



AGENDA ITEM:

SUMMARY

Report for:	Housing and Community Overview &Scrutiny
Date of meeting:	13 November 2013
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	STAR Survey update report
Contact:	Councillor Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing Responsible Officer: Elliott Brooks, Assistant Director, Housing Authors: Suzy Donaldson, Housing Policy Officer Sue Prowse, Tenant Involvement Officer
Purpose of report:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To update the committee on our year end progress in delivering the STAR 2012 Improvement Plan 2. To outline our approach in highlighting areas for improvement as a result of tenant and leaseholder priorities identified in the STAR survey including how the results of STAR 2014 will support service planning for 2014-16 3. To confirm that the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee will be involved in monitoring progress made against tenant and leaseholder priorities identified in STAR 2014
Recommendations	That the committee note the information contained within the report
Corporate objectives:	<p>Improving customer satisfaction supports the Council's corporate objectives and help contribute to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our community capacity • Resources and Value for Money • Enhancing our profile and reputation <p>STAR supports the Homes and Communities Agency regulatory standards, thereby providing evidence that we meet and exceed the requirements in the following areas:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant Involvement and Empowerment • Home • Tenancy • Neighbourhood and Community
Implications:	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>A budget of £25,000 has been allocated to this project, to be met from existing resources.</p> <p>Any financial implications arising from the delivery of improvements resulting from the STAR survey results have already been identified within the Housing Service budget.</p>
'Value For Money Implications'	<p><u>Value for Money</u></p> <p>Targeting resources to areas of the Housing Service most in need of improvement helps ensure the maximum value for money for our tenants and leaseholders.</p>
Risk Implications	<p>Failure to act upon customer feedback and performance issues could impact upon the reputation of Dacorum Borough Council.</p> <p>A lack of consultation with tenants and leaseholders about their satisfaction with the services that they receive could lead to a failure to target resources effectively. This in turn may lead to further dissatisfaction and ultimately impact on the image and reputation of Dacorum Borough Council and its Housing Service.</p>
Equalities Implications	<p>Equality Impact Assessment reviewed/carried out as part of STAR project.</p> <p>Survey results could be weighted to determine whether or not minority groups have unrepresentative levels of dissatisfaction when compared with the tenant and leaseholder population as a whole.</p>
Health And Safety Implications	None identified.
Consultees:	<p>Tenants and Leaseholders</p> <p>Tenant and Leaseholder Committee</p> <p>Housing Staff</p>
Background papers:	<p>STAR survey 2012 – recent News and Views articles</p> <p>Autumn 2013: News and Views autumn 2013</p> <p>Summer 2013: News and Views summer 2013</p>

	<p>STAR Presentation to committee June 2012</p> <p>STAR 2012 results presentation</p> <p>STAR improvement plan progress report to committee March 2013</p> <p>STAR satisfaction survey progress update report HCOSC 13 March 2013</p>
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	<p>STAR – Survey of Tenants and Residents</p> <p>STATUS - Standardised Tenant Satisfaction Survey</p> <p>TLC – Tenant and Leaseholder Committee</p> <p>HMEC – Housing Maintenance and Environment Committee</p>

1. Background

STAR is a standardised approach to tenant and resident satisfaction surveys developed by and copyright to HouseMark. Guidelines for running STAR surveys were originally published in July 2011. DBC's first STAR survey was developed in conjunction with tenants and was distributed to all tenants and leaseholders in January 2012.

The STAR survey is a comprehensive satisfaction survey covering all aspects of the Housing Service. The purpose of the survey is to help identify areas of lower satisfaction so that improvements can be put in place to address them.

Three separate STAR surveys were issued to all our general needs tenants, supported housing tenants and leaseholders in January 2012. Surveying tenants, leaseholders and supported housing tenants separately enables us to identify both general issues, such as lack of parking, but also more group specific issues requiring improvement or additional resources. It is also consistent with HouseMark guidelines for STAR surveys.

Prior to STAR, the last robust housing survey of our tenants and leaseholders was carried out in 2008 through the STATUS survey. At this time only a sample of tenants and leaseholders received a survey as opposed to 100% for the 2012 STAR survey.

The next STAR survey will be carried out early in 2014, and this will again be sent to all tenants and leaseholders.

2. STAR 2012 improvement Plan

The STAR improvement plan was developed to address areas of the service attracting lower levels of satisfaction in the STAR 2012 survey.

To ensure that tenants, leaseholders and supported housing tenants feel that their feedback has been taken on board we have provided regular progress updates in

News and Views as well as through the Annual Report. It is hoped that this will encourage a similarly significant proportion of tenants and leaseholders to complete the next STAR survey early next year.

Our approach for 2014 – 2016 will be to feed the STAR survey results into the process for Housing service planning as this is a more effective way of monitoring and delivering tenants' and leaseholders' priorities.

The Tenant and Leaseholder Committee will also be able to easily identify the improvements that have been highlighted as a result of STAR 2014 and monitor the improvements that have been made through the quarterly reports that they receive in relation to the Service Plan.

3. How have we performed?

The STAR 2012 Improvement Plan update (see appendix A) provides information regarding our performance in delivering the improvement plan. It is evident that we have made good progress in the majority of areas or are on track to do so in the near future. Details of the key areas for improvement and our progress in addressing them can be found below:

3.1 Parking

Parking has been identified as a major concern for tenants, supported housing tenants and leaseholders. Lack of parking provision and problems associated with anti-social parking have been the main issues that we have sought to address. A parking strategy for Housing land will be launched in December following consultation with tenants and leaseholders from the Housing Maintenance and Environment Committee. This will help to create more parking and tackle anti-social parking.

Monitoring of parking and improvements in this area will be undertaken by the Housing Maintenance and Environment Committee (HMEC) with regular updates being taken to the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee by the Chair of the HMEC.

3.2 Cleaning

Cleaning has been identified as a problem area by both tenants and leaseholders living in flats. Satisfaction with cleaning of external communal areas has been particularly low and a number of measures have been put in place to address this. Information provided to residents has improved greatly, with signs installed in all blocks detailing when cleaning will be carried out. Tenants and leaseholders have also received a detailed 'Service standards' booklet outlining the service they should expect to receive and giving them information about what to do if they do not feel they are receiving the correct level of service. New robust monitoring measures have also been put in place, to ensure that all cleaners' visits are recorded and that quality control checks can be carried out.

Two additional members of staff were recruited to the Housing Cleaning Service in October 2013. They are each equipped with a van and will be expected to take a proactive role in dealing with problems such as fly tipping on Housing land, build-up of moss on hard surfaces and responding to residents' reports of any cleaning service issues.

Cleaning will form part of the monitoring remit for the HMEC with regular updates being taken to the TLC by the Chair of the HMEC.

3.3 Maintenance of planted areas

The maintenance of planted areas was identified as an area in need of improvement by tenants, supported housing tenants and leaseholders. We have responded to what tenants and leaseholders have told us and following consultation with Clean, Safe and Green a new Service Level Agreement (SLA) has been agreed which will go live in March 2014. It is intended that this will help to address any weaker areas and improve levels of satisfaction with the service. To assist with the monitoring of the SLA tenant volunteers from neighbouring blocks are to be recruited to report any problem areas. Performance against the SLA will be monitored by the HMEC with regular updates being taken to the TLC by the Chair of the HMEC.

3.4 Leaseholders

It is evident that satisfaction rates amongst leaseholders are lower than those for tenants and supported housing tenants. One of the key measures put in place to try and address this has been greater communication. By engaging more with leaseholders we are able to gain more of an understanding of the underlying issues so that we can focus on them. Leaseholders have been actively encouraged to get more involved in the Housing Service through News and Views and the 'You are the Key' campaign. The Leaseholder Group will be re-launched following the distribution of the new Leaseholder Handbook.

While satisfaction with repairs and maintenance was relatively high amongst tenants and supported housing tenants, leaseholders identified a number of problem areas. A new leaseholder handbook will be launched shortly to help outline the level of service that leaseholders should expect to receive. Meetings with leaseholder representatives will also be taking place to discuss the problem areas. Representatives from the relevant service area will be present at the meetings to answer any questions and try to resolve any issues.

4. Developing and delivering the 2014 STAR Survey

Involving our tenants and leaseholders both in developing the survey and the methodology for producing, delivering, administering and evaluating it is of paramount importance.

Since the early stages of developing the 2012 survey we have taken every possible step to raise awareness of STAR and encourage survey completion.

DBC's next STAR survey will be distributed in January 2014. A series of meetings with tenants and staff were arranged in order to develop the 2014 survey and determine methodology for both the survey itself and handling the data received. An article in the autumn 2013 edition of News and Views invited all tenants and leaseholders to attend these meetings to help us develop the survey and 'make sure we ask you the right questions'.

5. Monitoring and evaluating the results of the 2014 STAR Survey

Once the results of the survey have been fully analysed, comparison will be carried out with the results of the 2012 survey to see if satisfaction has declined, improved or stayed the same. We will also benchmark our results against other members of the

HouseMark Local Authority Benchmarking Club. Areas with low or declining rates of satisfaction will be addressed within the Housing service plan.

More robust monitoring of the Housing service plan will also take place through the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee to ensure that timescales are being met and that any blockages to delivering actions can be addressed.

We will continue to use News and Views and the Annual Report as methods of reporting the results of the STAR 2014 and also of the progress made against the improvements that have been highlighted as our tenant and leaseholders priorities.