

**REPORT FOR: Tenants', Leaseholders'  
and Residents'  
Consultative Forum**

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**Date of Meeting:** 26 September 2012

**Subject:** **INFORMATION REPORT -**  
Housing Tenant and Leaseholder  
Satisfaction Survey 2012

**Responsible Officer:** Lynne Pennington  
Divisional Director of Housing Services

**Exempt:** No

**Enclosures:** Appendix 1 – Draft STAR surveys and  
'You said, we did'

**Section 1 – Summary**

Tenant and leaseholder satisfaction is a key performance measure for Housing. Recently we have carried out 2 yearly postal surveys of tenants and leaseholders and used the results to changes services, where necessary, to better meet customer expectations and to compare our performance to other social landlords.

This report outlines the proposals for the 2012 tenant and leaseholder survey due to be carried out in October 2012, and asks TLRCF for comments on the draft surveys.

The report also sets out the Council's plans for publicising the survey, and asks TRAs (tenants and residents associations) to support the survey by encouraging a good response.

**FOR INFORMATION**

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **Introduction & background**

- 2.1** Housing has completed a survey of tenants and leaseholders every 2 years for some time. Originally this was a government requirement (a Best Value performance indicator). Since 2010 we, like other social landlords, have carried it out on a voluntary basis as we believe it offers valuable information on customer satisfaction against a range of issues, including overall satisfaction, quality of home, neighbourhood, value for money, repairs and maintenance etc..
- 2.2** The survey was previously known as the STATUS survey. It is now known nationally as the STAR survey (Survey of Tenants And Residents) and has been developed by a national housing organisation (Housemark) as the new voluntary approach to tenant and resident satisfaction measurement for the social housing sector. Using the STAR survey will mean that we are able to compare results with other councils and housing associations.
- 2.3** In addition to this snapshot survey, undertaken every 2 years, we also carry out a range of service-specific surveys on a regular basis (e.g. caretaking services, housing repairs, major works) and use other methods to seek customer feedback including focus groups, working parties and in depth telephone surveys as well as tenant and leaseholder engagement activities.

### **2012 Survey proposal**

- 2.4** We propose to carry out the STAR survey during October 2012. It will be sent out by post, so that we can compare the results with previous surveys. The postal surveys will include a freepost envelope for return to the research company. In addition, in order to increase the completion and return rate, we will offer tenants and leaseholders the option of completing the survey online via a web link if they wish.
- 2.5** We hope to have results and a final report in January 2013. The research company will present the results to tenants, leaseholders, members and staff groups so that action planning can take place to address the main issues highlighted by the survey.
- 2.6** The survey will be carried out by an independent research company who have been selected on the basis of their previous experience, ability to do the work, quality and cost. The company sends out the surveys, analyses the responses, and administers incentives for completion (see below). All responses are confidential, although tenants/ leaseholders may agree to have their responses passed to the Council e.g. so a comment can be followed up, or to improve the Council's information for equalities monitoring.

- 2.7 Based on STAR guidelines, the survey will be sent to all sheltered tenants, all leaseholders and a representative sample of general needs tenants (approx. 1750 households) selected randomly by the research company.

## **Tenant and Leaseholder involvement**

- 2.8 We set up a tenant & leaseholder advisory group ('the advisory group') to assist with the project. Members include housing and communications officers, and one representative each of a tenant, sheltered tenant and leaseholder. This group has been involved in reviewing the 2010 survey and preparing for the 2012 survey, and we would like to thank them for their participation in this piece of work.
- 2.9 We have consulted the following groups on the draft survey questions: HFTRA, LSG, Housing Editorial board and we thank them for their comments. The research company has also offered advice and suggestions based on their experience of conducting surveys elsewhere.
- 2.10 TLRCF are asked to offer any final comments on the proposed surveys at this meeting.

## **Survey questions, promotion and next steps**

- 2.11 The STAR survey comprises a set of core questions (which all landlords should use, so that they can compare performance) and a long list of extra questions relating to the different service areas. These extra questions can be altered to suit local circumstances, and additional local questions can be added. Housemark provide guidance on how the STAR survey should be administered, including how to draw up a sample, deal with confidentiality, anonymity and data protection, analyse data and reporting the results.
- 2.12 Appendix 1 includes the proposed 3 surveys – for general needs tenants, sheltered tenants and leaseholders. They have been drawn from the long list of possible STAR questions developed by Housemark and customised to the Harrow context, following comments made by tenants and leaseholders.
- 2.13 In order to get a good response rate, we will be publicising the survey via Homing In, posters, press releases etc. We will also be offering a prize draw for returned surveys as an incentive for early completion and return; we are also proposing to increase the number and value of prizes from those offered in 2010.
- 2.14 The results of the survey will be available early in 2013 as a written report and the research company will do presentations/ workshops as required. We will use the outputs of these to plan future service improvements.

## **Section 3 - Financial Implications**

3.1 There is budget provision of £16,000 in the HRA for the survey. This will cover the survey contract with the independent research company (printing, postage, data analysis, reporting etc) together with ancillary costs of publicity, translations etc.

## **Section 4 - Corporate Priorities**

4.1 The proposals in this report incorporate the corporate priority:  
United and involved communities.

Name: Roger Hampson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 7 Sept 2012		

## **Section 5 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

### **Contact:**

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### **Background Papers:**

Housing STAR survey file

## Appendix 1 a) Draft STAR surveys - approach and 'You said, we did'

The main features of the 2012 surveys, including changes in response to comments made by tenants and leaseholder representatives, are:

Comment	Action
Cut down on unnecessary text and questions	We have deleted some questions e.g. about income, housing register/ right to buy
Delete questions about complaints procedure and anti-social behaviour	Instead of sending detailed questions in the general survey, we will send targeted surveys on these topics only to people who have used the services
Be clear about why the survey is being undertaken, how the information will be used, and what the benefits are of participating e.g. service improvements made following responses to previous surveys	This will be included in the covering letter and all publicity
Emphasise in communications that the responses will remain confidential and with the research company, unless the person indicates they want the information to be passed on	This will be included in the covering letter
Tighten and streamline questions to ensure they are relevant to Harrow context e.g. for leaseholders	Amendments made
Additional equalities questions (required to comply with the Equalities Act) need to be explained (why the Council is asking for this information & how it will be used)	Actioned
Additional questions to gauge readership & satisfaction with Homing In magazine	Actioned
Allow people to opt out of the prize draw if they wish	To be actioned
Publicise the telephone helpline, ensure all staff are briefed, and repeat the sheltered housing drop in sessions carried out in 2010	To be actioned