

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Housing Tenancy Board

Date **28 July 2014**

Report of: **Director of Community**

Subject: **TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER SATISFACTION SURVEY**

SUMMARY

This report to the board outlines plans to conduct a survey of tenants and leaseholders to gauge satisfaction levels with the housing service.

RECOMMENDATION

That board members note the contents of the report, comment on the draft questions and endorse the proposal to carry out a survey of all tenants and leaseholders.

INTRODUCTION

1. In the past all local authorities with retained housing stock were required by the Department of Communities and Local Government to carry out a survey of their tenants. The survey was known as a STATUS (Standardised Tenant Satisfaction Survey) and was carried out every two years.
2. The last STATUS survey carried out by the Council was in 2008/09. However the survey was directed at general needs tenants only.
3. The requirement to carry out STATUS survey of tenants was removed in 2010 when the former Tenant Services Authority took on the regulatory role for Social Housing. Following this a number of social housing landlords got together to produce a new satisfaction questionnaire STAR which could be used for future surveys.

STAR (SURVEY OF TENANTS AND RESIDENTS)

4. STAR replaced the STATUS satisfaction survey and is now carried out on a voluntary self-regulatory basis.
5. In carrying out a survey it is hoped that the Council will gain a better understanding of what services matter to tenants and leaseholders. It will also provide an opportunity to obtain a profile of our tenants which will help us to tailor our services in the future.
6. STAR enables social housing providers to compare satisfaction results both by benchmarking against each other and by examining trends over time. Carrying out a survey will enable us to regulate ourselves and by involving tenants in the process we will give them the opportunity to scrutinise the process and outcomes.
7. The proposed questions to be used in the survey have been discussed with the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum. The general consensus was that all the questions discussed should be included and that all tenants and leaseholders should be surveyed.

WHO WILL CARRY OUT THE SURVEY?

8. Although it is possible to carry out surveys in-house this can be quite labour intensive. Furthermore questions can be raised about the impartiality of such an approach. As a result it is proposed to employ the services of a specialist company. Specialist companies offer an impartial service and use a variety of survey methods. Experience of using these companies in the past has shown that they provide a good service. Limited resources in-house would not achieve the same results. At least three companies would be approached about carrying out the survey.

WHAT SURVEY METHODS WILL BE USED?

9. A variety of methods will need to be used in order to reach as many people as possible. Options will include postal surveys; telephone surveys; on-line surveys; face to face surveys and possibly focus groups. It may be a good idea to use all of these methods in order to gain an accurate picture from a representative sample of tenants and leaseholders.

SCOPE OF THE SURVEY

10. In the past the Council has carried out surveys using a sample selection. However this has raised concerns about how representative and accurate the information received is. Furthermore the previous survey was of general needs tenants only.
11. It is proposed to broaden out the survey by sending it to all of our tenants and leaseholders.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

12. The STAR satisfaction questionnaire has been used as a basis for the survey.
13. A list of the questions which were discussed at the recent Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum is attached for board members comments.
14. If there are any areas of the service that there are concerns about, questions in the survey can be used to find out more.

BENEFITS OF A SURVEY

15. A survey presents an opportunity for tenants and leaseholders to let us know how they feel about the service they receive from the Council. Feedback can then be used to shape, plan and improve the service provided in the future.
16. The results of the survey can also help determine what aspects of the service are most important to tenants and leaseholders and identify possible service priorities.
17. Surveys also provide an opportunity to update the profiles of tenants as information is given about household make-up.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

18. The outsourcing of the survey to an independent organisation will come at a cost. However there are funds set aside from existing budgets that can largely fund this work.

RISK ASSESSMENT

19. There are no significant risk considerations in relation to this report. However if we do not carry out a survey, we may not be able to demonstrate that we carry out self-regulation.

CONCLUSION

20. This report has outlined the proposal to carry out a survey of all tenants and leaseholders and has provided an opportunity for board members to comment on the draft questions to be included in the survey.

Appendices: [Appendix A – Draft survey questions](#)

Background Papers: None

Reference Papers: Homes and Communities Agency – Consumer Regulation Review
2012/13
HouseMark – A Guide to running STAR

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Jennie Larkin. (Ext 4463)