

Agenda Item	4
Report No	LA/22/21

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Lochaber Area Committee

Date: 8 November 2021

Report Title: Tenant Satisfaction Survey - Lochaber Update

Report By: Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Highland Council Tenant Satisfaction Survey and provides details of the survey results for Lochaber.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to: -
- i. note the results of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey for Lochaber.

3 Implications

- 3.1 Resource - There are no resource implications arising from this report.
- 3.2 Legal - There are no legal implications arising from this report. Engaging with our tenants is a regulatory requirement set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) - There are no equality implications arising from this report.
- 3.4 Climate Change - There are no climate change implications arising from this report.
- 3.5 Risk - Risk is managed through regular review and reporting to allow corrective action to be taken if necessary.
- 3.6 Gaelic - There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

4 Background

- 4.1 At Lochaber Area Committee on 9 August 2021 Lochaber Members asked that a report detailing the Tenants Satisfaction Survey results for Lochaber be brought to the following Lochaber Area Committee.
- 4.2 Every three years we carry out a comprehensive tenant satisfaction survey. This is a questionnaire focussing on the key indicators from the Scottish Social Housing Charter. Highland Council commissioned Research Resource to carry out a tenant satisfaction survey on their behalf. Our latest survey was completed in May 2021
- 4.3 The full Tenant Satisfaction Survey results were reported to Housing & Property Committee on 30 September 2021. That report and the full Highland Council Tenant Satisfaction Survey can be found at the following link
https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/23939/tenant_satisfaction_survey_2021
- 4.4 The aim of the survey was to seek tenants' views on the services that Highland Council Housing Services provides as a landlord, how well it performs these services and to help identify areas where the service can be improved
- 4.5 Customers views were sought on the following:
- The quality of information provided by Highland Council.
 - Quality of the home and neighbourhood.
 - The repairs and maintenance service.
 - Tenant involvement/opportunities for participation.
 - Rent and value for money.
- 4.6 The Highland wide key findings of the report are:
- 85.91% of tenants were very or fairly satisfied with the overall service provided by Highland Council's Housing Service (78.1% in 2018 survey)
 - 92.51% of tenants said that the Highland Council's Housing Service was very good or fairly good at keeping tenants informed about services and decisions (69% in 2018 survey)
 - 93.81% if tenants said they were very or fairly satisfied with the opportunities to participate in Highland Council's Housing Service's decision-making process (55.7% in 2018 survey)
 - 77.22% of tenants were very or fairly satisfied with the quality of their home (75.2% in the 2018 survey)
 - 88.01% of tenants were very or fairly satisfied with Highland Council's Housing Service's contribution to the management of the neighbourhood they lived in (68% in 2018 survey)
 - 88.92% of tenants said that they thought their rent was very good or fairly good value for money (87.69% in 2018 survey).
- 4.7 The survey indicates higher rates of satisfaction for 5 of the above 6 performance indicators.

5 Lochaber Responses

5.1 A total of 1001 interviews were achieved with Highland Tenants. 95 tenants in Lochaber were interviewed being 9.8% of tenants and 9.5% of the total interviews. This is a satisfactory response in relation to customer surveys.

5.2 The survey report provides details on key questions which can be broken down to area level. The outcomes for Lochaber are detailed below:

- ***How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall service provided by Highland Council Housing Service as your landlord?***

80% of Lochaber tenants interviewed were satisfied with the overall service, 3% neither nor and 16% dissatisfied. The main reasons given for dissatisfaction were waiting times for new kitchens, bathrooms, heating, doors & windows. There was also some dissatisfaction with general maintenance i.e. damp and mould. The capital programme is ongoing in Lochaber and we try to prioritise the improvements and upgrades needed. We have included an article in the upcoming tenant newsletter giving advice on damp and condensation.

- ***How good or poor do you feel Highland Council Housing Service is at keeping you informed about their services and decisions?***

88% of Lochaber tenants interviewed said we were good at keeping them informed about services and decisions, 6% neither nor and 6% were dissatisfied. Comments suggested that Lochaber tenants would welcome a more locally focussed newsletter. The tenant participation team are currently looking at running a pilot area-based newsletter in Lochaber to be published in between issues of the Highland wide "Housing Matters" tenant newsletter.

- ***How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the opportunities given to you to participate in the Council's Housing Services decision making processes?***

95% of Lochaber tenants interviewed said that they were given the opportunity to participate. There are currently four Registered Tenant Organisations in Lochaber (Kinlochleven, Upper Achintore, Claggan and Plantation) and less formal tenant groups in Caol and the Lochaber Interested Tenants group. Several Lochaber tenants also regularly attend the Highland Tenants Forum. We have carried out Rate your Place surveys in Plantation and Caol over the past three months and held Rate your Estate inspections with tenants in Upper Achintore, Kinlochleven and Plantation. Extensive estate action plans are currently being implemented. Members have also been briefed on the comprehensive review of housing owned garages and garage sites which has been undertaken in Lochaber. The actions associated with this piece of work will also link with Rate Your Estate making improvements to housing estates across Lochaber.

- ***Overall, how satisfied, or dissatisfied are you with the quality of your home?***

77% of Lochaber tenants interviewed said that they were satisfied with the quality of their home. 11% neither and 13% were dissatisfied. We do try to address quality of our housing stock through identifying improvements and prioritising these in our capital programme.

- ***Overall, how satisfied, or dissatisfied are you with the Council's Housing Service contribution to the management of the neighbourhood you live in?***

88% of Lochaber tenants interviewed said that they were satisfied with the Council's contribution to the management of the neighbourhood they live in. 3% were neither and 9% were dissatisfied.

- ***Taking into account the accommodation and services Highland Council's Housing Services provides, do you think your rent for the property represents good or poor value for money?***

82% of Lochaber tenants interviewed said that the rent for the property represents good value for money.

6 New Tenants Survey

- 6.1 Through the Tenant Participation team, the Service has recently started contacting new tenants to gain information on their experience of the service and in particular their satisfaction with the standard of their new home when moving in. Early indications are that satisfaction levels in Lochaber are lower than the Highland average, however this is the early stages of information gathering. Over the coming months the tenant participation team will prioritise surveying new tenants in Lochaber to monitor satisfaction levels to identify any specific issues affecting levels of satisfaction.
- 6.2 We have received some negative feedback from tenants regarding the standard of decoration of empty properties. The Council has an Empty Homes Standard which officers are working to. To help address any issues prospective tenants may have as quickly as possible we are carrying out accompanied viewings in Lochaber. We are also ensuring, in accordance with the Empty Homes Standard that tenants receive decoration allowances where this is appropriate.
- 6.3 The Empty Homes Standard can be found on the Highland Council website at the following link:
https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/19248/the_empty_homes_standard
- 6.4 The Tenants Scrutiny Group has also carried out a review of the Empty Homes Standard and is currently preparing a report for senior management with recommendations to raise awareness of the standard and improve tenant satisfaction.

7 Future Tenant Engagement

- 7.1 The tenant participation team will continue to engage with tenants in Lochaber. Over the winter it is planned to carry out Rate your Place surveys in other areas of Fort William and Ardnamurchan. This gives a holistic view of how residents feel about living in an area and what issues concern them and will feed into future engagement activities.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Housing and Property

Date: 4 November 2021

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Background Papers: Highland Council Tenant Satisfaction Survey May 2021