

# CABINET

URN: 23-063

Report Title: STAR Survey Action Plan

Report to: ELT / Cabinet

Date of meeting 13 September 2023 / 9 October 2023

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Graham Plant

Responsible Director/Officer: Nicola Turner, Head of Housing Assets

Is this a Key decision? No

Date added to Forward Plan of Key Decisions if a Key Decision: N/A



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY / INTRODUCTION FROM CABINET MEMBER

This report details the outcome of the Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR Survey) undertaken by the Council in December 2022 and January 2023. Reflecting the introduction of new Tenant Satisfaction Measures by the Regulator of Social Housing which the Council must collect this year, the survey provides a useful benchmark of tenant and leaseholders perception of the Housing Assets Service. An action plan has been developed to address those areas where improvement is required.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet:

- 1) Note the report and action plan.

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council last carried out a perception Survey of Tenants and Residents also known as a STAR survey in 2019. The survey was used to support service improvements. A new survey was commissioned in 2022 and survey work was undertaken in December 2022 and January 2023, the formal report was received in March 2023. As the Regulator of Social Housing has introduced Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) for 2023/24 which include 12 qualitative questions, the STAR survey was used as an opportunity to benchmark the Council's performance as a landlord in relation to the TSMs. Whilst this is the first year that landlords are required to collect TSM information, it will not be required to report the TSM until the summer of 2024

reflecting performance in 2023/24. Tenants will be able to review the TSM scores for their landlord as well as other Registered Provider landlords as the Regulator of Social Housing will publish all TSM information. The regulator will use the TSMs to understand landlord's performance as part of the new pro-active regulatory regime starting in April 2024 which will see landlords being inspected by the regulator.

- 1.2 The survey was a paper survey which was sent to all Council tenants and leaseholders, with separate reports received for tenants and leaseholders.

## 2. STAR Survey Results - Tenants

- 1.3 The tenant survey had 30 questions including the 12 TSM questions. Overall, 1,681 tenants responded to the survey with a 24% response rate from general need tenants and 52% response rate from sheltered housing tenants. The survey is able to be broken down by property type, ward and tenant age and disability status which allows us to identify the different levels of satisfaction across the tenant population. An open question in the survey asked what the Council could do better, this question provided a wide range of answers and feedback in relation to the Council's landlord service.

- 2.1 The table below provides a summary of the results of the survey for tenants against each of the twelve TSM qualitative questions.

TSM Question	Tenant Satisfaction Scores
TP01: Overall satisfaction	80%
TP02: Satisfaction with repairs	79%
TP03: Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair	77%
TP04: Satisfaction that the home is well maintained	77%
TP05: Satisfaction that the home is safe	80%
TP06: Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them	59%
TP07: Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them	66%
TP08: Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect	77%
TP09: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of complaints	42%
TP10: Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean, safe and well maintained	78%
TP11: Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods	68%
TP12: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of anti-social behaviour	67%

- 2.2 Due to the use of the TSM questions in the recent survey, it is not possible to provide a direct comparison against all scores between the 2019 and most recent STAR surveys, however, the table below captures the key result areas from the 2019 survey and compares them to the current TSM questions and scores. It is noted that there is a reduction in satisfaction across all areas when taken as a whole other than in relation to repairs and maintenance.

2019 Measure	2019 Score	Current Score	2023 Measure
Overall Satisfaction	83%	80%	Overall Satisfaction
Quality of the home	84%	77%	Home is well maintained
Neighbourhood as a place to live	85%	68%	Landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods
		78%	Communal areas are clean, safe and well maintained
Repairs and Maintenance	77%	79%	Satisfaction with repairs
		80%	Satisfaction that the home is safe
Listens to views and acts upon them	65%	59%	Landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them


- 2.3 Appendix A provides a comparison of the Council's scores against other landlords in terms of the median and upper quartile scores utilising House Mark benchmarking data. This shows that in some areas, despite the reduction in scores from 2019 to 2023, the Council is still achieving scores which are above median and in relation to satisfaction that communal areas are clean and well maintained the score is in the upper quartile. The score on satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things which matter to them was in the lower quartile.
- 2.4 An analysis has been undertaken of the comments made by respondents to the survey which identified that the Council's landlord service is not meeting tenant expectations in relation to the following areas:
- Communication and informing tenants about what we are doing (in general and applied to any process)
  - How we maintain communal areas on a regular basis including cyclical maintenance (poor upkeep)
  - How we show that we are keeping tenants safe in their homes and managing safety in communal areas
  - Being better at treating tenants fairly and with respect

- How we engage and work alongside tenants to improve services and have more say in tailoring services to what tenants aspire to
- The process around addressing dissatisfaction and managing complaints
- The perception/fear of anti-social behaviour and how we manage it
- The experience when tenants report damp and mould
- The day-to-day repairs process and overall tenant experience
- The process and communication from inspection to delivery of repairs
- How we communicate better between service areas
- The service standards for the service need to be clear
- The quality of fixtures and fittings used.

### 3 STAR Survey Leaseholders

- 3.1 The leasehold survey had 22 questions including an open question which asked what the Council could do better, this question provided a wide range of answers and feedback in relation to the Council's landlord service. It is noted that the TSM do not apply to leaseholders, however the STAR survey included the relevant TSM qualitative questions to allow comparison of leaseholder and tenant perceptions of the service.
- 3.2 84 leaseholder survey forms were completed representing a 24% response rate. The table below summaries the results from leaseholders and it is noted that overall, their level of satisfaction is lower than for tenants. The arrows next to the score show the direction of travel from the 2019 survey where comparison is possible.

TSM Question	Tenant Satisfaction Scores
TP01: Overall satisfaction	55% ↑
TP02: Satisfaction with repairs	Not Applicable
TP03: Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair	Not Applicable
TP04: Satisfaction that the home is well maintained	Not Applicable
TP05: Satisfaction that the home is safe	59%
TP06: Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them	33% ↑
TP07: Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them	49%
TP08: Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect	53% ↓

TP09: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of complaints	32% 
TP10: Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean, safe and well maintained	57%
TP11: Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods	50%
TP12: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of anti-social behaviour	37%

3.2 An analysis of the comments made by respondents to the survey identified the following key themes:

- Need to provide more information on how service charges are calculated – increasing transparency of charging
- External area cleaning and maintenance
- Communication in response to repairs and other queries.
- Listening to views and acting on them.

#### 4.0 STAR Survey Action Plan

4.1 An action plan has been developed to reflect the themes identified from the STAR Survey report and using an analysis of the comments made by respondents to improve the Council's performance in those areas where the scores show tenant and leaseholder scores for satisfaction with the service are weakest. The aim of the action plan is for the TSM scores for 2023/4 to show improvement with all scores below the median to achieve the median and for all scores below the upper quartile to increase to the upper quartile. Over the next few years the focus will be for all 12 TSM scores to be in the upper quartile.

4.2 The action plan is a joint action plan with Great Yarmouth Norse (GYN) reflecting the fact that for many tenants, GYN will be their primary interaction with the Council's landlord services. The action plan will be monitored six monthly with progress reported to ELT. A copy of the Action Plan is attached at Appendix B.

#### 5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report. Any financial implications related to individual actions will be managed through existing budget monitoring and approval processes. The main cost is officer time.

#### 6.0 Risk Implications

6.1 There are no risk implications associated with this report. The results of the STAR survey, however, show a number of areas where the Council must make

improvements to the way it delivers the landlord services to increase satisfaction with the service and in particular how the Council listens to and acts on the views of tenants and in relation to complaint handling. The action plan sets out to strengthen the service in these areas. There are risks associated with not implementing the actions within the STAR action plan in relation to the TSM showing declining levels of tenant and leaseholder satisfaction with the Council's service which could trigger an earlier inspection of the Council's landlord service by the Regulator of Social Housing.

## 7.0 Legal Implications

7.1 There are no legal implications associated with the report.

### **Background papers**

*STAR 2019: General Needs and Sheltered Tenants*

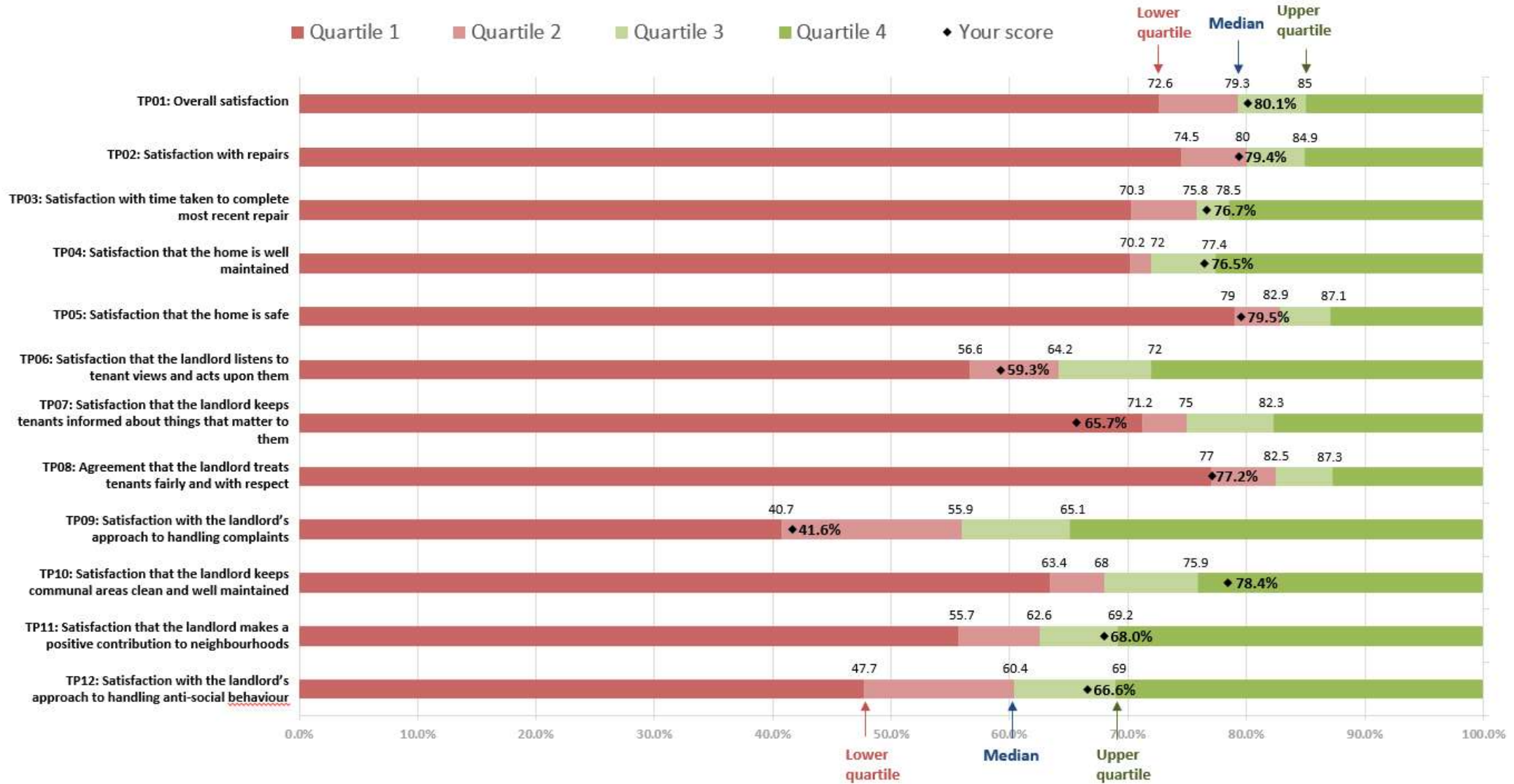
*Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2023: General Needs and Sheltered Tenants*

*Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2023: Leaseholders*

*Areas of consideration: e.g. does this report raise any of the following issues and if so how have these been considered/mitigated against?*

Consultations	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	Pre-circulated for comment
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Pre-circulated for comment
Existing Council Policies:	N/A
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	None associated with the report. However, in delivering landlord services the Council reflects the needs of individuals with protected characteristics.

Figure 1: Satisfaction with TSMs (Your score) compared to January 2023 HouseMark data (Quartiles 1-4)



## STAR ACTION PLAN 2023

STAR/TSM Measure	Area for improvement	Action	Required Outcome	Lead Officer	Timescale for Completion
TP01: Overall Satisfaction	Tenants and leaseholders do not always know that their emails and written communications have been received.	Introduce a standard automated response for all emails sent to shared emails to confirm receipt and timescale for a response (reflecting Council Customer Charter). Ensure all letters have a holding response to confirm receipt and timescale for full response if an immediate response cannot be provided.	Tenants and leaseholders have confidence that correspondence has been received and is being actioned.	Head of Housing Assets	01-Nov-23
	There are differing levels of satisfaction with services and it is not fully understood how these differences relate to demographics, tenure and property location.	Review the STAR survey to understand the differences in satisfaction levels and refine the action plan once complete to ensure that actions can be undertaken to address lower areas of satisfaction.	There are less variances in satisfaction across tenants and leaseholders reflecting a clearer understanding of the needs of tenants and leaseholders and all groups are aware of the Council's service standards.	Head of Housing Assets	04-Dec-23
	Tenants and leaseholders do not always consider that they are kept informed of progress in resolving queries or enquiries.	Introduce a regular feedback approach when resolution of queries/answering of queries cannot be achieved within 5 working days, with a Single Point of Contact being responsible for keeping the tenant up to date on actions and timescales.	Tenants and leaseholders have confidence that issues, queries and enquiries are being actioned and are aware of timescales for resolution.	Head of Housing Assets	04-Dec-23
TP02: Satisfaction with repairs	Tenants are not always satisfied with the quality of repairs	Develop and adopt a new Housing Repairs Policy, so tenants are clear on what repairs the Council will undertake and the timescale for repairs.	Clearer understanding by tenants of what repairs the Council will and will not do. More consistency in approach to repairs delivery.	M Burns	Cabinet consideration of policy on 9 October 2023
		Introduce a new post inspection regime to inspect a sample of repair works when complete to ensure quality and value for money of the repairs service.	The Council is randomly checking the quality of and resolution of repair issues in the tenant's homes and across estates.	Housing Asset Manager	08-Jan-24
		Carry out a regular review of properties where more than 10 repairs per annum are requested to identify and remedy root cause of high repair demand.	To ensure that repairs can be completed first time to the required standard, to reduce the impact on tenants and ensure better value for money of the repairs service.	Housing Asset Manager and GYN Operations Director	01-Nov-23
TP03: Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair	In some cases, repairs take too long to complete, or when follow up works are required, tenants are not aware repairs will be completed.	Introduction of "first available appointment" for routine repairs, ensuring that tenants are offered more choice on appointment times.	Where further works are required, a new appointment is made for completion of the works.	GYN Operations Director	01-Nov-23
		Ensure that where an inspection of the home is required, tenants are advised of the timescale for inspection. All works required are discussed with tenant and timescales for works communicated.	Tenants are clear on what works will be carried out to their home and the timescale for completion.	Housing Asset Manager and GYN Operations Director	04-Dec-23
TP04: Satisfaction that the home is well maintained	Cyclical maintenance has not been undertaken for a number of years and many homes appear in poor condition due to peeling/poor paintwork.	Develop and publish a three year cyclical decorations programme. Target 2023/4 cyclical decoration works on the worst properties.	The visual appearance and quality of the Council's estates improves, ensuring tenants can see that properties are well maintained.	Housing Asset Manager	01-Apr-24
	Tenants and leaseholders do not know what capital works are planned for their homes until notified of imminent works.	Develop a three year capital programme, publish details of the programme and the areas of homes to be included in the programme.	Tenants and leaseholders are aware what works the Council is undertaking to the housing stock and when they will happen. There is clear understanding of the level of investment in Council homes.	Housing Asset Manager	01-Apr-24
		Ensure tenants and leaseholders are notified at the start of each year if their home is to receive capital improvement works.	Tenants and leaseholders have early notification of capital works to be undertaken in their home.	Housing Asset Manager	01-Apr-24
	Tenants and leaseholders are not always satisfied that works required to their homes/their estates are completed.	Carry out a review of all outstanding repairs as part of the monthly GYN/GYBC Operational Meetings to identify timescales for completion of works/works where no further action is required and trends.	The number of repairs (including compliance works) not completed within target time is reduced, trends in why some repairs are not completed are identified and appropriate action is taken. Overall, more repairs are completed on time.	Housing Asset Manager, GYN Operations Director and Corporate Health and Safety Manager	01-Nov-23
TP05: Satisfaction that the home is safe	Not all tenants are satisfied that the Council's homes are safe.	Update tenants on the progress which has been made in ensuring Council homes are safe following the Regulatory Notice issued in October 2022.	Tenants have confidence that prior issues with compliance checks on Council homes are being remedied and homes are safe.	Corporate Health and Safety Manager	30-Nov-23
		Ensure there is a full suite of policies which set out the Council's approach to compliance and protecting the health and safety of tenants.	There are clear policies underpinned by processes which ensure that Council homes are safe. Staff are aware of requirements to address issues which impact safety in flatted homes.	Corporate Health and Safety Manager	01-Apr-24
		Update tenants on the outcome of the stock condition survey and what it shows re the standard and safety of homes, along with details of how the survey is informing the capital programme.	Tenants are aware of the stock condition survey has been used to focus the future capital programme and ensure homes are safe and well maintained.	Housing Asset Manager	01-Apr-24



TP06: Satisfaction that the landlord listens to views and acts upon them	Not all tenants are satisfied that as a landlord, the Council listens to their views and uses their feedback to improve services.	At least annually, the outcome of tenant and leaseholder satisfaction surveys (including the Tenant Satisfaction Measures) are shared with tenants and leaseholders. Feedback clearly states how the views shared with tenants have been acted on and any service changes which have been made as a consequence of tenant feedback.	Tenants understand how their feedback has shaped service delivery and made a difference.	Head of Housing Assets/Resident Engagement Officer	01-Apr-24
		Review the Resident Engagement Strategy and approach to engagement following the publication of the revised Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards and new Code of Practice. To include consideration of introduction of a new Tenant Engagement Panel and how tenant representation can inform delivery and working groups across the Housing Assets Service.	The Resident Engagement Strategy maximises opportunity to ensure that the views of tenants and leaseholders is strongly influencing strategy and policy development as well as service delivery. The Council is able to evidence how the voice of tenants is heard and used.	Head of Housing Assets/Resident Engagement Officer	01-May-24
		Review the Sheltered Housing Service contact options for tenants to ensure they reflect the needs of sheltered housing tenants.	The delivery of the Sheltered Housing Service reflects the needs of the tenants that use it, providing a flexible and adaptive approach to maintaining contact and support plan delivery.	Tenancy Services Manager	01-Nov-23
		Ensure all staff understand their role in feeding back tenant views on the services the Council provides.	All options for capturing feedback from tenants are used to enhance understanding of tenants experience of the Housing Assets Service and to ensure those views can inform service delivery.	Head of Housing Assets	04-Dec-23
TP07: Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed of things that matter to them	Tenants do not always feel that they know what is happening to their home/area or changes which affect their tenancy or the Council housing stock more widely.	Increase proactive information sharing with tenants and leaseholders to include: 1. Reviewing how we keep tenants informed about repairs and other service requests 2. Increasing awareness of campaigns the council is running - such as estate walks, ASB week, Damp and Mould 3. Capital programme and cyclical decorations programme (see actions above) Sharing of the Resident Engagement Calendar with tenants and residents	Tenants and leaseholders have more awareness of what is happening across the Housing Assets Service, their local area and what is proposed for their home.	Head of Housing Assets	01-Apr-24
		Develop a new Housing Customer Charter setting out the council's approach to service delivery and resident engagement. To include resident engagement in development of Charter. Charter to support and compliment the Resident Engagement Strategy.	Tenants actively support the development of a Customer Charter setting out the Council's service standards as well as the approach to and support (including financial) for resident engagement and ensuring they are informed in a timely way about things which matter to them.	Head of Housing Assets	08-Jan-24
		Review the approach to Service Charge billing for leaseholders to ensure that the basis of costs are clearer reflecting feedback from the STAR survey.	Leaseholders are clearer on the basis of service charges and how they are calculated with effect from the 2023/4 billing cycle in September 2024.	HRA Income Service Manager	30-Sep-24
TP08: Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect	Not all tenants consider that they are treated fairly or with respect	Ensure all staff, including GYN and sub contractors delivering repair and maintenance works are aware of the Council's Customer Charter.	All staff (directly or indirectly employed by the Council) understand the need for courtesy and respect when dealing with tenants and leaseholders. The Council's expectation of what good customer service looks like is clearly understood and met by all staff.	Head of Housing Assets	01-Nov-23
		Ensure that when a negative decision is communicated with a tenant or leaseholder, then the policy/legislative basis of that decision is clearly articulated to the tenant. Where there is a formal appeal process, this is explained.	Tenants and leaseholders understand the basis for decisions and that decision making is fair and consistent, especially when the decision is not the outcome wanted by the tenant/leaseholder	Head of Housing Assets	01-Nov-23
TP09: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling of complaints	Complaint handling - complaints are not responded to or resolve the issue being complained about	Refresh training for all staff on complaints policy and what a complaint is.	Staff respond quickly to acknowledge and action complaints, tenants feel that complaints are dealt with positively.	Assets/Information Governance Lead	08-Jan-24
		Train managers on how to investigate and respond to complaints	More complaints are resolved at Stage 1, better outcomes for complainants and learning from complaints is captured and implemented.	Head of Housing Assets/Information Governance Lead	08-Jan-24
		Introduce satisfaction survey on complaint handling.	More tenants and leaseholders are satisfied with complaint handling. Issues raised with complaint handling are fed back to managers to support improvements in complaint handling.	Head of Housing Assets/Information Governance Lead	31-Dec-23
TP10: Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained	Not all tenants and leaseholders consider that communal areas are clean and well maintained.	Consider and consult tenants and leaseholders on introduction of grass cutting collection and indicative service cost charges to inform final decision. Outcome of decision communicated to tenants and leaseholders.	To involve tenants and leaseholders in a decision on whether to change the specification for grass cutting, reflecting negative feedback on grass cuttings being left on grassed areas.	Tenancy Services Manager	01-Apr-24
		Review communal bin provision to identify how can improve accessibility of communal bins for residents with vulnerabilities, trial approach in sheltered housing and assess outcome.	Address options and costs of ensuring all communal bins can be used by all residents irrespective of vulnerabilities or disabilities.	Tenancy Services Manager	01-Mar-24
TP11: Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods	Not all tenants consider that the Council makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods.	Promote the work undertaken by the Council on ensuring neighbourhoods are well managed, maintained and to ensure residents are aware of local services.	Tenants and leaseholders are aware of the Council's commitment to ensuring that neighbourhoods are well maintained and well managed areas.	Head of Housing Assets	01-Feb-24

TP12: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling Anti-Social Behaviour	Not all tenants and leaseholders are satisfied with the Council's approach to handling and resolving Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)	Use feedback from the ASB survey to understand those areas where complainants are less satisfied with the response to ASB and to develop a specific action plan to support continuous improvement in this area.	More complainants are satisfied with the handling of their ASB complaint.	Tenancy Services Manager	01-Nov-23
		Develop a leaflet to define ASB and the actions the Council will take to address ASB working collaboratively with complainants and partners to be shared with complainants when a complaint is made. The leaflet to articulate when the Council can/cannot take formal actions. Tenants and leaseholds are engaged in the development of the leaflet.	Complainants are clearer on what constitutes ASB, what actions the Council can undertake to address ASB and the role of complainants in evidencing ASB to allow effective resolution of issues.	Tenancy Services Manager	04-Dec-23
		Improve evidence gathering evaluating the use of deployable CCTV (overt) to capture evidence to support effective action in relation to ASB including environmental crime.	More effective resolution of ASB and environment crime through increasing the ability to secure high quality evidence which allows effective ASB resolution and actions.	Tenancy Services Manager	03-Jun-24