

Your Home, Your Say

Issue 3 March 2008

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Welcome to the third issue of 'Your Home, Your Say', the newsletter that keeps you informed about the ongoing Stock Options Appraisal of the Council's housing stock.

In this issue we will be focusing on the feedback from the "Your Home, Your Say" questionnaire. The questionnaire featured in our first newsletter, issued in November 2007 and asked all council tenants and leaseholders to indicate (by numbering from 1-5) what they considered to be the most important issues for them, under the headings "Your Home & Neighbourhood" and "Your Environment".

Thank you very much to everyone who took the time to complete and return their questionnaire. The response rate was high. 1685 questionnaires were returned - a response rate of 14.77%. All of the responses have now been analysed and the results are published in the centre pages of this newsletter.

A quick recap – what is the Option Appraisal?

The Council are working in partnership with Tristar Homes to consider how best to secure investment to meet the aspirations of both tenants and the Council for the future of housing in the Borough.

How the Option Appraisal is progressing

We have now successfully completed a number of milestones, notably – the appointment of an Independent Tenants Adviser, a comprehensive stock condition survey, the establishment of the Housing Customer Futures Group and, just as importantly, the gathering of information from tenants and leaseholders about what is important to them in terms of both their homes and the services they receive. The process is complex, but please be reassured it is ongoing and we will make all attempts to keep you up to date through this newsletter and on our web pages on the Stockton Borough Council website

Latest News from the Housing Futures Customer Group

Members of the Housing Futures group are committed to keeping all tenants and leaseholders informed of our activities and letting them know that we are continuing to 'champion' the issues that are important to them.

At our last meeting we invited Glen Wilby, the Strategic Housing Advisor from the Government Office for the North East, to visit us. Glen agreed to meet with us to answer some of our concerns regarding the Government's Housing and Regeneration Bill and in particular proposed changes to the Stock Option process. As a result of our meeting he has agreed to arrange for Stockton Borough Council officers to meet with officers from the Department for Communities and Local Government in London to allow them to confirm the details and agree a suitable timescale for the completion of our option appraisal work. We will keep you all advised of progress on this matter.

Over the past couple of months we have also met with staff, tenants and leaseholders from Durham (Durham



City Council), Hartlepool (Housing Hartlepool) and Middlesbrough (Erimus Housing), to share ideas and learn from their previous experience of the options appraisal process. Everyone found these meetings extremely useful and they were particularly impressed with the way in which tenants and leaseholders in Hartlepool and Middlesbrough had used the option appraisal as a positive opportunity to shape the future of 'their' Housing Service.

Signed - The Housing Futures Customer Group



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BOROUGH COUNCIL

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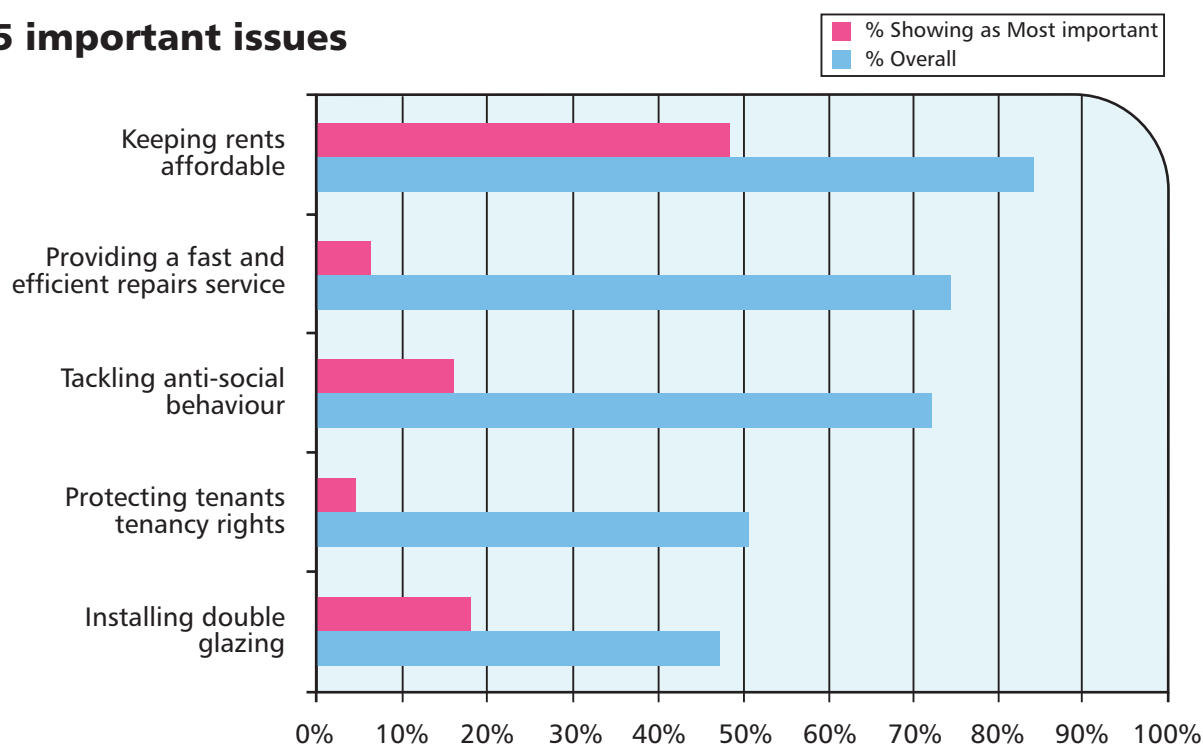
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council - Results of Tenants and Leaseholder questionnaire

Each statement on the questionnaire was given a score for every time it appeared on a returned questionnaire listed as a top five issue. The statements with the highest scores were identified as the five most important issues under our two main headings - “Your Home & Neighbourhood” & “Your Environment” and are shown in the graphs below. The blue bars show how many tenants/leaseholders listed the statement in their top five. The red bar indicates how many tenants/leaseholders listed the statement as the most important issue. The results shown here are the overall results for the Borough. Any differences that were identified for the individual areas of Stockton, Thornaby, Billingham or Rural areas, are highlighted in the text below each graph.

THE RESULTS:

Your Home & Neighbourhood: Overall result

Top 5 important issues



The top 5 were :

Keeping rents affordable proved to be the most important issue to tenants and leaseholders with **84%** of them listing this in their top five most important issues.

Providing efficient repairs services – second most important issue. **75%** of tenants and leaseholders listed this statement in their top five.

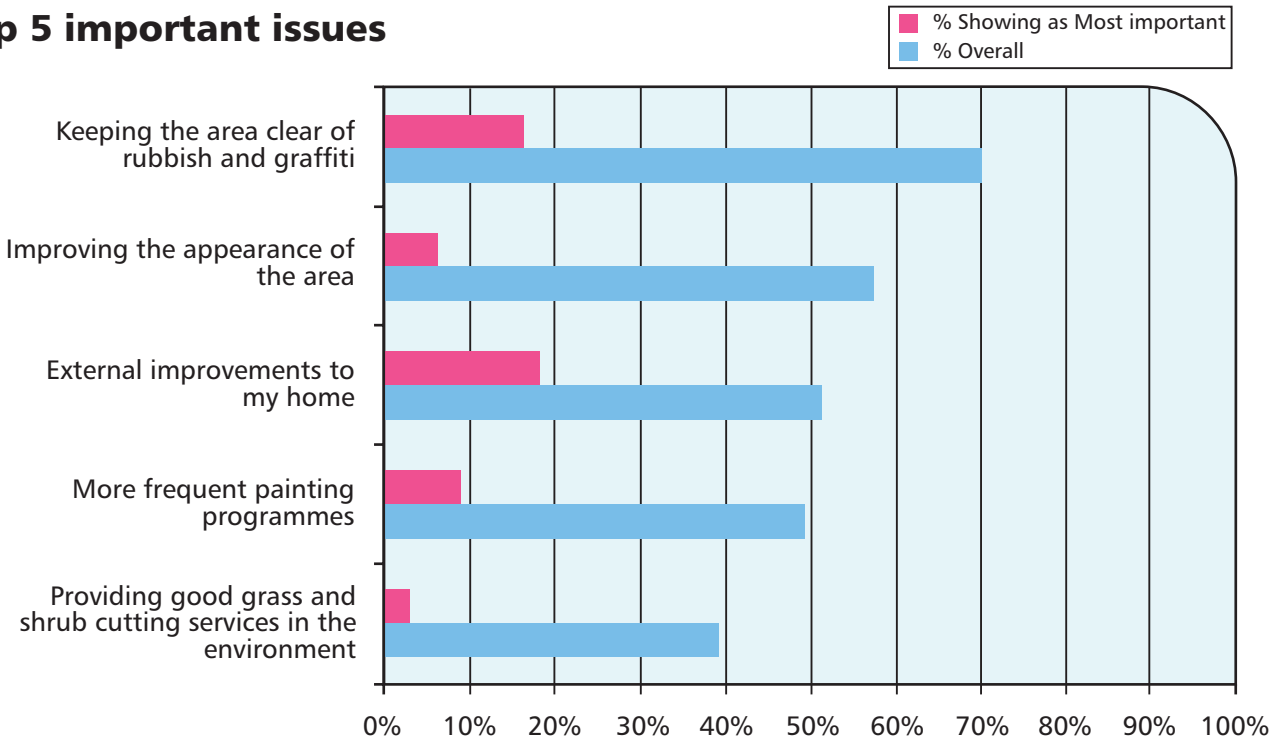
Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour - This followed close behind “repairs” with **72%**. 16% of those who replied listed it as their most important, clearly displaying the importance of this issue to many tenants and leaseholders.

Protecting tenancy rights (52%) and **Installing double glazing (47%)** were ranked as the 4th & 5th most important issues respectively.

When results were broken down by the four areas of Stockton, Thornaby, Billingham & Rurals, no differences were identified. Each area ranked the same issues shown above.

Your Environment: Overall result

Top 5 important issues



The top 5 :

Keeping the area clear of rubbish & graffiti - This issue featured in the top five of **70%** of all replies making it the most important issue overall.

Improving the appearance of the area - **57%** of tenants and leaseholders listed this statement in the top five.

External Improvements to my home – This issue was ranked third overall with 51% of tenants/leaseholders listing it in the top five.

Frequent painting programmes (49%) and **Grass & shrub cutting services (39%)** are 4th & 5th most important issues respectively.

Area Breakdown:

Once again, closer analysis of responses for the four areas of the borough (Stockton, Billingham, Thornaby and Rural areas) was undertaken and generally they highlighted the same top 5 issues. However there were some slight differences in the Rural areas and in Thornaby for example:

Thornaby - the top 4 issues were the same as the overall result but the 5th most important issue differed. **Providing off street parking** was listed by

37% of tenants and leaseholders living in Thornaby, replacing **“Grass and shrub cutting services”** “Off street parking” did not feature in the top five in any other area.

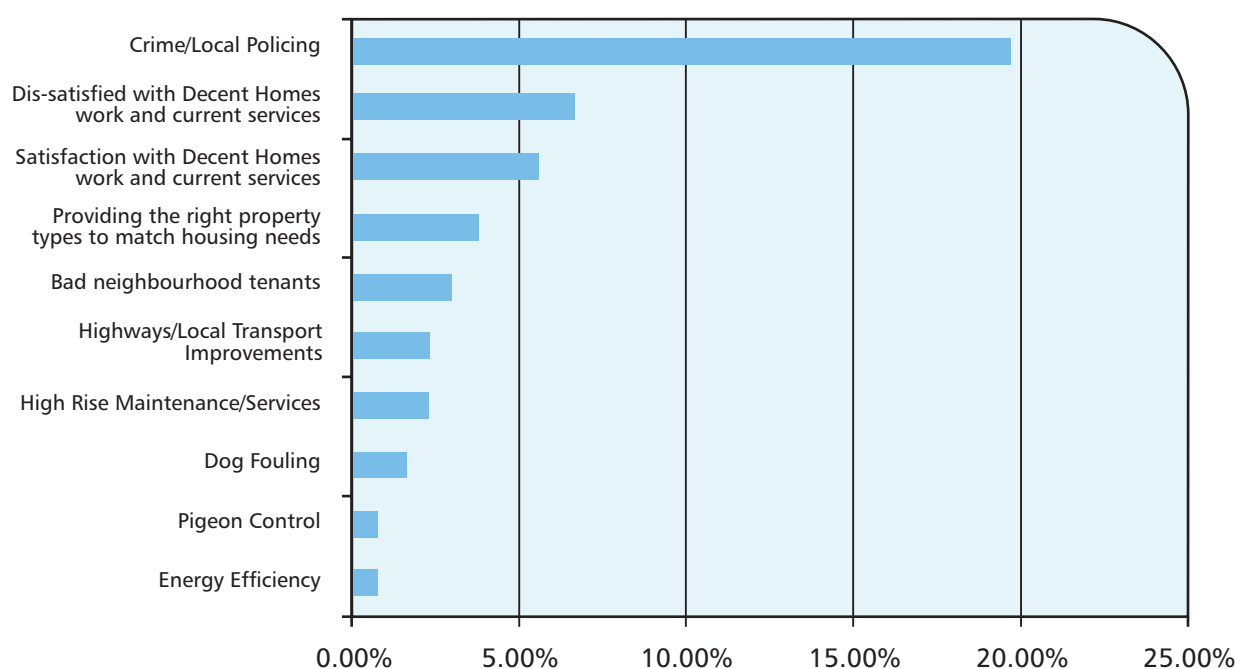
Rural area - **“Improving the appearance of the area”** did not feature as a priority, - **“Help with Garden Maintenance”** was ranked as being more important with **44%** of tenants in Rural areas ranking this in the top five.

Other issues and comments:

The questionnaire also provided a space for all tenants and leaseholders to provide information on other issues or comments they wished to make.

Most of the comments in this section were very similar and it was therefore possible to group responses under the 10 headings listed below :

Other important issues & comments



A small number of the issues and comments added to the questionnaire forms were specific individual complaints. In these instances all details have been forwarded to the appropriate team within Tristar Homes or the Council for action.

Want to know more or want to get involved?

Contact details:

For more information on the Options Appraisal and how to get more involved please contact either

Stockton Council – Options Appraisal Team:
Freephone 0800 432 0891
E-Mail: – stock.options@stockton.gov.uk

Tristar Homes Limited - Customer Involvement Team:
Phone: (01642) 527777 / 527676
E-Mail: resident.involvement@tristarhomes.co.uk

Engage Associates - Your Independent Tenants Adviser:

Phone: (01845 537145)
E-Mail: info@engage3.org

Your Home Your Say information webpages:
<http://www.stockton.gov.uk/citizenservices/32923/yourhomeyoursay> OR follow the links on the homepage of the Stockton Borough Council or Tristar Homes websites.