

To: The Scrutiny Committee

Date: 7th February 2014

Report of: Head of Housing & Property Services

Title of Report: STAR Survey Benchmarking Information

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To report to members the outcomes of the STAR survey 2013 and details of how it will be used to improve the offer to tenants in Oxford

Scrutiny Lead Member: Councillor Mills

Executive Lead Member: Councillor Scott Seamons

Recommendation(s) or major points for consideration:

- 1. Scrutiny Panel note the report and consider the suggested actions under the '*Improving the offer to tenants section*' of the report**

Name and contact details of author:-

Name: Gary Parsons

Job title: Housing Strategy & Performance Manager

Service Area: Housing & Property Services

Tel: 01865252711

List of background papers:

1. Oxford City Council STAR Survey 2013 Final Report September 2013
2. STAR Survey Benchmarking Data Tables 2013

Version number: 0.1

BACKGROUND

1. At the scrutiny panel meeting on the 5th December 2013, a report was presented to explain how STAR surveys were conducted and the response rates by ward for the 2013 survey. Some key performance measures were provided but could only be benchmarked against the 2012 survey as the 2013 survey data had not been validated yet.
2. Following out of the meeting, the panel requested that a further report be brought back once the data had been validated, and where possible provide the following:
 - Total number of tenants in each area and what the response rate was for each area; and
 - Demographic breakdown and details of how the results will be used to improve the offer to tenants in Oxford
3. This report will explain the response rates and total number of households in each area, look at the benchmarking data with other organisations to assess which aspects the council are not performing as good at as other organisations are, and then will focus on these worst performing areas in more detail to assess how the offer to tenants can be improved.

TENANT RESPONSE RATES AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Response Rates

4. The total number of surveys sent out to tenants was 2420, broken down to 2140 for general needs tenants and 280 for sheltered housing tenants. The response rates are illustrated in the table below.

Oxford City Council STAR 2013			
Tenure	Surveys Sent	Returns	Response Rate
General Needs	2140	620	29%
Sheltered	280	125	45%
Total	2420	745	31%

5. In terms of how this is broken down to area, the table below illustrates the total number of tenancies in each area, along with the responses received.

Measures	Area																					
	Abingdon	Barton & Sandhills	Blackbird Leys	Carfax	Churchill	Cowley	Cowley Marsh	Headington	Headington Hill & Northway	Hinksey Park	Iffley Fields	Jericho & Osney	Kiddlington	Littlemore	Lye Valley	Marston	Northfield Brook	Quarry & Risinghurst	Rosehill & Iffley	St Clements	Summertown	Wolvercote
Total Number Tenancies	30	816	955	90	784	315	229	122	280	387	322	268	111	517	249	208	353	211	559	180	255	261
Total Number surveys received	9	65	81	15	75	20	17	12	28	34	35	17	8	66	17	26	37	32	6	14	29	24
Response Rate as a percentage of total tenancies	30	8	8	17	10	6	7	10	10	9	11	6	7	13	7	13	10	15	1	8	11	9

6. The above table does not include Holywell, North and St Mary's as the response rates were very low. However the total numbers of tenancies associated with these three areas are; 39, 8 and 42, so very low numbers.

Demographics

7. The demographics data within the STAR survey final report has not been broken down to area, however the various categories illustrated below demonstrates what responses were to each of the areas of questions asked by various categories. This table highlights those groups least satisfied where the percentage is Red, and Green highlights the most satisfied.

Category	Service Provided	Quality of Home	Estate as a place to live	Condition of home	Rent provides VFM	Service charge VFM	Repairs & Maintenance	Listen to views and act upon them
Gender								
Male	92%	87%	82%	83%	77%	72%	88%	65%
Female	86%	81%	85%	79%	75%	71%	89%	65%
Age								
16-34*	69%	65%	88%	57%	73%	66%	77%	45%
35-44*	84%	68%	79%	70%	67%	67%	86%	66%
45-54*	84%	74%	73%	73%	66%	59%	84%	62%
55-59*	84%	82%	75%	80%	70%	-	86%	49%
60-64*	93%	89%	89%	85%	82%	80%	85%	64%
65-74*	96%	92%	86%	89%	80%	77%	91%	70%
75-84*	91%	91%	89%	84%	85%	76%	89%	70%
85+*	94%	96%	95%	100%	88%	83%	96%	70%
Ethnicity								
White	90%	86%	83%	83%	77%	72%	88%	64%
BME	82%	68%	77%	68%	69%	68%	825	66%

* Low base under 100 – base lower than 30 excluded

8. The above table highlights that the group that was largely dissatisfied with most of the areas were the 16-34 year olds, whereas the group most satisfied with the majority of areas were the 85+ age group.

BENCHMARKING DATA WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

9. Benchmarking against other organisations is always difficult as not every organisation collects the same level and type of data. However of those organisations that use the STAR Survey to measure their success during 2013 there are nine questions where comparisons can be drawn and areas for improvement be identified. The table below illustrates the nine areas covered. The detailed STAR survey final report that the Council received does cover other areas that the benchmarking club do not cover and these areas can be looked at in more detail.

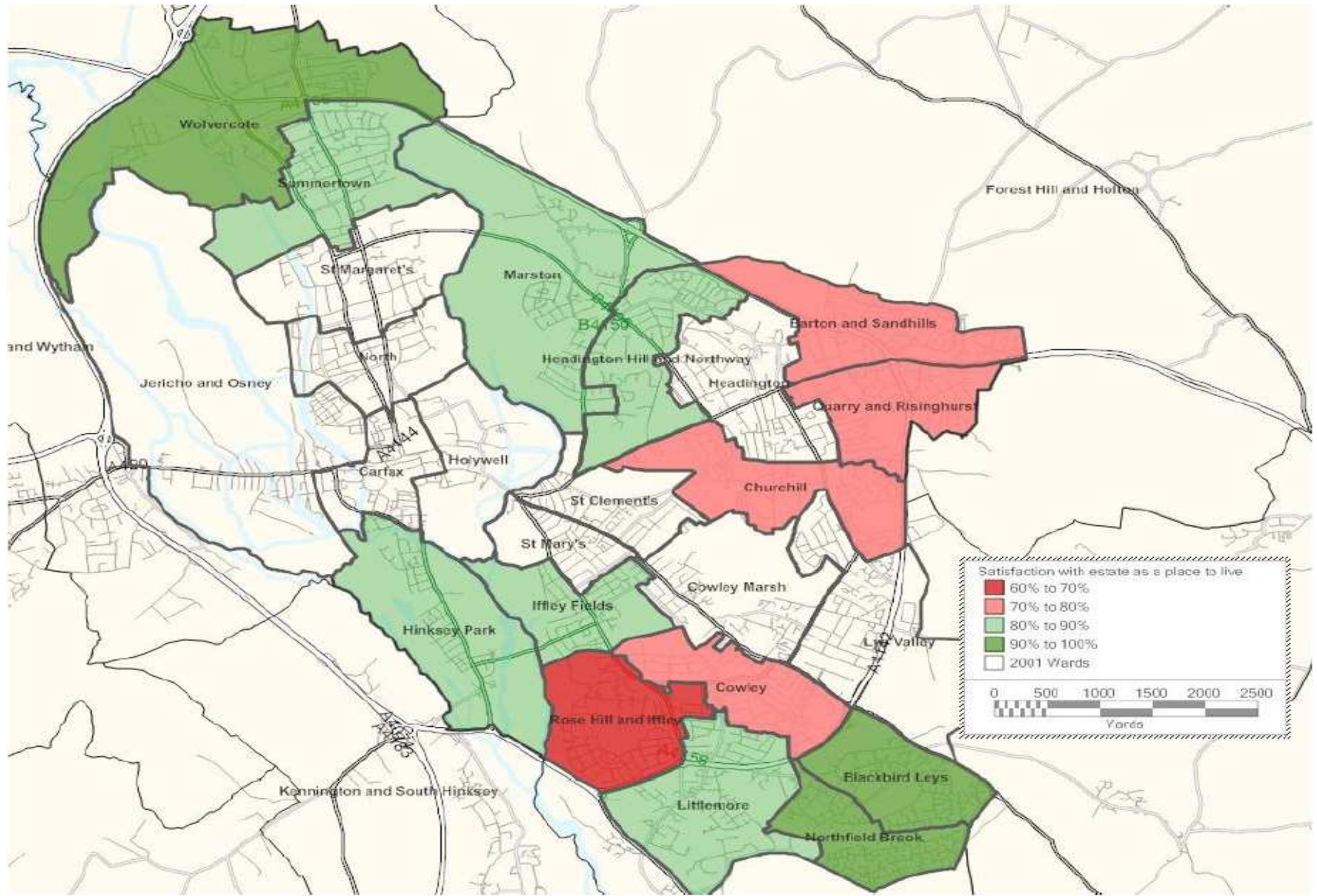
Measure	Benchmarking				Oxford City Council		Highest Performer	
	Top Quartile	Club Median	Bottom Quartile	No. in sample	Rank	Score	Score	Name
Satisfaction with service provided by social housing provider	88.55	84.75	82.85	20	6	88.40	93.00	Suffolk Housing Society
Satisfaction with overall quality of their home	87.65	83.40	80.17	19	10	83.40	90.00	Cestria Community Housing
Satisfaction with their neighbourhood as a place to live	87.55	85.70	82.80	19	15	82.60	92.30	Victory Housing Trust
Satisfaction that their rent provides value for money	85.20	79.70	75.30	19	14	75.60	90.40	West Devon Homes
Satisfaction that their service charges provide value for money	74.15	70.10	67.35	16	6	71.70	84.00	Wulvern Housing
Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance	85.03	79.85	74.80	20	2	87.40	92.00	Suffolk Housing Society
Dissatisfaction with repairs and maintenance	9.50	11.95	15.53	20	2	6.20	4.00	Suffolk Housing Society
Satisfaction with landlord over how they listen to their views and act upon them	75.25	66.50	63.15	19	14	64.30	85.10	Manningham Housing Association
Satisfaction with landlord at keeping them informed about things that might affect them as a resident	85.70	85.50	79.83	6	5	78.00	86.00	Wulvern Housing

IMPROVING THE OFFER TO TENANTS

10. Using the benchmarking data in the table above, it is clear to see that there are four areas where the Council could look to improving their performance and consequently offer to the tenants. This is because the performance is in the bottom quartile or is just above bottom quartile but not high enough to be classed as club median. These areas are:
 - Satisfaction with neighbourhoods as a place to live
 - Satisfaction that rent provides value for money
 - Satisfaction with your landlord over how they listen to their views and act upon them; and
 - Satisfaction with your landlord at keeping them informed about things that might affect them as a resident
11. In terms of trying to learn and improve on the results in these four areas, there is the overall level of performance to look at and improve, and looking towards the highest performing organisations in these categories and arranging a site visit could help. There is also the element of detail and trying to understand in each area, how did responses vary geographically, and if certain areas were very dissatisfied then look in more detail to see why so improvement next year can be made. In trying to understand the above areas in more detail, the Oxford City Council STAR Survey Final report can show how the overall performance breaks down to each geographical area.

Satisfaction with neighbourhoods as a place to live

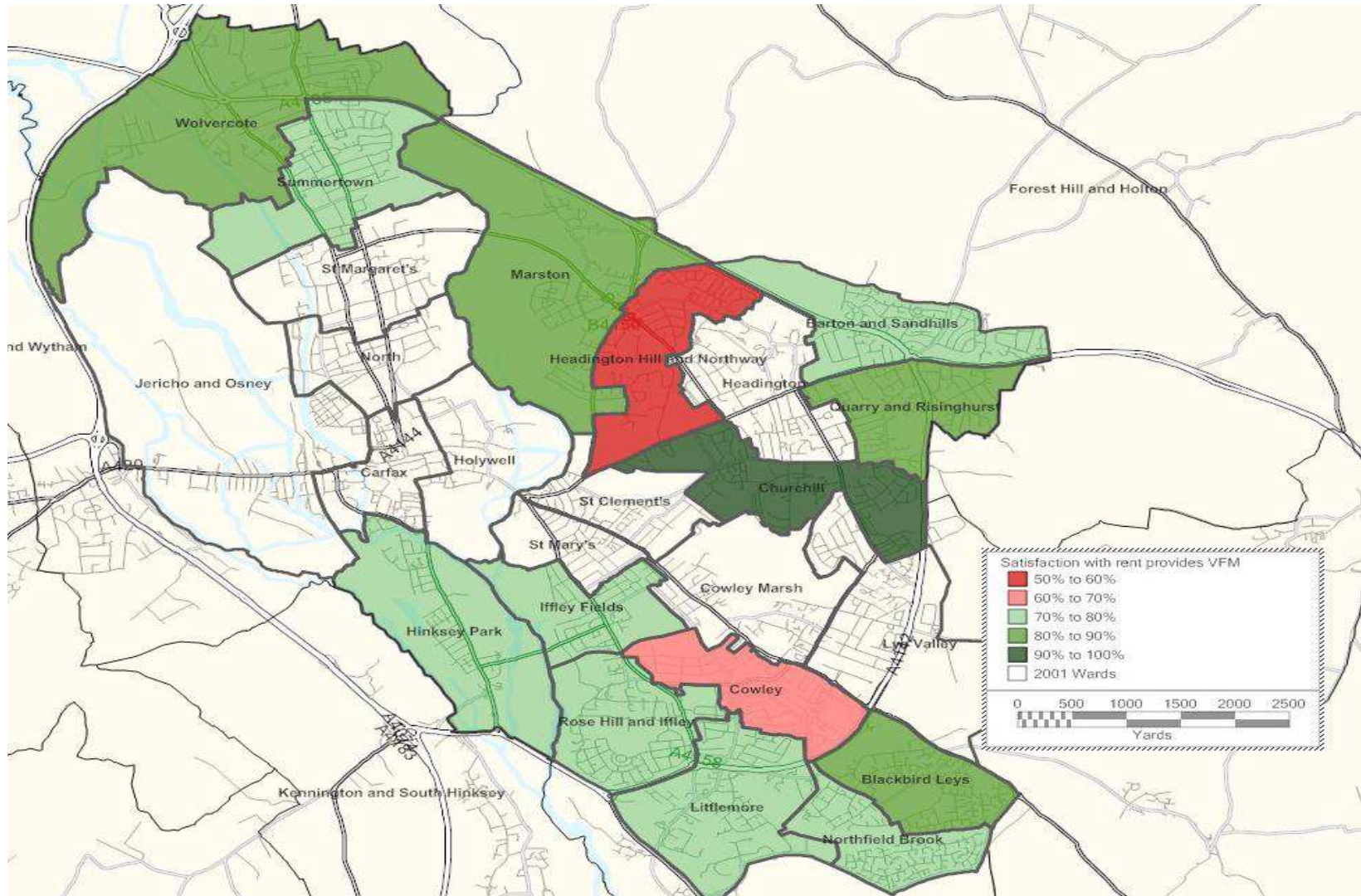
12. When you look into the detail for this area, it is clear from the map below that the areas of Rosehill & Iffley residents are least satisfied with their area, followed by Cowley, Churchill, Quarry and Risinghurst and Barton and Sandhills. The areas most satisfied with their area as a place to live are, Blackbird Leys, Wolvercote and Northfield Brook.
13. To try and improve this overall satisfaction rating beyond the current 82.60% and move towards the top quartile and the better performing organisations, it is suggested that further consultation with the areas least satisfied maybe worth exploring. This could be conducted through an estate walkabout, and supported by the Tenancy Involvement team. Furthermore it is something that scrutiny as an action may want to consider including in the Housing & Property Service Plan for 2014/15 and to perhaps suggest revising the Local Offers that the Local Offer Working Group (LOWG) set last year, as the environment is not a particular area covered by the current local offers. This would demonstrate that the STAR survey has been used to improve the offer to tenants.
14. A final consideration of scrutiny maybe to suggest a field trip to Victory Housing Trust who scored the highest on the Benchmarking exercise in this area, so best practice can be shared.



Satisfaction that rent provides value for money

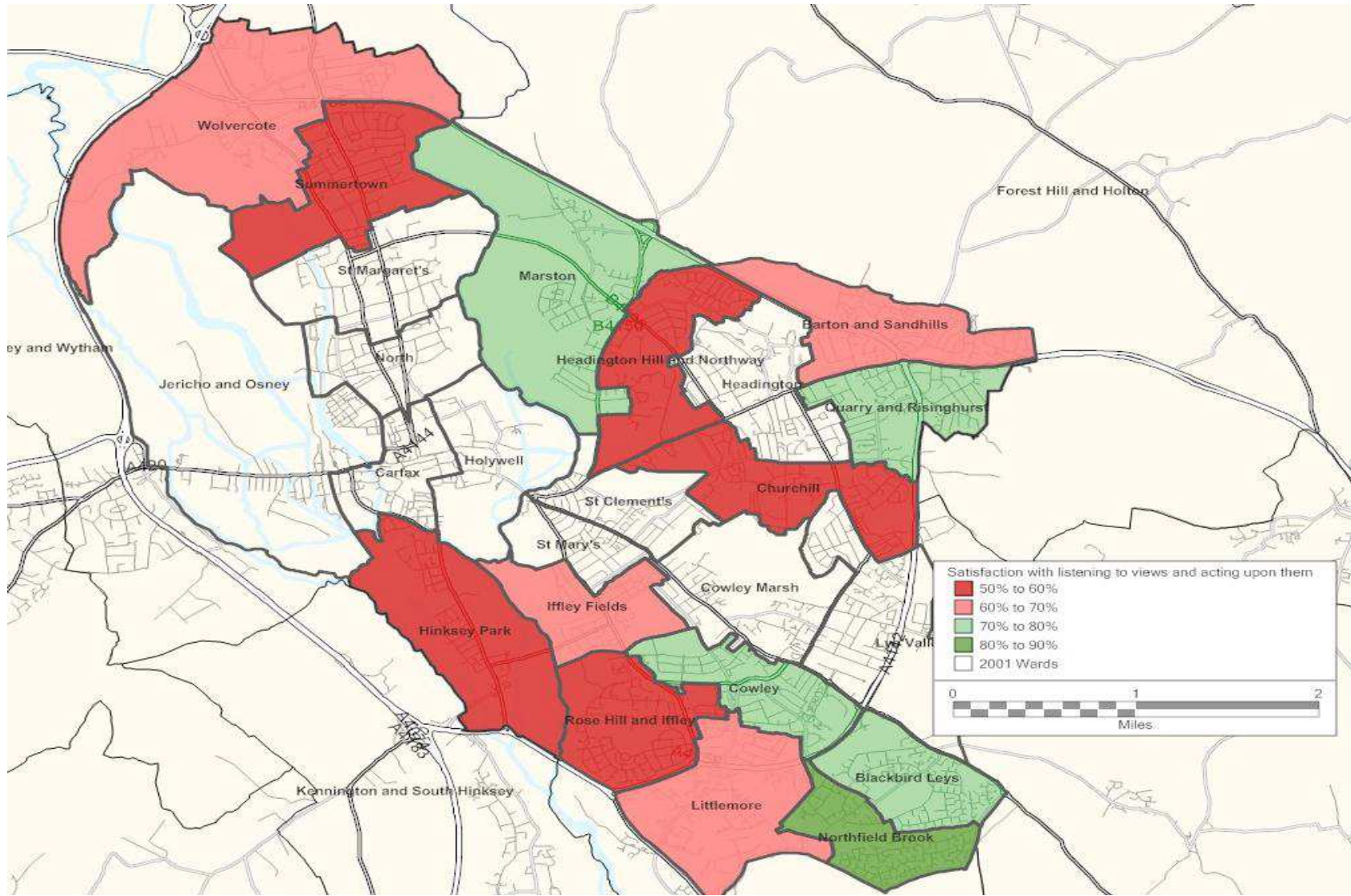
15. The age group least satisfied that their rent provides value for money was the 45-54 year olds at 66%. The map below illustrates that those areas least satisfied with their rents being value for money are Headington Hill and Northway, followed by Cowley. The most satisfied area was Churchill.

16. The current rent increase exercise being consulted upon by Housing & Property services may help understand some of the key drivers for why certain groups and areas feel that their rent does not provide good value for money. Scrutiny panel may wish to consider a walkabout in the Headington Hill and Northway ward and Cowley ward to see if the Council can further understand the drivers for the low satisfaction levels and what can be done to improve this. The organisation that scored the highest in this area was West Devon Homes with 90.40% satisfaction. Scrutiny Panel may wish to consider a best practice site visit pending the outcome of the rent increase consultation exercise to see whether Oxford City Council could learn anything new.



Satisfaction with your landlord over how they listen to their views and act upon them

17. The overall satisfaction of tenants on this area was 64%, which is marginally higher than 2012 at 61%. In terms of age groups, again the 16-34 year olds were the least satisfied at 45% compared to the elderly groups of 65+ at 70%. Clearly there is a perception from younger tenants that there is a communication breakdown and this will need to improve. Compared to other organisations Oxford came 14th out of 19 organisations with a score of 64.30%, with the best performing organisations (Manningham Housing Association) scoring 85.10%. Scrutiny may want to consider a best practice visit to this organisation, and may want to look further into the detail of key drivers on this area.
18. Looking at the key drivers, tenants satisfaction levels would increase if they thought their complaints were being dealt with better and they had the opportunity to make their views known. This could suggest issues with how the Council manages complaints and how we allow customers to report issues to us, such as internet, phone, in writing etc.
19. In terms of geographical areas, there are 6 wards that have low satisfaction levels, which are; Headington Hill and Northway, Churchill, Hinksey Park, Rosehill & Iffley and Summertown. Northfield Brook as an area is the most satisfied that their views are acted upon.



Satisfaction with your landlord at keeping them informed about things that might affect them as a resident

20. This particular area of focus is not covered in the final report of the STAR Survey, however the benchmarking results despite only having a small sample in the group highlighted that performance can improve quite considerably. The score of Oxford City Council was 78%, compared to the highest scoring organisation at 86% (Wulvern Housing). Without the breakdown of the detail behind this benchmarked area, it is hard to understand what the key drivers might be, but communication is clearly a problem, and this is something that perhaps needs to be discussed with the Local Offer Working Group or indeed tenants through the tenant involvement team. Scrutiny panel could consider a best practice visit to Wulvern Housing to understand how they communicate with tenants, so Oxford City Council can improve the offer to its tenants in this area.