

16 March 2021		ITEM: 6
Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Leaseholder Satisfaction Survey Results and Initial Action Plan		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A	
Report of: Chris Seman – Intelligence and Performance Manager		
Accountable Assistant Director: Carol Hinvest – Assistant Director of Housing		
Accountable Director: Roger Harris – Corporate Director Adults, Housing and Health.		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

An overview of the results of the leaseholder satisfaction survey is provided in addition to a summary overview of the actions which have been identified so far from the results of the survey.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the Committee notes and comments on the report.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Starting at the end of July 2020 and ending at the beginning of October 2020, a full postal leaseholder satisfaction survey was undertaken by our service provider, KWEST Research Ltd, which was sent to every leaseholder. The project used a multi-mode approach, comprising a postal census survey targeting all of the Council's leasehold households, accompanied by email invitations and an online version to broaden survey reach and accessibility.
- 2.2 The questionnaire was designed in accordance with HouseMark's STAR guidance and includes a selection of STAR questions, alongside additional question-sets that cover specific areas of interest to the Council.
- 2.3 At the end of the data collection period, a total of 216 leaseholder responses had been received, representing a response rate of 25%. 216 responses provide overall data accuracy of $\pm 5.8\%$ for the leaseholder results, allowing findings to be used with confidence.
- 2.4 The data collected shows that 21% of the leaseholders who responded to the

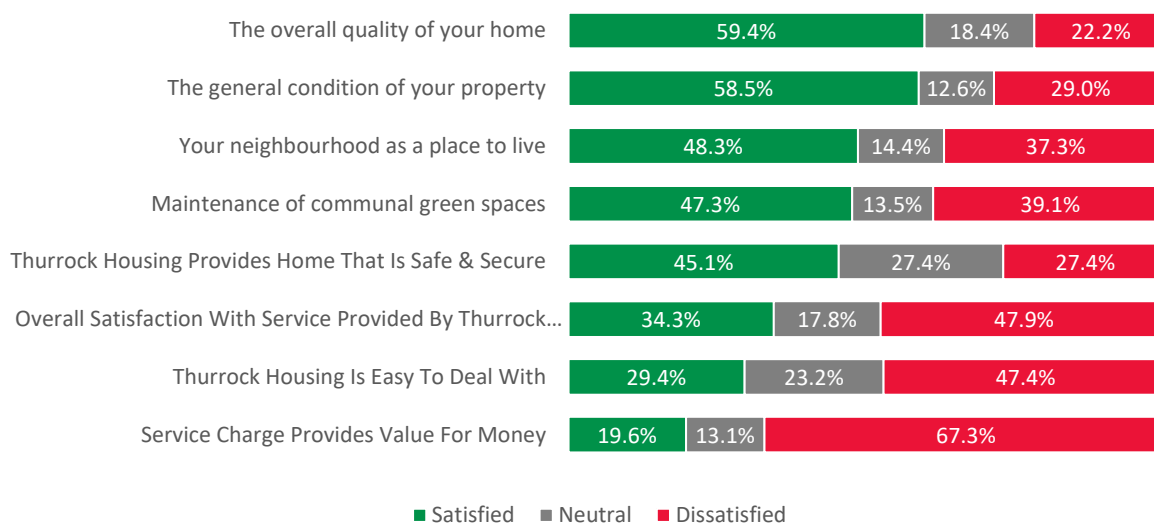
survey are not resident at the leasehold property in question and reside elsewhere. This can have an impact on the results with measures such as neighbourhoods, communal repairs and maintenance, estate services, anti-social behaviour and value for money as the respondent is not resident at the property and therefore will have a different perception on these measures to those who are resident.

3. Results

3.1 As part of the survey, a series of satisfaction questions were included to ascertain leaseholders' views of the key service areas provided by Housing. It is important to note that the bulk of responses were received between August and September 2020, not long after the coronavirus lockdown which resulted in a reduction in services provided by the Council.

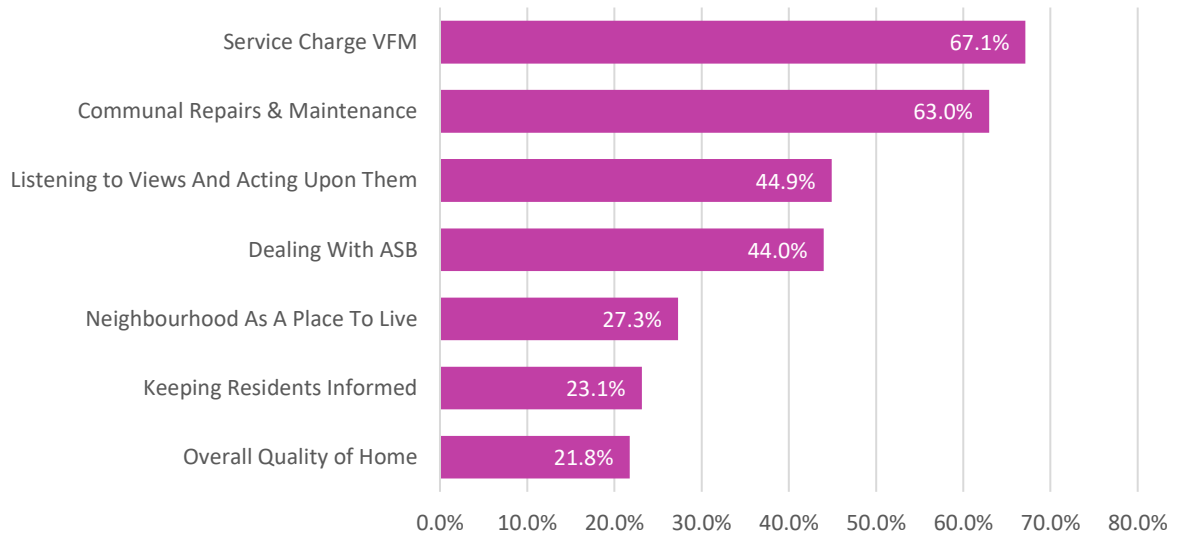
The survey results show mixed views from leaseholders on the services the Housing service provides, some of which contrast significantly with the results from the tenant satisfaction survey. There are moderate levels of satisfaction with the majority of measures but low levels of satisfaction and high levels of dissatisfaction with the overall service provided by Thurrock Housing, Thurrock Housing is easy to deal with and service charge provides value for money.

Satisfaction With Housing and Services



3.2 An important objective when undertaking the survey was to obtain leaseholder feedback on the services which are the most important services to them which are delivered by the Council with the results of this section shown below.

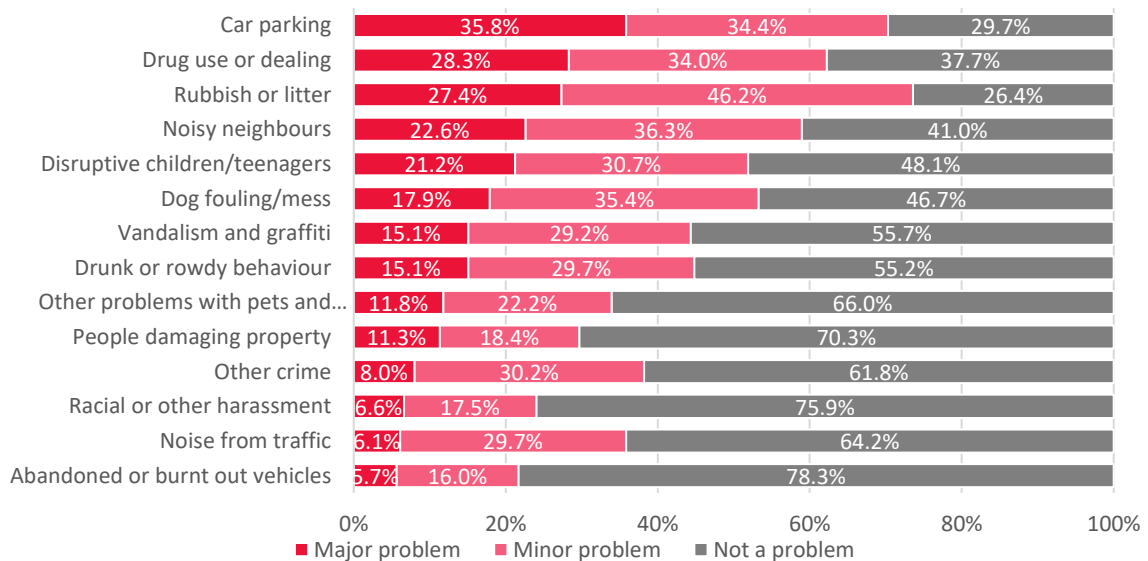
Leaseholder Service Priorities



The results from this question confirms that service charge value for money is the highest priority for leaseholders by a small margin with 67.1% of leaseholders indicating this was one of their priorities, followed by communal repairs and maintenance at 63%.

- 3.3 The survey also asked residents about problems in their area which can have an impact on residents' perception of their neighbourhood as a place to live. Leaseholders were asked to indicate whether each problem in a list was a major problem, a minor problem or not a problem. Full details of the borough wide neighbourhood problems is shown in the chart below.

Leaseholder Neighbourhood Issues

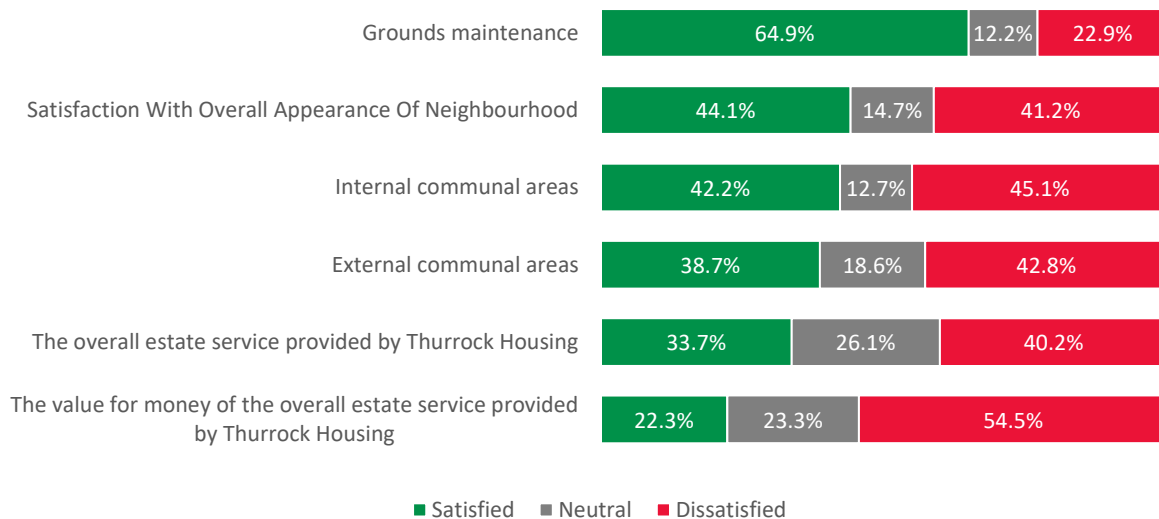


The most common neighbourhood problems indicated by leaseholders as part

of the survey are car parking, drug use or dealing and rubbish and litter and is broadly similar to the neighbourhood issues outlined by tenants. The resulting data from this question enables us to identify specific neighbourhood problems down to area, neighbourhood or even street level.

3.4 Another section of the survey asked leaseholders to feed back their views on the estate services function of Housing. Leaseholders were asked to indicate their satisfaction levels with six measures, the results of which are shown in the chart below.

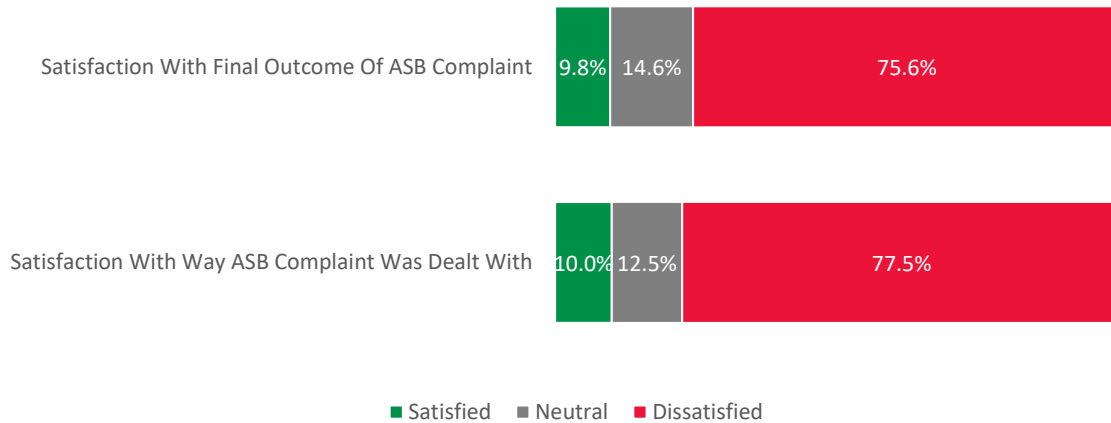
Satisfaction With Neighbourhood and Estate Services



The results show high levels of satisfaction with the grounds maintenance service, moderate levels of satisfaction with the overall appearance of their neighbourhood, internal communal areas and external communal areas but low levels of satisfaction with the overall estate service provided by Thurrock Housing and the value for money of the overall estate service provided by Thurrock Housing.

3.5 Leaseholders were asked to indicate whether they had reported an anti-social behaviour issue in the last 12 months and to provide their feedback on their experience if they had. Overall, 19.5% of leaseholders who responded to the survey said they have reported anti-social behaviour to Housing in the last year. The results for this section are shown in the chart below.

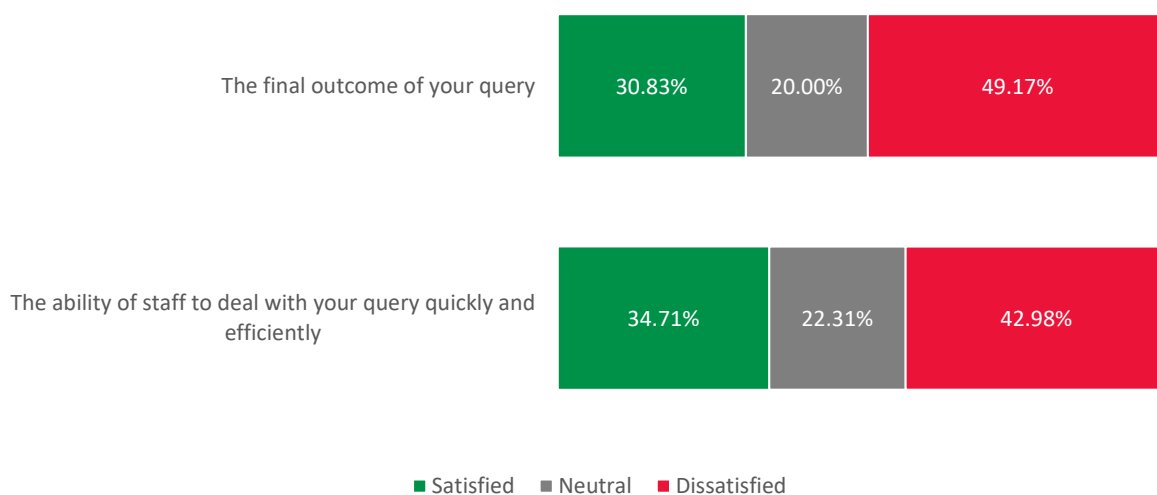
Satisfaction With ASB Complaint



Leaseholders' responses to this question show low levels of satisfaction amongst the cohort of leaseholders who have reported anti-social behaviour in the last year with the way their case was dealt with and the final outcome of their complaint.

- 3.6 Similarly, leaseholders were also asked to indicate whether they had contacted the Housing department in the last 12 months and to provide feedback on their experience if they had. 57.8% of respondents indicated that they had contacted the Housing department in the last year. The results from this section are shown in the charts below.

Satisfaction With Recent Contact

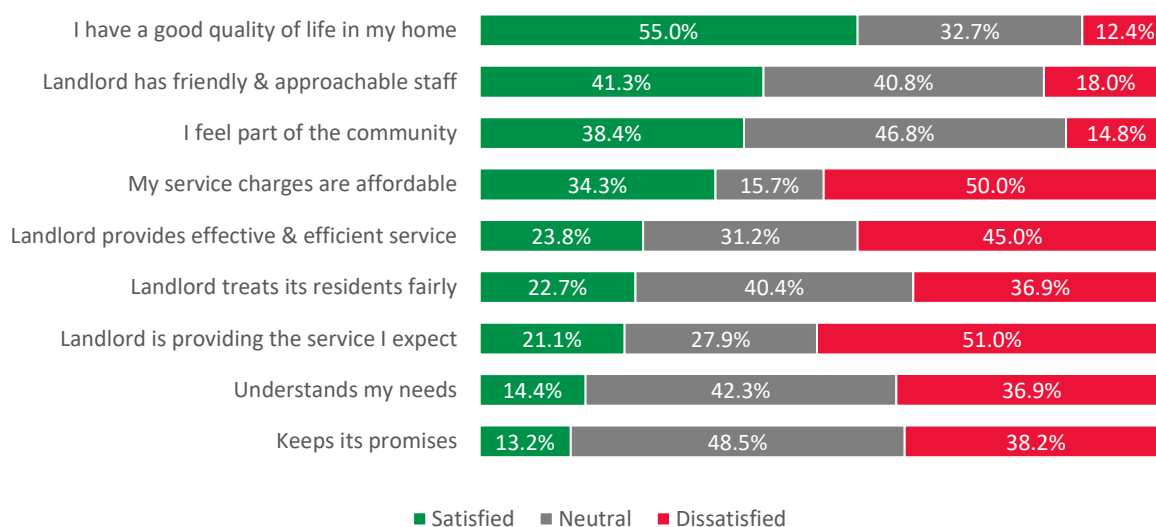


The results from this section of the survey show low satisfaction levels with the ability of staff to deal with enquiries and with the final outcome of the

enquiries.

3.7 The survey also contained a list of landlord characteristics from Housemark's STAR question library. Leaseholders were asked to either indicate whether they agree or disagree with the measures included in the survey. The results of this section is shown in the chart below.

Views on Thurrock Housing



The results from this section show moderate and low levels of satisfaction with all measures with large proportions of leaseholders giving the neutral rating of “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied”. The measures with the lowest ratings overall were landlord is providing the service I expect, understands my needs and keeps its promises.

4. Initial actions identified

4.1 Relevant members of the Housing service have held a meeting to consider the results and initial analysis of the data which has identified some initial actions to address some of the dissatisfaction expressed by leaseholders, many of which will cut across both leaseholders and tenants. This is a fluid process and will be developed based on the results of further data analytics and intelligence and will be broadened over the coming months.

4.2 Satisfaction with Housing and services

Due to the fact that the cohort of leaseholders who responded to the survey is around ten times smaller than the cohort of tenants who responded to the tenant satisfaction survey, a very small amount of free text feedback was collected as part of the survey. The feedback collected was not specific to each measure and does not allow us to identify leaseholders' exact reasons for dissatisfaction with each measure. However, the results do provide insight into how leaseholders view certain elements of the service offer as well as a steer on what leaseholder's priorities are.

In order to better understand the reasons for dissatisfaction with the measures in this section, the Housing service intend to deliver focus groups with leaseholders as soon as it is practical to do so which focus primarily on the measures which leaseholders have identified to be their top priorities such as service charge value for money and communal repairs and maintenance. This will enable us to identify and determine which elements of the service offer leaseholders are dissatisfied with.

4.3 Neighbourhood Problems

The resulting data from this section enables us to identify the neighbourhood issues in granular detail down to street or post code level and allows us to identify the locations where certain neighbourhood problems may be more prevalent than others. An action has been identified to aggregate this data with the data from the tenant satisfaction survey to enable us to determine which neighbourhood issues are most prevalent in specific neighbourhoods. This will be shared with neighbourhoods team, the tenancy management team, the estates services team and the anti-social behaviour team for discussion and to develop specific action plans for areas or neighbourhoods for specific neighbourhood issues where it is necessary to do so.

Due to the fact that car parking has been identified as the most prevalent neighbourhood problem across both tenant and leaseholder satisfaction surveys, an action has been identified to explore options in relation to introducing parking permit areas based on the data as well as exploring options in relation to increasing car parking spaces where possible.

4.4 Estate Services

In order to develop an action plan for Estate Services, data analytics will be critical. An action has been identified to aggregate and compare the responses from both tenants and leaseholders to the Estate Services questions to identify whether satisfaction with the relevant measures differ between different areas or sites or differ between tenants and leaseholders. Tenant and leaseholder feedback, in this instance, is comparable as both tenures pay a service charge where a caretaking service exists and therefore any differences in satisfaction levels between tenures is likely to relate to specific elements of service delivery and not necessarily the service charge.

This will enable the service to identify areas of high dissatisfaction which will in turn enable the service to carry out an investigation in order to determine the reasons for dissatisfaction.

4.5 Anti-social behaviour and contact and communication

In relation to anti-social behaviour, an action has been identified to explore the possibility of mystery shopping in order to identify areas and touchpoints during the process of reporting an anti-social behaviour complaint which could be improved to enhance the customer experience during the entire process.

This will further inform the action plan through the identification of specific actions.

For contact and communication, a number of actions have been identified. The Housing service aims to introduce cross-divisional working to ensure staff are able to answer leaseholder's queries even if the query relates to another service area. This will be completed through the development of an internal directory to enable staff to find the information they require as well as enhancements to the Housing web page on the Council's website.

Another action which has been identified to improve contact and communication is to deliver training to customer facing staff in the skills required to communicate with tenants and leaseholders effectively as well as including this subject as part of new staff inductions.

A further and more wide ranging action has also been identified which will cut across both anti-social behaviour and contact. The Housing service will look to establish a wider project to identify issues in resident interaction across all Housing services with a view to improving and reducing customer effort to raise queries or issues and have them resolved.

4.6 Landlord characteristics

In order to understand dissatisfaction with the measures included within this section, the Housing service will look to deliver focus groups with leaseholders to explore the reasons for dissatisfaction in relation to each individual measure. This will enable the service to understand leaseholders issues on each subject and what leaseholders feel the service needs to do to address their issues to further inform the action plan. The delivery of focus groups will also demonstrate the services willingness to listen to leaseholders' views and develop a better understanding of leaseholders needs.

In addition to this, the Housing service will also look to ascertain whether there are links or correlations between leaseholders' responses to the landlord characteristics questions to establish whether service delivery in certain areas have an impact on leaseholders views on landlord characteristic measures through data analysis.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 The committee's comments are sought on the results of the full postal leaseholder satisfaction survey.

6. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 6.1 None.

7. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

7.1 None.

8. Implications

8.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Hannah Katakwe**
Housing Accountant

None.

8.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Tim Hallam**
Deputy Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Given the nature of this report there are no legal implications directly arising from it.

8.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer

The survey was designed to be as accessible as possible by providing multiple means for completion. The Housing service will also look to ascertain whether there are links or correlations between leaseholders' responses to the landlord characteristics questions. Through data analysis this should identify any areas of dissatisfaction related to a particular protected characteristic and actions can be identified if this is the case.

8.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder.

Not applicable

9. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

None

10. Appendices to the report

None

Report Author:

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Intelligence and Performance Manager