1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To advise of findings of a tenant satisfaction survey.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is invited to note:

2.1 that a wholesale tenant satisfaction survey is required by the Scottish Social Housing Charter, the process for which is detailed and prescriptive for landlords with up to 1,500 tenants, including achieving a return rate of 40%;

2.2 that the results of the process, referred to at paragraph 2.1 above, is used by the Scottish Housing Regulator as part of the process of regulating Local Authority Housing Services;

2.3 that a tenant satisfaction survey was undertaken by an independent body, IBP Strategy and Research, in April/May 2016, the results of which are summarised in section 6 of this report; and

2.4 the full details from the survey, referred to at paragraph 2.3 above, attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

3. **POLICY ASPECTS**

3.1 This report reflects targets and actions from the Council Plan 2013-2018 being priority target 3 “housing to meet the needs of Orkney’s people”.

3.2 It also links to the Council’s value of working to provide better services – to improve the planning and delivery of services.

4. **INTRODUCTION**

4.1 At its meeting held on 5 February 2014, the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee noted:

4.1.1 that a wholesale tenant satisfaction survey was required by the Scottish Social Housing Charter, the process for which was detailed and prescriptive for landlords with up to 1,500 tenants, including achieving a return rate of 40%;
4.1.2 that the results of the process, referred to at paragraph 4.1.1 above, were used by the Scottish Housing Regulator as part of the process of regulating Local Authority Housing Services;

4.1.3 that a tenant satisfaction survey had been undertaken by an independent body in September/October 2013, the results of which were summarised in section 5 of the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing; and

4.1.4 the full details from the survey, referred to at paragraph 4.1.3 above, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing; and

4.1.5 that the Council would receive a detailed report and tenant profile from the independent body, referred to at paragraph 4.1.3 above, which would be analysed by officers and a briefing note issued to members, if appropriate.

5. **BACKGROUND**

5.1 The Scottish Social Housing Charter, which came into effect on 1 April 2012, includes a series of outcomes and standards against which housing services are to be regulated.

5.2 The Charter includes a requirement that landlords undertake regular surveys of their tenants to assess their satisfaction with services and report the findings to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

5.3 The Scottish Housing Regulator, in conjunction with Ipsos MORI, has produced guidance on undertaking such surveys and this is available at the following web address: [www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk](http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk)

5.4 The guidance is detailed and prescriptive. It requires that landlords with up to 1500 tenants are required to survey all their tenants and that all landlords seek to achieve at least a 40% return rate, which is challenging.

5.5 It also provides detail on the type of questions to be asked to ensure that the Scottish Housing Regulator can in turn receive information on certain key outcomes.

5.6 The Council undertook its initial survey in September/October 2013. This is the second time the survey has been carried out. In order to meet these requirements the Council worked jointly with Orkney Housing Association Limited who have undertaken tenant surveys for a significant number of years.

5.7 A joint arrangement was made with IBP Strategy and Research which specialises in undertaking surveys for landlords. This gave the added advantage of being able to anonymise information and allowed tenants to respond openly without the Council receiving details of individual responses.

5.8 The survey was undertaken in April / May 2016 and initial results were presented to Housing Services in July 2016.
6. **SURVEY RESULTS**

6.1 Surveys were sent to all tenants within Housing Revenue Account (HRA) properties, a total of 839 surveys.

6.2 A total of 340 valid responses were received which amounts to the required 40% response rate.

6.3 The data is determined to be accurate to +/- 4.10%.

6.4 Results should help to assess compliance with the Scottish Social Housing Charter and identify a range of other issues and priorities.

6.5 The survey focused on a range of issues including:

   6.5.1 Social, economic and demographic profile of tenants;
   6.5.2 Quality of communication
   6.5.3 Tenant participation;
   6.5.4 Contact with the Council’s Housing Service;
   6.5.5 Complaints;
   6.5.6 The Home;
   6.5.7 Repairs and housing services;
   6.5.8 Rent and arrears;
   6.5.9 The neighbourhood;
   6.5.10 Final comments and overall satisfaction.

6.6 The key findings are as follows and a comparison is provided from the previous survey which is shown in brackets:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator from the Scottish Social Housing Charter at time of Survey</th>
<th>Performance of Council’s Housing Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall service provided by landlord (indicator 1)</td>
<td>87% satisfaction (88%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of tenants who feel their landlord is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions (charter indicator 3)</td>
<td>91% rating as very or fairly good (89%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord’s decision making processes (charter indicator 6)</td>
<td>66% satisfaction (61%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of tenants satisfied with the condition of their home when moving in (charter indicator 9)</td>
<td>88% satisfaction (83%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home (charter indicator 10)</td>
<td>83% satisfaction (85%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of tenants who have had repairs or maintenance carried out in the</td>
<td>82% satisfaction (83%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Indicator from the Scottish Social Housing Charter at time of Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance of Council’s Housing Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>last 12 months satisfied with repairs and maintenance service (charter indicator 16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in (charter indicator 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of tenants who feel the rent for their property represents good value for money (charter indicator 29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81% satisfaction (82%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77% rating a good or fairly good (76%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.7 Tenants were asked about their contact with the Council in the last 12 months.

6.7.1 51% had contacted the Council in past 12 months;
6.7.2 Telephone contact was considered the most common method of contact (67%);
6.7.3 78% reported it was easy to get hold of the right person;
6.7.4 87% say staff were helpful;
6.7.5 82% thought their query was answered within a reasonable time; and
6.7.6 75% were satisfied with the outcome of their query though 15% were dissatisfied.

6.8 When asked for their overall view of the quality of customer service provided by the Council’s Housing Service, 90% of respondents said it was very good or good (51% and 39% respectively).

6.9 While 88% of respondents were either very or fairly satisfied with the quality of their home (50% and 38% respectively), they also reported certain areas of dissatisfaction, as follows:

6.9.1 26% dissatisfaction with amount of outdoor storage space;
6.9.2 20% dissatisfaction with amount of indoor storage space;
6.9.3 27% dissatisfaction with heating system;
6.9.4 16% dissatisfaction with noise insulation between neighbours;
6.9.5 10% dissatisfaction with the dining area;
6.9.6 11% dissatisfaction with number and position of electrical sockets; and
6.9.7 13% dissatisfaction with the number of kitchen units.

6.10 Of those tenants who had moved in the last 12 months, the level of satisfaction with aspects of the moving service was as follows:

6.10.1 information on housing options (92%);
6.10.2 clarity of allocations process (88%);
6.10.3 length of time taken (86%);
6.10.4 advice and support received (83%);
6.10.5 cleanliness of home (75%);
6.10.6 level of decoration grant (69%); and
6.10.7 decorative condition (71%).
Tenants who had repair or maintenance work undertaken over the last 12 months, were asked about their level of satisfaction. 82% were either very or fairly satisfied (56% and 26% respectively). This is broken down further as follows:

- 95% were satisfied at the attitude of Housing Service;
- 95% were satisfied at the ease of reporting repairs;
- 94% were satisfied with the attitude of workers;
- 94% believed that workers tidied up after themselves;
- 93% were satisfied with arrangements for access;
- 88% were satisfied with the overall quality of work;
- 85% were satisfied with the time taken to complete the work; and
- 80% were satisfied that the repair was done “right first time”.

Tenants were also asked various questions about rent. This included how they thought rent levels compared with those of similar properties from other landlords in the area. Responses showed that 31% felt it was much the same and a further 40% believed it was slightly less expensive.

As regards arrears, 6% advised that they are currently in arrears and 14% say they have been in arrears. Of those that expressed a view:

- 83% think the Council takes a reasonable approach to arrears;
- 13% think it is too lenient;
- 5% think it is too strict;
- 89% perceive that they are getting by financially, managing quite well or managing very well.

In respect of the extent tenants felt safe in their neighbourhood, 94% advised that they felt very or fairly safe (being 66% and 28% respectively).

When asked about satisfaction with common areas:

- 89% were satisfied with their common entrance / door entry;
- 87% were satisfied with their communal back drying area;
- 81% were satisfied with their garden;
- 69% were satisfied with stair cleaning;
- 68% were satisfied with bin areas; and
- 65% were satisfied with fencing.

The most common neighbourhood problems were:

- Dog fouling (15% felt it was a serious problem);
- Inconsiderate parking (7% felt it was a serious problem);
- Drug dealing (3% felt it was a serious problem);
- Noisy neighbours (3% felt it was a serious problem);
- Rubbish (4% felt it was a serious problem).

As regards various statements in respect of the Council’s Housing Services (respondents choosing “strongly agree” or “agree”):

- 91% found staff friendly and approachable;
- 86% found staff knowledgeable;
6.17.3 86% considered tenants were treated fairly and with respect;
6.17.4 76% trusted the Housing Service;
6.17.5 76% felt the Housing Service had a good reputation;
6.17.6 71% believed appropriate support was provided for tenants who needed adaptations;
6.17.7 69% felt their individual needs were recognised;
6.17.8 77% felt they received clear information about how rent and other money is spent.

6.18 When asked to rank which specific aspects of the service were most important to them, tenants chose as follows:

6.18.1 overall quality of home 73%;
6.18.2 affordability of rents / service charges 45%;
6.18.3 the speed of response to emergency repairs 40%; and
6.18.4 how many repairs are completed right first time 36%.

6.19 When asked to rank which specific aspects of the service were least important to them, tenants chose as follows:

6.19.1 how quickly your landlord lets homes 55%;
6.19.2 opportunities to participate in landlord decision making 48%; and
6.19.3 the level of rent arrears across your landlord as a whole 20%.

6.20 When asked to consider broader issues and to rank which aspects were the two most important to them, tenants chose as follows:

6.20.1 whether your rent and other charges are good value for money 76%;
6.20.2 the quality of services provided by your landlord 71%;
6.20.3 your landlord keeping you informed about services and decisions 24%; and
6.20.4 opportunities to participate in landlord decisions 4%.

6.21 When asked to consider broader issues and to rank which aspects were the two least important to them, tenants chose as follows:

6.21.1 whether your rent and other charges are good value for money 13%;
6.21.2 the quality of services provided by your landlord 9%;
6.21.3 your landlord keeping you informed about services and decisions 56%; and
6.21.4 opportunities to participate in landlord decisions 89%.

6.22 The survey also sought information on tenant profiling including demographic information and data relating to their occupation and income levels. In addition the survey considered what proportion of tenants had access to the internet and what online services they use. 61% indicated they had access to the internet at home. The most commonly used devices were laptop (65%), smartphone (52%) and tablet (51%).

6.23 Overall, the results of the tenant survey are very positive and provide a range of useful information to the Council. The questions asked, along with percentage responses to each question, are attached at Appendix 1 to this report.
7. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no significant financial implications arising directly as a result of this report.

8. **LEGAL ASPECTS**

8.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 introduced changes to the basis on which the Scottish Housing Regulator would be responsible for regulating housing services.

8.2 Although not laid down formally in legislation, the Scottish Social Housing Charter determines the outcomes against which social landlords will be regulated. This includes a requirement for a regular tenants’ satisfaction survey to be undertaken and for a performance report to be published.

9. **CONTACT OFFICERS**

9.1 Wilfred Weir, Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, Ext 2401, Email: wilf.weir@orkney.gov.uk

9.2 Frances Troup, Head of Housing and Homelessness, Ext 2177, Email: frances.troup@orkney.gov.uk

10. **APPENDIX**

10.1 Appendix 1: Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2016, undertaken by IBP