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**Meeting of Executive Members for Housing  
and Adult Social Services and Advisory Panel**

17<sup>th</sup> March 2008

Report of the Director of Housing and Adult Social Services

**RESULTS OF THE 2007 ANNUAL HOUSING SATISFACTION  
SURVEY**

**Summary**

1. This report provides the Executive Member with the results of the Annual Housing Services Monitor (AHSM): a postal survey of City of York Council tenants undertaken during November 2007. It will be supplemented by a presentation to the Executive Member and Advisory Panel at the meeting. For ease of reference percentages have been “rounded”.
2. Headline results from the 2007 survey are:
  - Overall satisfaction with the housing services has increased to 88%
  - 88% of tenants describe the council as a ‘very good’ or ‘good’ landlord
  - 87% are very or fairly satisfied with the condition of their home
  - 83% are satisfied with the repair and maintenance service
  - 70% feel the Council’s housing service takes account of their views when making decisions

**Background**

3. The Annual Housing Services Monitor is a tenant satisfaction survey which has been carried out in York every year since 1990. The AHSM is a tenant satisfaction survey which has been carried out every year since 1990. This year the survey was non-statutory (i.e. a year in which submission of Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 74 and 75 relating to tenant satisfaction is not mandatory) and in consultation with members was reduced in size.
4. City of York Council Marketing and Communications Group developed the questionnaire in conjunction with Housing Services. The fieldwork was outsourced to PCP research.

## **Methodology**

5. During October/November 2007 a postal survey was mailed to 2000 City of York council tenants selected at random. A total of 995 tenants returned the questionnaire, which represents a good response rate of 50% of the sample. This compared to a 49% response rate in 2006 and is above the number required for statistical validity.
6. Prior to 2006 the survey was conducted using face-to-face interviews but for the last two years a postal methodology has been used. The change in data collection methods must be kept in mind when comparing results pre and post 2006. Results are accurate to within +/- 3.1% with 95% confidence based on 7767 occupied properties. Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this is either due to multiple responses or decimal rounding. The figures for each question have been calculated after the respondents who did not answer the questions have been removed from the bases.

## **Promotion**

7. The survey was promoted using the *Streets Ahead* magazine for tenants, posters in housing offices and press releases. A prize draw with a top prize of £100 was also offered to help maximise the response rate.

## **Communication**

8. A press release summarising the headline results was issued in January 2008, there is to be a presentation to the York Federation on March 20<sup>th</sup>, and a feature on the results of the survey will be published in the April edition of *Streets Ahead* magazine for tenants.

## **Consultation**

9. The survey questionnaire was developed in partnership with Marketing and Communications. At the meeting of the Executive Members for Housing and Adult Social Services and Advisory Panel on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2007 it was agreed to the 2007 survey being a reduced version. This was also discussed with the York Federation of Residents' & Community Associations at their meeting in July 2007.

## **Options**

10. This report is for information only – there are no options for consideration

## **Analysis**

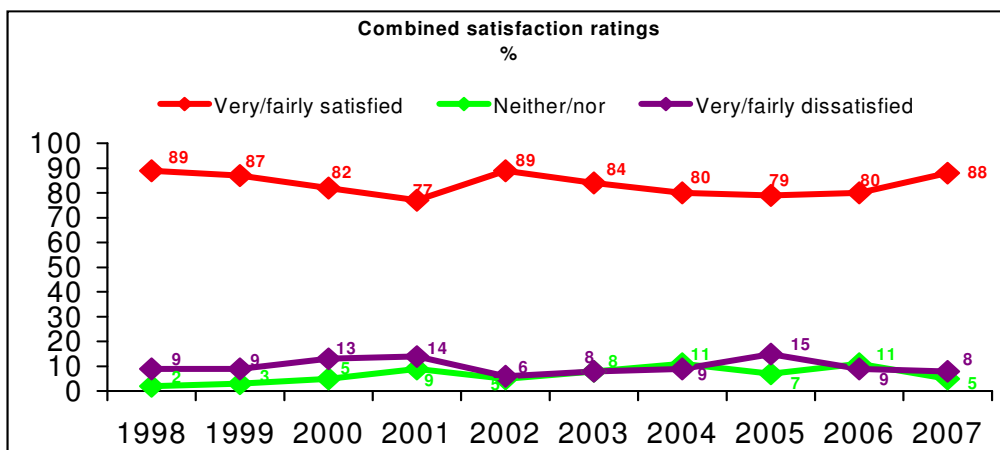
### **Profile of respondents**

11. The majority of those who responded to the questionnaire were longstanding tenants of City of York Council: almost two-thirds (64%) have been a council tenant for over 10 years. Just under half (49%) are renting a house and a

lower proportion (40%) rent a flat. In terms of ethnic group, the sample was dominated by White British (98%) tenants.

- Over half (53%) of the households participating in the survey are made up of one adult. Families account for 20% of the sample whilst households consisting of two or more adults account for 27%.
- Over half (53%) of households included at least one tenant with a long-standing illness or disability and over four-fifths (83%) of these respondents explained that the illness limited this person's activities.
- Over two-fifths (41%) of the tenants are retired, over one-quarter (29%) are employed or self-employed, 14% are permanently sick or disabled and 7% are looking after the home and family.
- Over half (54%) of households receive all their income from benefits or pensions. Almost two-thirds (64%) of the sample receive housing benefit and 61% of these respondents explain that this benefit pays for all of their rent

### Overall Satisfaction with the Housing Service



12. Overall 88% of tenants state that they are very or fairly satisfied with the Housing Service: a significant improvement on 80% combined satisfaction in 2006. The same percentage describe the Council as a good landlord, with a sharp increase in the numbers strongly agreeing with this statement: 55% compared to 46% in 2006. Eighty-six per cent of tenants perceived their rent as value for money (up from 74%) Over 55's and those without children at home are the most satisfied in this respect.

### Repairs & Maintenance

13. Encouragingly, there has been an increase in satisfaction with the condition of the property up to 87% from 80 (though younger tenants 16-34 are less content with the service in this area – only 69% are satisfied compared to 93% of over 55s). Satisfaction with the way repairs are dealt with has increased to 83% from 79% last year, although again younger tenants are the least satisfied

with 67% satisfaction compared to 90% among the over 55s. Area based analysis indicates tenants on the city side are less satisfied than in Acomb, and this will be explored with the Repairs Partnership.

14. It is recognised that Repairs are a key area of concern to many tenants, and we have therefore recently revamped surveys sent out to all tenants after they receive repairs to their homes, so that we can track satisfaction continuously. Examples of good practice were sought by the Service Development team from other members of the Housing Quality Network, and this work generated sufficient interest at the network that a specific briefing paper on repair satisfaction surveys was issued recently. The results of the first two batches of surveys revealed satisfaction levels of 85.9% among tenants who received repairs to their homes in October 2007 and 87.2% in November. This data relates wholly to those customers who have recently reported repairs, whereas respondents to the Annual Housing Monitor may not have recent experience of the service, and enables ongoing analysis of customer satisfaction with the responsive repairs service.
15. An end-to-end review of the responsive repairs service using systems thinking principles is underway. The review looks at the process of repairs from reporting to completion, and changes undertaken to improve this process should also improve customer satisfaction.

### **Resident Involvement**

16. Eight out of ten respondents are satisfied with the extent the housing department keeps them informed about the things which might affect them as a tenant. However, under two-thirds (64%) are satisfied with the opportunities for participation in management and decision-making. Although this is a significant improvement on 57% satisfaction in 2006 and 55% in 2005, less than half of those with children and those aged 35-54 are satisfied. The Housing Customer Involvement Compact was launched in Autumn 2007 and work is underway to develop new methods of involvement such as customer expert panels. Just over two-thirds (67%) are satisfied with the extent to which the housing department finds out their views. Seven out of ten respondents (70%) feel that CYC takes account of tenants' views to some extent when making decisions.

### **Contact and Communication**

17. Respondents were asked how much of the Council's quarterly magazine for Tenants (Streets Ahead) they normally read. Ninety-three percent of those receiving the magazine read at least some of it, however the number stating they read the entire publication has reduced too, with 57% (down from 62%) saying they read the entire magazine. More detailed work needs to be done with the Streets Ahead Editorial Panel to examine reasons for this, with consideration given to a readership survey or focus group.
18. Just less than three-quarters (73%) of the sample said they had contacted City of York Council Housing Services in the last 12 months (up from 63% in 2006). The main reason for contact (as in 2006) was about repairs: 70% cited this as the reason for their contact (66% in 2006). Contacting the service by telephone

is still the most popular method, although written and email contact both doubled from 1 to 2%. Officers are now including email addresses on letters, and this may increase the amount of email contact in future.

19. Importantly, getting hold of the right person has almost returned to the 2005 level of 74% (73%) from a drop to 61% in 2006. A possible explanation for the low figure last year was that it was due in part to the restructure of housing services in 2005-6 and the recovery this year would seem to back this up. Late in 2007 there was also the introduction of voice recognition dialling for external customers, which may have had an impact. Most tenants say their enquiry was dealt with, however 14% (the same as last year) are still citing that the person they spoke to was not able to deal with their enquiry. A revised training and development plan in preparation for housing, and a comprehensive overhaul of procedure manuals should hopefully improve this figure.

### **Variations in Satisfaction**

20. In previous years satisfaction levels in most areas increased with age and length of tenancy. In 2007 there have been changes particularly in relation to length of tenancy. New tenants (of less than two years) are reporting higher satisfaction levels than those tenants who have lived in council homes for between two and ten years. This trend is apparent in overall satisfaction, where 90% (73%) of new tenants are satisfied compared to 89% (85%) of long standing tenants, and 83% (81%) of the middle group (figures for 2006 in brackets). New tenants are also most likely (91%) to perceive their rent as value for money compared to 79% of tenants of two to ten years standing, and 87% of long term tenants.
21. Satisfaction of new tenants has also improved in relation to repairs and maintenance increasing from 69 to 78%, the same level as those tenants with two to ten year tenancies.

### **Corporate Priorities**

22. The findings from the survey can be used to identify actions to contribute to the delivery of the priority statement *'Improve the quality and availability of decent affordable homes in the city'* by clarifying quality issues of concern to tenants.
23. Carrying out regular surveys of council tenant satisfaction reflects the councils Vision and Values in that it helps us in *'Delivering what our customers want'* and the findings are a way of *'Encouraging improvement in everything we do'*

### **Implications**

24.
  - **Financial** No direct financial implications. The costs of the survey were met from existing research budgets in Housing. Some improvement actions taken in response to the survey may have financial implications.
  - **Human Resources (HR)** No HR implications

- **Equalities** Respondents are asked their age group, ethnic group and gender. It is possible to analyse and sort responses to assess the satisfaction levels of different groups, however in some cases the number of responses may be insufficient for statistical validity.
- **Legal** No direct legal implications
- **Crime and Disorder** No Crime and Disorder Implications
- **Information Technology (IT)** No IT implications
- **Property** No property implications

### Risk Management

25. There are no direct risks associated with this report.

### Recommendations

26. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to note the results of the 2007 Annual Housing Service Monitor and the proposed actions.

Reason: This report is for information only.

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*Chief Officer's name  
 Title*

Report Approved  tick Date *Insert Date*

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** None – the report is co-authored by Marketing and Communications who commissioned the research

**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

### Background Papers:

Report to Housing EMAP 16<sup>th</sup> July 2007 Annual Housing Satisfaction Survey 2007.

**Annexes** - None