

To: Housing and Homelessness Panel
Date: 02 February 2022
Report of: Head of Housing Services
Title of Report: STAR Survey 2021 Action Plan

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of Report:	To introduce the Action Plan developed following the Tenant and Leaseholder Satisfaction Survey 2021 and to provide an overview of progress so far and milestones for achievement
Corporate Priority:	Deliver more affordable housing, Support thriving communities
Policy Framework:	Corporate Plan
Recommendation: That the Panel resolves to:	
1. Note the contents of the report and action plan	
2. Note progress made against the action plan	

Appendices	
Appendix A:	STAR survey action plan 2022

Background

1. At its meeting of 16th December 2021, the Panel received the results of the Tenant and Leaseholder Satisfaction Survey 2021. Officers advised that they were putting together an action plan to capture the range of service improvements that were planned or already underway across the Council to provide an enhanced customer service to Council tenants.
2. This report introduces the Action Plan and progress to date.

Key Action Area

3. The report provides information on the range of actions and milestones grouped by five themes, each of which has a focus on improving the customer experience:
 - Repairs Service
 - Quality of the home and the neighbourhood, planned maintenance
 - Communications and engagement
 - Anti-Social Behaviour
 - Housing Services

Change Programme and other Service Improvements

4. As well as the action plan which is relating directly to improvements following the STAR survey, there is a broader change programme underway within the Council and the report of 16th December provided information on the Service Integration Project, the Customer Experience Change Programme and the Service Delivery Review of how landlord related services are delivered.
5. There are other service improvements in development across the Council which will further improve efficiency and the customer experience. One of the most exciting is the development of the mobile working solution for staff. Using the 1st Touch solution will enable front line staff to call up information on customers in their homes and provide a two-way connection to the main housing and asset management system, QL.
6. An example of this would be a Tenancy Management Officer (or other member of staff) visiting a tenant and being able to check on progress on a repair, make an arrangement to repay rent arrears, take a payment or review a complaint, as well as capturing important information from the customer such as up to date details, preferred methods of contact, any protected characteristics and adjustments needed and GDPR consents including for digital communication.
7. This mobile solution is being trialled within Tenancy Management and will be rolled out across all of the other teams that provide mobile working for tenants and potentially other Council services.
8. As well as seeking additional resources to help to deliver the ambitious plans on engagement and safety, we have also decided to second the Tenant Involvement Manager to concentrate on delivering the requirements of the Social Housing White Paper and will be backfilling his substantive role.

Conclusion

9. The action plan sets out the ambitious initiatives of the Council to improve services to tenants, with clear milestones and targets for delivery. A number of the actions are already complete.

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Appendix A – About STAR

The STAR acronym stands for Survey of Tenants and Residents, and it is a framework designed for social landlords to collect tenant and resident satisfaction feedback in a consistent, measurable way. Introduced in 2011, STAR surveys were developed by Housemark, the housing benchmarking organisation, in conjunction with a number of industry bodies and tenant groups.

Although generally carried out every three years by landlords, Oxford City Council carried out STAR surveys each year from 2012 to 2015, at which point, with dwindling response levels reducing to 17% it was decided to extend the period between surveys.

It was planned to restart the survey in 2018. However, Housemark announced that it was overhauling the STAR survey methodology and question base to include transactional as well as perception based questions and to include a greater focus on safety, the home and the estate. This is in line with the themes introduced in the social housing Green Paper – A New Deal for Social Housing.

As a result, the council decided to wait until the revised measures were published rather than spending money on a survey which would have limited use in terms of comparability. Housemark's revised measures were finally published in February 2020. It was then not considered appropriate to carry out the survey in 2020 given the overriding need to respond to the COVID-19 emergency.

The decision to proceed with the survey in 2021 was made in recognition that the social housing White Paper, published in November 2020, set out a series of landlord performance and satisfaction indicators that were to be consulted on and that landlords would be expected to measure and publish.

Benchmarking

STAR survey results would ordinarily be initially compared with the sector as a whole and then peer groups of stock holding local authorities with similar numbers of properties and challenges. As few, if any, landlords would have carried out a STAR survey in 2020, the only data comparisons that could be made would be against surveys carried out before the COVID-19 pandemic. This would not provide a meaningful comparison. Many councils have also moved away from annual surveys, but this is likely to change as the new regulatory inspection regime comes in.

Appendix B – Full survey results

The percentages shown below relate to “satisfied” and “very satisfied” responses and do not include “neither”, “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied”.

Question theme	2021	2015*
Overall satisfaction with the council as a landlord	76%	83%
Overall quality of the home	67%	79%
Condition of home	66%	
Safe and secure home	80%	
Communal areas safe and clean	75%	
Value for money (rent)	81%	75%
Value for money (service charges)	68%	
Neighbourhood as a place to live	75%	
Overall appearance of the neighbourhood	73%	
Overall repairs and maintenance service	76%	77%
Repairs right first time	76%	
Last repair carried out	79%	
OCC is easy to deal with	77%	
Customer service they receive	85%	
Being kept informed about things that might affect them	76%	74%
Having a say in how services are managed	63%	
Tenants views being listened to and acted upon	55%	60%
Support received when dealing with ASB case	53%	
Speed of the ASB case	53%	
Final outcome of the ASB case	49%	60%
The way a complaint was handled	49%	
The final outcome of a complaint	33%	

* 2015 figures shown where available

Perception of neighbourhood over the last three years		
Got better	Stayed the same	Got worse
17%	60%	23%

Perceptions

	Agree	Neither	Disagree
OCC takes health and safety concerns seriously	69%	19%	12%
OCC treats tenants fairly	73%	17%	10%
OCC is open and transparent	63%	24%	13%
OCC cares about their customers	66%	20%	14%
OCC has friendly and approachable staff	81%	13%	6%
OCC keeps its promises	56%	25%	19%
I feel valued by OCC	58%	23%	20%
OCC treats me with respect	73%	17%	10%
I trust OCC	66%	19%	15%

Demographics

	Age		
	Under 25	25 - 59	60+
Overall satisfaction	58%	70%	85%
Quality of home	42%	57%	81%
Repairs and maintenance	63%	71%	84%

Leaseholder results

Leaseholders were not surveyed in previous STAR surveys.

The percentages shown below relate to “satisfied” and “very satisfied” responses and do not include “neither”, “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied”.

Question theme	2021
Overall satisfaction with the council as a landlord	33%
Overall quality of the home	60%
Condition of home	52%
Safe and secure home	58%
Communal areas safe and clean	42%
Value for money (rent)	64%
Value for money (service charges)	22%
Neighbourhood as a place to live	58%
Overall appearance of the neighbourhood	39%
Overall repairs and maintenance service	34%
Repairs right first time	31%
Last repair carried out	37%
OCC is easy to deal with	35%
Customer service they receive	43%
Being kept informed about things that might affect them	53%
Having a say in how services are managed	33%
Tenants views being listened to and acted upon	24%
Support received when dealing with ASB case	24%
Speed of the ASB case	18%
Final outcome of the ASB case	23%
The way a complaint was handled	23%
The final outcome of a complaint	23%

Perception of neighbourhood over the last three years		
Got better	Stayed the same	Got worse
14%	56%	30%

Perceptions

	Agree	Neither	Disagree
OCC takes health and safety concerns seriously	35%	38%	27%
OCC treats tenants fairly	32%	32%	37%

	Agree	Neither	Disagree
OCC is open and transparent	42%	26%	42%
OCC cares about their customers	32%	24%	45%
OCC has friendly and approachable staff	53%	25%	22%
OCC keeps its promises	47%	27%	47%
I feel valued by OCC	22%	26%	51%
OCC treats me with respect	43%	27%	31%
I trust OCC	45%	18%	45%

Appendix C – Resident suggestions for improvement

Positive comments	22% of total
Generally happy, no problems	278
Repairs service/workforce	26
Attitude of staff	25
Good communications and contactable	11
Good overall service	9
Happy living here	6
Settled, lived here a long time	5
Like my home (type, size, condition)	4
Neighbourhood/good location	4
Communal cleaning & maintenance	3
Feel safe and secure	1
Good value for money	1

Day-to-day repairs	20% of total
Repairs service generally	79
Timescales to complete repairs	55
Appointments	54
Quality of work	37
Outstanding / forgotten repairs	28
Communication about repair (before work started)	14
Quality checking	13
Treatment of resident / home	13
Ease of reporting repair	7
Keep informed of repair progress	6
Right first time	6
Repairs covered in service level	6
Contractor	5
Internal communications (repairs)	3
Job details given to contractor	3
Replace not repair	1
Out of hours service	1

Customer contact	11% of total
Customer care, customer service	70
Return call / email	26
Keep promises	14
Staff knowledge / turnover	13
Time taken to resolve enquiry	11
Resolving problems	11
Answering phones	11
Call handling	10
Contact information	7
Keep informed of progress	6
Complaints handling	6
Automated system	5
Internal communications	2
Opening hours	1

Communications and information	10% of total
Communications (in general)	59
Listen carefully, take interest	39
Keep tenants up to date	15
More visits	13
Website and online services	11
Act on views and give feedback	10
Transparent in decision-making	7
Consult or inform before acting	4
Information on service standards	3
More events, meetings	3

Grounds maintenance	5% of total
Grounds maintenance generally	25
Grass cutting	14
Fences and gates	11
Bushes & hedges - maintenance / weeding	8
Tree maintenance	7
Rubbish	5
Paths and driveways	4
Drainage/flooding issues	2
Flower beds - maintenance / weeding	2
Overgrown/neglected gardens	1
Landscaping	1
Removal of garden waste	1

Neighbourhood problems	4% of total
Car parking, signage and garage areas	23
Anti-social behaviour (dealing with)	16
Drug related issues	9
Neighbours - noise, alcohol	8
Neighbours gardens	4
Litter, graffiti and vandalism	3
Pest/vermin issues	3
Noise from children, ball games	2
Dogs - noise or fouling	1

Property condition	4% of total
Damp / mould / condensation	16
Regular inspections	13
External property maintenance	13
Condition of the property	12
Condition of property at letting	5
Flooring	3
Insulation	2
Sound proofing	1
Pest/vermin control	1

Tenant services and management	3% of total
Help for older residents/health issues	21
Value for money (rent/service charge)	9
Move, transfer	8
Decorating /handyman service	5
Financial difficulties	5
Enforcement of tenancy agreement	4
Warden service	2
Purchase property	1
Overcrowding	1
Rent issues, arrears, HB	1

Home improvements	3% of total
General home improvements	14
Property adaptations	14
New kitchen, bathroom	9
New doors or windows	7
Heating system	3

Safety and security	2% of total
Health & safety (general)	10
Security measures (general)	5
CCTV/cameras needed	4
Fire alarm information or testing	2
Lighting (car park, communal)	2
People on site not residents	1
Do not feel safe	1
Door or window security	1
Door security in communal areas	1
Property theft (parcels)	1
Asbestos	1

Communal areas	1% of total
Rubbish	7
Frequency of cleaning service	6
Rubbish storage areas	3
Maintenance of communal areas	2
Storage areas - mobility scooter, bikes	2
Lifts	1
Caretaker customer service	1

Council, other agencies	1% of total
Council refuse collection	8
Fly-tipping	4
Road repairs	3
Traffic - speed or noise	3
Lighting, street lighting	2

Organisational policies	1% of total
Energy efficient, environmentally friendly	8
Too financially focused	2
Mix of tenants or tenures	2
Service generally / declined	1
Bedroom tax	1
Build more homes	1
Senior Management	1

Moving	1% of total
Need larger property	6
Health issues require a move	4
Need a smaller property	1
Do not like the neighbourhood, move to better area	1
Move away from neighbours, noisy	1

Local area services	0% of total
Local transport	3
Youth facilities/centres	2
Play areas for children	1
Local facilities (shops etc.)	1

Other	12% of total
No comment/suggestions	142
Other	26
Don't know	14
General negative comment	8
Neutral comment	4
Already commented in earlier question	1

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