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**Decision Session: Cabinet Member for Health,  
Housing & Adult Social Services**

**26 July 2011**

Report of the Assistant Director – Housing & Public Protection

**Results of Annual Housing Satisfaction Survey 2010/11**

**Summary**

1. This report provides the results of the Annual Housing Services Monitor (AHSM): a postal survey of City of York Council tenants undertaken during January 2011 – February 2011 responded to by 947 tenants. Attached at **Annex 1** are the results of the survey compared to the results for 2009. Where HouseMark<sup>1</sup> benchmarking information is available a comparison has been made to establish York's position. To address where performance needs to be improved actions have been included within the Service Plan 2011/12.
2. Headline results shows that satisfaction remains high although in some areas satisfaction has decreased compared to 2009. Where comparison information is available out of the 20 customer satisfaction indicators 7 have improved and 13 have reduced. (See table 1 below). Also included in the table is comparison information using the results of the bespoke Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) survey which provides satisfaction results from customers who have recently reported ASB.
3. In terms of Equalities monitoring in general the under 25's and 25 – 44 age range are less satisfied with all aspects of the service whilst overall BME satisfaction accords with the results of White British Tenants. Further equalities analysis is at paragraph 28.

**Background**

4. The AHSM is a tenant satisfaction survey, which has been carried out in York every year since 1990. It is no longer a government requirement to carry out the survey, however Housing Services Management Team (HSMT) at a meeting in November 2010 agreed to continue to administer the survey as it provides customer satisfaction information against key

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<sup>1</sup> HouseMark is a benchmarking club with a membership of over 350 Housing organisations which allows each organisation to compare and rank its performance with other housing organisations.

performance indicators and is a useful source of information to inform Housing's Service Plan.

## Methodology

- The postal survey was mailed to 2,000 City of York council tenants selected at random. A total of 949 were returned which represents a 47% response rate, which is the same response rate received for 2009. For 2010/11, results are accurate to within +/- 3% confidence level based on 8000 council housing tenants.

## Customer Satisfaction Indicators

Satisfaction Improved	AHSM 2009	AHSM 2010/11 113 Respondents	ASB Survey 51 Respondents
Talking to an estate manager	65%	68%	N/A
Being kept informed by Landlord	79%	82%	No comparator
Being kept informed about ASB	43%	53%	70%
Staff support when dealing with ASB	42%	51%	85%
Speed at which ASB was dealt with	47%	50%	83%
How ASB report was dealt with <sup>2</sup>	51%	55%	65%
Final outcome of ASB <sup>3</sup>	43%	49%	57%

Satisfaction Reduced	AHSM 2009	AHSM 2010/11
Overall service	89%	86%
Condition of property	85%	83%
Value for money of rent	85%	84%
Getting hold of the right person	75%	71%
Helpfulness of staff	86%	85%
ASB advise by staff	68%	63%
Ability to deal with general problem	81%	79%
Final outcome of general query	73%	71%
Reporting repairs	88%	82%

<sup>2</sup> HouseMark - Top 85%, Middle 75.5%, Lower 62.5%, York's Position Middle Lower

<sup>3</sup> HouseMark Top 81.2%, Middle 70%, Lower 53%, York's Position Lower Quartile

<b>Satisfaction Reduced</b>	<b>AHSM 2009</b>	<b>AHSM 2010/11</b>
Advise on council housing waiting list	58%	44%
How repair carried out	87%	83%
Views being taken into account	72%	67%
Opportunities to be involved in management and decision making	63%	58%

## Benchmarking

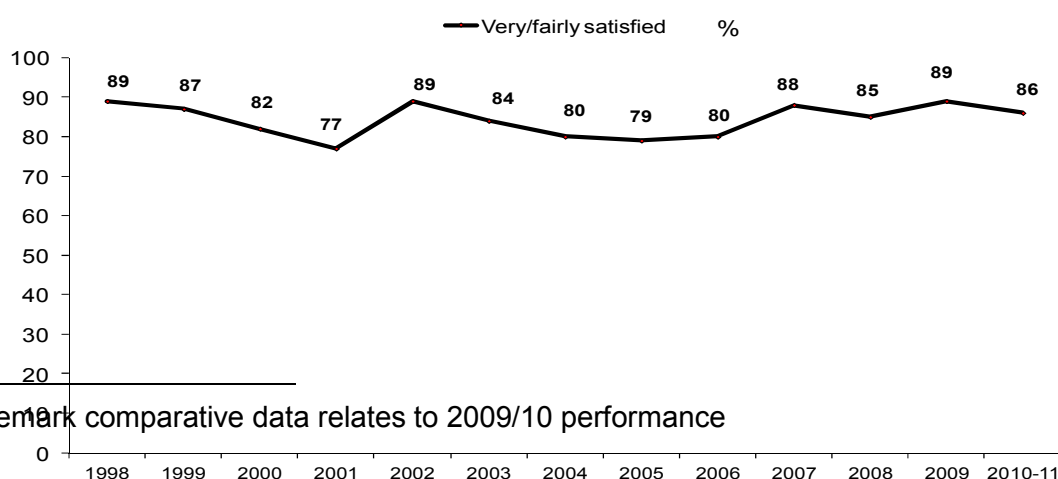
6. For those indicators where HouseMark comparative information is available<sup>4</sup> the table below outlines which band York's performance is within.

<b>Top Satisfaction Band</b>	<b>Upper Middle Satisfaction Band</b>	<b>Lower Middle Satisfaction Band</b>	<b>Lower Satisfaction Band</b>
Overall Service provided	Quality of home	ASB complaints dealt with	ASB finale outcome
How repairs are carried out	Condition of property		
	Views being taken into account		

## Analysis

### Landlord and Home

7. 86% of respondents are satisfied with the overall service. Whilst this has gone down by 3% compared to the 2009 figure (89%), this figure places us in Top quartile performance, which is 87%. The chart below provides trend data showing satisfaction remains high in comparison to previous year's satisfaction.



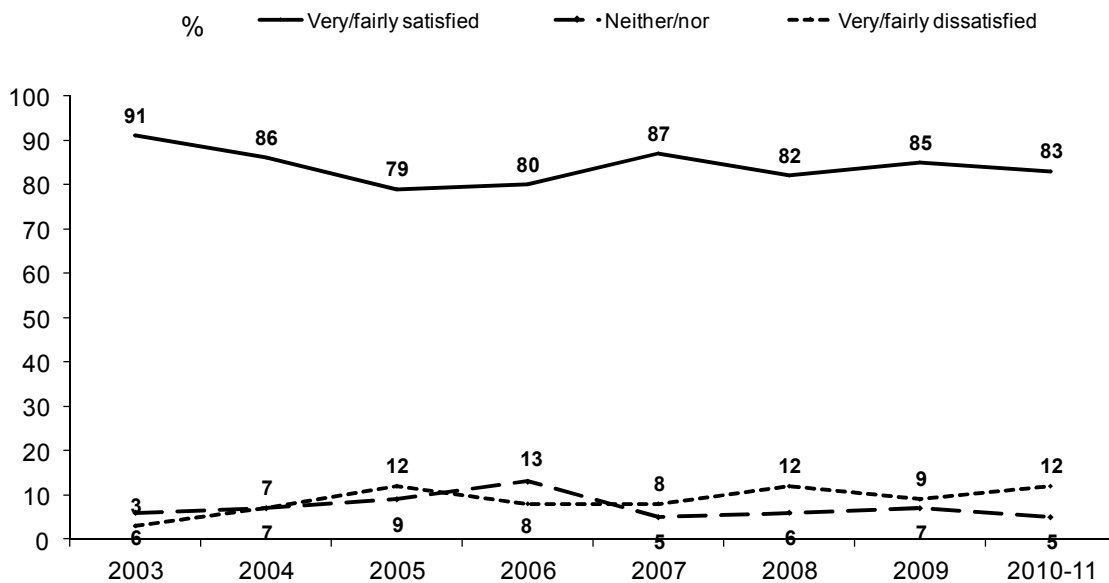
<sup>4</sup> HouseMark comparative data relates to 2009/10 performance

8. Respondents were asked to provide reasons if they were dissatisfied with the overall service<sup>5</sup>. The majority of issues raised were in connection with outstanding repairs, followed by lack of customer care. Other comments were as follows:

- Young families with children in flats causing a noise nuisance
- Families in flats needing family housing
- Windows need replacing
- Quality of repairs undertaken
- Lack of response to service requests
- Lack of action in response to complaints
- Lack of care of communal areas

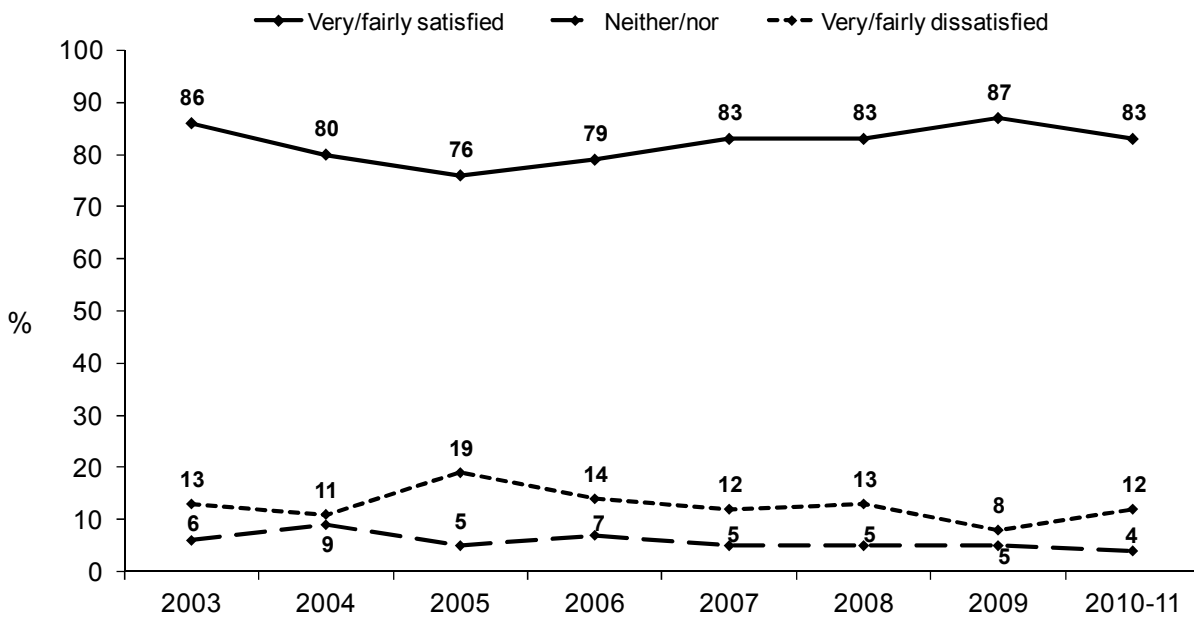
9. With regards respondents concerns about children living in flats, members made a policy decision to allow families with children to be allocated flats above ground floor level some years ago to help alleviate pressure on the waiting list and people in temporary accommodation. The Cabinet Member notes that a priority in the Housing Strategy is to make best use of our existing stock and this has been translated into a number of actions in the 20011/12 Service Plan.

10. 83% of respondents were satisfied with the condition of their property a 2% decline on 2009. Top quartile performance is 85% putting us in the middle/upper performance band. The chart below shows trend data.



<sup>5</sup> Whilst customer satisfaction may have reduced, actual performance has continued to be top quartile with the average length of time to complete non urgent repairs under 6 days.

11. 84% of respondents are satisfied with the overall quality of their home. This question was included for the first time in order that we could benchmark our performance. Top quartile performance is 86.6% and as such this result places us in the middle/upper performance band.
12. 83 % of respondents were satisfied with how their repairs were carried out down by 4% on the 87% satisfaction figure for 2009. Although this performance still puts us in top quartile performance which is 83.8%.



13. Satisfaction with reporting repairs at 82% is also down on the 2009 figure of 88%

### Tenant Priorities

14. Tenants were asked to identify their top 3 priorities out of a list of 7. The table below compares 2009 priorities with those of 2010/11.

2009		2010	
Priority	Rank	Priority	Rank
Repairs and maintenance (78%)	1	Repairs and maintenance (84%)	1
Overall quality of home (48%)	2	Overall quality of home (51%)	2
Dealing with anti- social behaviour (35%)	3	Dealing with anti- social behaviour (38%)	3
Keeping tenants informed (30%)	4	Keeping tenants informed (29%)	4
Value for money for rent	5	Value for money for rent	5

2009		2010	
Priority	Rank	Priority	Rank
(29%)		(28%)	
Taking Tenants views into account (27%)	6	Taking Tenants views into account (27%)	6
Neighbourhood as a place to live (25%)	7	Neighbourhood as a place to live (24%)	7
	N/A	High quality customer service (12%)	8

15. Tenants priorities remain the same as 2009 with top 3 priorities being: - Repairs and Maintenance (ranked 1), Overall Quality of Home (ranked 2) and Dealing with anti-social behaviour (ranked 3). These priorities also remain the same as those identified in 2008.

### **Anti Social Behaviour (ASB)**

16. The results for the annual housing monitor for ASB satisfaction have been compared with the ASB bespoke satisfaction survey administered by tenancy enforcement, both of which have been compared with HouseMark benchmarking data where available. Results show that satisfaction with the ease of reporting ASB is 82% this is lower than the bespoke ASB survey where satisfaction is at 90%. Results also show that all customer satisfaction has increased on 2009 performance with the exception of advice by staff, which fell from 68% to 63%. However benchmarking data shows that satisfaction with how a report was dealt with is in the middle lower band and satisfaction with the final outcome of ASB performance is in the lower performance band.
17. Over the past year a considerable amount of work has been undertaken with regards ASB particularly the recent development and adoption by partners of the Citywide ASB Strategy. To further strengthen York's approach to ASB and increase customer satisfaction the following actions are contained in 2011/12 Service Plan.
- As part of the organisational review it is proposed to establish a Neighbourhood Safety Unit which will bring together the community safety team within the Safer York Partnership and the Housing Tenancy Enforcement Team
  - Develop clear ASB policies and procedures and effective case management for carrying out enforcement across the social housing sector to ensure consistency.
  - Develop a ASB advice DVD with the ASB customer panel to advise victims of ASB what action and standards of service they can expect for case handling

- Provide ASB data for the HouseMark Specialist ASB module to enable further analysis of performance and the identification of best practice examples.

### **Neighbourhood as a place to live**

18. Respondents were asked to identify to what extent the following were a very big / fairly big problem or not a problem at all. The results below what percentage of respondents viewed the issue as being a problem.

- Car parking (41%)
- Drug use or dealing (25%)
- Rubbish and litter (24%)
- Noisy neighbours (18%)
- Disruptive children/teenagers (17%)
- Drunk or rowdy behaviour (15%)
- Noise from traffic (14%)
- Pets and animals (14%)
- Other crime (11%)
- Vandalism and graffiti (10%)
- People damaging property (9%)
- Racial or other harassment (5%)
- Abandoned or burnt out vehicles (4%)

19. The top three issues remain the same to that of 2009 i.e. Car parking, drugs and litter. Although car parking at 41% is seen as the biggest problem it has dropped by 6% since 2009. Drugs (25%) litter (24%) racial harassment (5%) and abandoned vehicles (4%) have increased slightly.

### **Measuring Local Offers**

20. The following questions were included in the survey for the first time so that customer satisfaction could be established around local offers. However currently there is no benchmarking information available for these measures.

- 90% respondents felt that the council made best use of its stock. Respondents who disagreed with this cited the following reasons:
  - Do not let flats to people with children
  - Do not mix elderly people with young people
  - People under-occupying should move to smaller accommodation

- People who are overcrowded should move into bigger accommodation
- Empty properties should be let quicker ( In terms of letting empty property our performance is in the top performance band)
- 89% of respondents are satisfied with facilities to pay their rent
- 84% of respondents are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live
- 79% of respondents are satisfied with estate services
- 76% of respondents are satisfied with the ground maintenance service
- 60% of respondents are satisfied with internal cleaning in blocks of flats.

21. To address customer satisfaction concerning ground maintenance and internal cleaning in blocks of flats the following actions have been included in 200/12 Service Plan:

- Review the composting pilot of grass collection and the provision of compost bins to establish whether it is feasible to extend this to other areas in the City.
- Embed the audit by Estate Workers of internal cleaning of blocks of flats to ensure cleaning standards are being met.

### **Contact with Landlord**

22. Over the last 12 months 68% of respondents made contact with the Council compared with 59% in 2009 and increase of 9%. Overwhelmingly (78%) of those making contact was in relation to repairs and maintenance, with relatively low contact for other issues:

- 9% Neighbour problems,
- 6% rent,
- 2% moving,
- 2% gardens and communal areas
- 7% other.



- 74% of respondents made contact by telephone followed by 21% visiting the office, 4% using email a slight increase of 3% on 2009 then letter 2% and other 1%. When asked how respondents preferred to make contact 74% cited the telephone, 22% by visiting the office, 4% by letter and 4% by email.

## **Customer Care**

23. When making contact 71% of respondents were able to get hold of the right person. This is down by 4% compared to the 2009 figure of 75%. 85% of respondents found staff to be helpful this is slightly down on the 86% figure for 2009. When asked if staff were able to deal with their problem 79% of respondents were very or fairly satisfied. This is slightly down on the 2009 figure at 81%. In terms of satisfaction with the final outcome of their query 71% of respondents were satisfied. This is down by 2% compared to the 73% figure in 2009.
24. In terms of reporting repairs 82% of respondents were satisfied with this; however satisfaction is down by 6% on the 2009 figure of 88%. Comments made with regards repairs reporting suggested that improvements could be made if there were more people to answer the repair telephone lines as the lines were always busy. It should be noted that during 2010/11 a full review of the repairs service has been undertaken, including the introduction of new IT systems for managing the workforce planning which may have had a one off impact on customer satisfaction.
25. Respondents were less satisfied when talking to an Estate Manager with only 68% of respondents very or fairly satisfied although satisfaction had increased from 2009 when satisfaction was at 65%. Comments made in relation to the service provided by the estate manager focused on the inability to get hold of them and lack of action taken by them. In order to improve performance in this area an action to review phone contact and availability of estate managers is included within 2011/12 Service Plan.
26. Satisfaction at 44% is particularly low in terms of getting advice about the council's waiting list. This is considerably down on the 2009 figure at 58% and is the lowest in terms of customer satisfaction. The delay in the introduction of Choice Based Lettings may have impacted on this. It is expected that the implementation of Choice Based Lettings will improve satisfaction in this area and actions around the introduction of Choice Based Lettings are included in the 2011/12 Service Plan.

## **Access to services**

27. As well as the standard customer and access questions a number of questions were added to inform the development of the Customer Access Strategy in order to establish if accessing the Housing service was convenient and whether respondents had access to the internet.
- 95% of respondents were satisfied with current opening hours and the out of hours repair services. However a small number of respondents made suggestions on how this could be improved suggesting longer opening hours during the week and Saturday working.
  - 57% of respondents have access to the Internet with the majority (91%) having access from home.

## **Gas Servicing**

28. For the first time gas servicing questions were included in the AHSM with exceptionally high levels of satisfaction. Of the 91% of respondents who stated that gas servicing was undertaken in the last 12 months, 94% stated that the gas servicing appointment was kept and 94% overall were satisfied with the gas service. The Gas Maintenance Manager asked that respondents be asked how they would like their gas servicing appointment made 53% preferred to be given an appointment whilst 47% preferred to ring and arrange an appointment.

## **Tenant Engagement**

29. Overall satisfaction on being kept informed has increased to 82% from 79%. However satisfaction with views being taken into account at 67% has dropped compared to 72% in 2009. Opportunities to be involved in management and decision-making at 58% compared to 63% in 2009 has also reduced. In order to improve performance in this area the following actions have been included in 2011/12 Service Plan:
- Establish a Tenant Scrutiny Panel which is representative of council house areas. Housing's regulator the Tenant Services Authority are urging Local Authorities to establish Tenant Scrutiny Panels made up of a representative sample of council housing tenants to scrutinise and challenge Housing's service delivery and performance. Establishing a Tenant Scrutiny Panel focusing solely on Housing issues will give tenants a further opportunity to be involved in the management and decision making process of Housing.
  - Develop Resident Associations on council housing estates to become self sufficient

- Implement the Tenant Inspector Project. Seven volunteer council tenant inspectors have been recruited for the purpose of inspecting the delivery of housing services to establish if housing services are meeting the service standards agreed by tenants and identifying where service delivery improvements can be made. A programme of key service areas to be inspected is being developed and will be implemented this financial year.
  - Review the cost/quality and overall value for money of resident involvement
30. In terms of how respondents preferred to be consulted 79% choose postal surveys, 21% via Resident Associations, 13% online surveys, 11% telephone surveys, 8% focus groups, 12% attendance at meetings and 3% via other means.

### **Equalities Monitoring**

31. The Annual Housing Service Monitor asks for customer profiling information so results can be analysed in terms of age, disability and ethnic origin. The survey also includes questions on sexuality and religion. Profile of respondents to the 2010 Survey:
- In terms of ethnic group, the sample was dominated by White British (94%) tenants with 6% BME.
  - The largest group of respondents were in the 45-64 age group (39.5%), 32.7% were aged 65+, 23.7% were aged between 25-44 and 4.1% were aged between 16 and 24 years of age.
  - More females (59.7%) than males responded, and 55.6% of respondents stated they had a disability.
32. Equality analysis shows that for the majority of questions satisfaction of BME tenants accords with the results of White British tenants with the exception for satisfaction with: value for money for rent (BME 93%, WB 84%), neighbourhood as a place to live (BME95% WB 84%), views being taken into account (BME 79%, WB 66%) and opportunities to be involved in management and decision making (BME 69% WB 57%) showing higher satisfaction levels for BME tenants. However BME tenants were less satisfied than White British tenants with the final outcome of a general query (BME 67%, WB 74%).
33. For the vast majority of questions satisfaction with disabled and non disabled tenants where in accord with each other with two exceptions. Disabled tenants had higher levels of satisfaction with views being taken into account (71%) compared to non disabled tenants (65%). Disabled tenants had higher satisfaction levels with opportunities to be involved in

management and decision making (63%) compared to non disabled tenants (53%).

34. Overall younger tenants, under 25's and those between 25-44 had lower levels of satisfaction in all areas covered by the AHSM survey with satisfaction generally ranging between 70% and 75%. However there was a marked fall in satisfaction with the under 25's in relation to the general condition of their property (59%), the final outcome of a general enquiry (58%). Younger tenants are also less satisfied with views being taken into account particularly the 25- 44 years olds at 51% and opportunities to be involved in management and decision making with satisfaction at 38%. In terms of engaging with younger tenants, focused work will be undertaken during 2011/12 and a concentrated effort will be made to encourage younger tenants to be involved with the Tenant Inspector Project.

### **Corporate Priorities**

35. The administration of the Annual Housing Monitor supports the Corporate themes of being an Inclusive City - We will do our best to make sure that all citizens, regardless of race, age, disability, sexual orientation, faith or gender, feel included in the life of York. We will help improve prospects for all, tackle poverty and exclusion and make services and facilities easy to access and Effective Organisation- to be a modern council with high standards in all that we do, living up to our values and be a great place to work.

### **Implications**

- **Financial** – There are no direct financial implications arising from this report
- **Human Resources (HR)** N/A
- **Equalities** – *An analysis of equalities issues is included within the report*
- **Legal** N/A
- **Crime and Disorder** – *Issues raised through the survey in relation to crime and disorder have informed Housings Service Improvement Plan*
- **Information Technology (IT)**
- **Property** N/A)
- Risk Management N/A

## Conclusion

36. This report has highlighted that in a number of areas customer satisfaction has reduced compared to 2009 performance. In order to address this improvement actions have been included in the 2011/2012 Service Plan.

## Recommendations

37. The Cabinet Member is asked to note the report and

- Agree to continue undertaking the annual satisfaction survey.

Reason – To ensure that the council is fully aware of customer perceptions of the service and to use this information to improve the service

## Contact Details

### Author:

**Sharon Brown**  
**Service Development**  
**Manager**  
Tel: 554362

### Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

**Steve Waddington**  
**Assistant Director Housing & Public Protection**

Report Approved  Date 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2011

## Annexes

*Annex 1 – AHM 2010 Results*