

REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 16 OCTOBER 2012

SUBJECT: TENANT SURVEY 2012

BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides details and timescales of the tenant survey currently underway for Moray Council tenants.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to the management of the Council's housing stock.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Communities Committee:-

- (i) notes the progress achieved in the tenant survey 2012;**
- (ii) agrees that a presentation is made to Members, tenant representatives and senior managers on 6 December 2012; and**
- (iii) agrees that a report on the survey results and potential improvement actions be presented to the Communities Committee on 11 December 2012.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council has carried out a number of tenant surveys since 1997, with the last survey completed in 2007. The Committee previously agreed that the survey scheduled for 2010 be deferred due to the potential impact of Designing Better Services work in the Housing and Property Service. The survey was further deferred in 2011 as the Scottish Government was consulting on a draft Scottish Social Housing Standard. On 9 February 2012, the Council agreed financial provision for the tenant survey to be carried out in 2012/13 as part of the Housing Revenue Budget (paragraph 6 of the Minute refers).
- 3.2 Tenant feedback will form an important element of the Scottish Housing Regulator's regime, through which the Council will be able to demonstrate its achievement of Charter outcomes. The results from the 2012 tenant survey will therefore provide a picture of tenants' views on the quality of the housing services provided by the Council. This will form an important baseline to be reported to tenants and to the Scottish Housing Regulator in future reports on the Council's performance.

4. PROGRESS TO DATE

- 4.1 In June and July 2012, the procurement process was progressed, resulting in the appointment of Research Resource Scotland Ltd, a market research company with a track record of similar work carried out for social housing landlords in Scotland. An inaugural project meeting was held on 1 August 2012. This meeting agreed project timescales and milestones. The agreed survey methodology is similar to that of earlier surveys, with a sample survey

of 2,500 tenants, randomly drawn from a list of current tenants. The sample size has been increased from the 2007 survey sample. Even on a worst case scenario of a 20% response rate (500 completed returns), this would yield sufficiently accurate data from which to draw conclusions.

- 4.2 Research Resource prepared a questionnaire which was then piloted using tenant volunteers from registered tenant groups. The questionnaire was dispatched to the sample of tenants on schedule on 10 September 2012. As at 28 September 2012, a total of 695 responses have been received which equates to a response rate of 28%. Tenants can either return the completed questionnaire by post to Research Resource, or can complete their response on line. The level of responses to date provides reassurance that the Council can expect to receive an accurate picture of tenants' views from this survey.
- 4.3 The tenant survey questionnaire seeks views from tenants on:-
- ease of/method of contact with the Council
 - information and communication
 - satisfaction with the provision of specific housing services eg dealing with complaints, dealing with anti social behaviour etc
 - making their views known to the Council
 - the repairs service
 - the quality of their home
 - improvements required to their home
 - their neighbourhood
 - whether they would be prepared to pay additional rent to fund specific activities eg improvements to their home, more new build council housing
 - the extent to which their rent is value to money
 - overall satisfaction with the housing services that they receive
 - their awareness of welfare reform changes and how it might impact on them.
- 4.4 In a number of areas, the survey responses will be directly comparable with earlier surveys. The aspects of service provision covered in the questionnaire also accord with the likely performance framework for the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

5. FUTURE ACTIONS

- 5.1 It is projected that an initial overview of the survey results will be available to officers around mid October 2012, with detailed findings being available by the mid November 2012.
- 5.2 It is therefore proposed that Research Resource be asked to make a detailed presentation to elected members on the results of the survey on 6 December 2012. This date has been identified in consultation with Member Support. It is suggested that all elected members are invited to this presentation, as well as the tenant representatives on the Communities Committee and managers

within the Housing and Property Service. Feedback to staff within the housing sections in the Service would also be provided following this presentation.

- 5.3 It is proposed that a report on the tenant survey should be presented to the Communities Committee on 11 December 2012. This report would give some initial consideration to potential improvement actions arising from the survey results.
- 5.4 Officers are also keen to develop a 'user friendly' approach to feeding back to tenants the results of the survey and the actions that the Council will develop to address the findings. It is suggested that this could form part of the report to the Committee on 11 December 2012.

6. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Single Outcome Agreement/ Service Plan

The Corporate Improvement Plan identifies that improving service quality and customer engagement are key priorities for the Council. This is reflected in the Housing and Property Service Plan.

(b) Policy and Legal

The provision of the Council's housing services is influenced by the Scottish Social Housing Charter and the Scottish Housing Regulator's performance regime.

(c) Financial Implications

The agreed budget for the tenant survey amounted to £15,000. The final costs are likely to result in savings of around £5,000.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no risk implications associated with this report.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising from this report

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising from this report.

(g) Equalities

There are no equalities implications arising from this report. Any equalities implications arising from improvement actions to be developed as a result of the tenant survey will be considered when actions are proposed.

(h) Consultations

Consultation on this report has been carried out with senior managers in the Housing and Property Service and the Committee Clerk (Darren Westmacott) who agree this report.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This report sets out the progress achieved to date in implementing the Tenant Survey 2012. It sets out the likely timescales to conclude the survey and proposes actions to ensure that elected members, senior managers, staff and tenants are informed of the survey results.**

Author of Report:	Jill Stewart, Head of Housing and Property
Background Papers:	Held by author
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