ABSTRACT
This report seeks Committee approval for the introduction of a customer satisfaction framework.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

   It is recommended that Members
   a) note the contents of this report
   b) agree to the introduction of a customer satisfaction framework subject to consultation with users of the Department’s services.
   A draft Customer Satisfaction Framework is attached to this report as Appendix A.

2. BACKGROUND

   One of the aims in the Housing Department's Service Plan 2003 - 2007 is to provide a high quality housing service that is responsive to the needs of the housing customer.

   Objectives within the Plan include

   - Develop customer satisfaction measures;
   - Ensure that service standards are achieved or exceeded in all activities;
   - Survey/monitor customer satisfaction regarding stock improvements.

   To achieve this aim and these objectives we need to be able to effectively measure customer satisfaction. Rather than embarking on a number of ad hoc, stand-alone customer surveys, we should aim to take a planned and co-ordinated approach to measuring customer satisfaction. We also need to make sure we use the data we obtain to shape our services. Planning our surveys in this way will prevent overloading service users with requests for their views. Indeed, Communities Scotland’s Regulatory Inspection of the Council’s housing services in 2004 recommended that
“The Council should plan its future tenant consultation work to ensure that it reduces the risk of overburdening tenants groups and activists and focuses on the issues tenants and residents wish to discuss.”

3. PROPOSALS

The proposals are outlined fully in Appendix 1, but are summarised here.

- The Department should form a Working Group of staff and service users to devise and introduce two annual customer satisfaction surveys, one for tenants and one for users of other Housing services.
- The Department should introduce a customer satisfaction check proforma for all policies, plans and strategies. The officers responsible for each should demonstrate how they have taken existing satisfaction data into account in writing their piece of work.
- The Department should require the Quality Assurance team to review all policies, plans and strategies before publication to ensure that they meet certain criteria, one of which will be to consider customer satisfaction data in writing their piece of work.
- The Department should report the results of the annual customer satisfaction surveys using a variety of methods including:
  - Annual conferences
  - Tenants newsletter
  - Angus.gov website
  - Housing Intranet
  - Leaflet

To help us get this right first time, money has been identified in the 2005/2006 research budget for the development of a customer satisfaction monitoring system. We anticipate that the brief for this research project will focus on working with service users and staff to agree what information all stakeholders need and design questionnaires accordingly.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There will be financial implications relating to the costs of forming the Working Group in terms of staff time, service user expenses, and also in design and production of surveys. Additional expenditure will result from the need to provide respondents with pre-paid return envelopes and from data input to allow analysis of the customer satisfaction data.

Tenders will be invited for a research project to develop the questionnaires and monitoring system. Expenditure for consultancy to develop customer satisfaction surveys and monitoring will be contained within the Department's research budget.
5. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

It is considered that the introduction of a customer satisfaction framework is compatible with human rights legislation.

6. CONSULTATION

In preparing this report, there has been consultation with the Chief Executive, Acting Director of Finance, Director of Law and Administration.

7. CONCLUSION

The Council needs to consider service users’ views when introducing and reviewing services. Customer views are also useful in identifying services which need to be reviewed. By introducing annual surveys, we can identify trends year-on-year and avoid overburdening customers with lots of different requests to complete surveys.

However, just as important will be ensuring that we use the data collected to make real changes to our services, and the proposed Framework contains measures to make this a reality.

Ron Ashton
Director of Housing

Note:- No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied upon to any material extent in preparing this report.
ANGUS COUNCIL
HOUSING
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION FRAMEWORK

1. **AIMS**

   - To improve services by taking account of customers' views
   - To allow service users to influence the development and review of housing services
   - To record and monitor the use of customer satisfaction data

2. **OBJECTIVES**

   - To collect, analyse and report satisfaction of Housing customers
   - To ensure the analysis of customers' satisfaction levels is a key factor in the review, development and planning of services
   - To ensure customers' views are central to decision-making, prioritising and planning
   - To focus improvement actions on areas which report lower satisfaction levels.

3. **CONTEXT STATEMENT**

   The Tenant Participation Strategy has involved tenants in decision-making in Housing. The Customer Satisfaction Framework will work alongside the Tenant Participation Strategy by providing evidence of customer opinion to support and assist tenant participation work and keep customers views central to planning and review.

4. **LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES AND STRATEGIES**

   - Communications Strategy

     In reporting on customer satisfaction, we will communicate the right information to the right people using the right medium at the right time.

   - Customer Care

     We will listen to our customers and be open and accountable.

   - Consultation/Involvement Strategy

     We will
     - gather information about views and needs
     - obtain feedback about service delivery
     - check organisation priorities against those of the public
     - enable people who use services, their carers and their representatives, to participate in the planning, development and delivery of services
     - take account of, and be responsive to views and needs, and use them to inform decision making
     - provide feedback
Equal Opportunities Policy

We will make sure that where particular groups experience our services differently we consider the reasons for this and take action to ensure no groups are disadvantaged.

Race Equality Scheme

We will consider the needs of people from minority ethnic communities when designing and implementing the Framework. We will monitor the experiences of different minority ethnic groups and ensure their views are considered when we review our services and introduce new ones.

Corporate and Departmental Performance Management Frameworks

We will ensure that information about customer satisfaction is a core driver for performance management. We will measure and monitor the things that are most important to our service users and feedback performance on priority areas.

Housing Service Plan

We will put the Housing customer at the centre of our services. As the core driver for service development and improvement, we will ensure that customer views and priorities are central to Service Plan production and delivery.

Homelessness Strategy

We will ensure that the views and priorities of people who use our homelessness service are central to decisions we take about that service.

Tenant Participation Strategy

We will ensure that tenants and other service users have the opportunity to tell us their views and to become involved in improving our services.

5. Why measure customer satisfaction?

Regulation and Inspection: Our services need to be customer-focused to meet national Performance Standards.

Efficiency gain: We can make real service improvements, and save money through improvements in efficiency, by allowing customers’ views to influence consultation and review.

Prioritising areas for improvement: As we cannot improve everything at the same time, information about satisfaction will direct us to consider which areas of our business we need to prioritise for improvement.

Increasing customer confidence and involvement: If our customers see that we’re listening to them, and taking action on what they’ve told us, they are more likely to feel good about the service and wish to become involved in how it is run.
The most effective use of customer satisfaction data will be when it is integrated within a performance management system as a fundamental driver in planning and reviewing services.

6. **Current situation**

Some Housing services currently measure customer satisfaction:

- **Stock Improvements**
  
  Tenants who receive planned improvements to their properties receive a survey form to complete and return. The PO Operations enters the data and the PO Technical feeds the views into the stock improvement programme. The data collected from these surveys have resulted in the following service improvements:

  a. Appointment of Stock Improvement Liaison Officers to improve liaison between the Council and tenants
  b. A Code of Conduct for Contractors

- **Repairs dissatisfaction**
  
  Each responsive repair request triggers the issuing of a letter which asks the tenant to reply if they are not satisfied with any part of the repair. The information is analysed by the QACO (GHS). The information obtained about contractors’ performance is fed back to contractors in meetings with the STO and targets for improvement set.

7. **What do we need to do?**

- Ensure that we ask users of the full range of our services what they think about them so we can focus on priorities
- Use the results of satisfaction measures to inform and drive service improvements
- Report the results of our satisfaction measurements to all stakeholders and take action where satisfaction with services is low.

8. **What resources do we have?**

- Quality Assurance and Compliance Officers both have a remit to “devise and implement customer satisfaction measures” and “report on findings”.
- The Department’s research budget contains £X for consultancy to develop customer satisfaction surveys and monitoring.

9. **How will we do it?**

Housing provides a wide range of services to our customers. We provide traditional landlord functions to our tenants, such as estate management, rent collection and repairs. However, we also provide services to people who are not necessarily tenants, such as homeless services, services for owners and special needs and
medical assessment. We need to make sure we obtain and act upon the views of all our customers.

We will do this by introducing two annual customer surveys:

Tenant Satisfaction Survey (TeSS)

This will ask general questions about our services and specific questions about the following services: Allocations, Repairs, Rents and arrears, Anti-social behaviour, Sheltered Housing, Gas Maintenance

Service User Satisfaction Survey (SUSS)

This will ask general questions about our services and specific questions about the following services: Allocations, homelessness, right-to-buy, special needs and medical assessment.

The content of these surveys will be reviewed every year and take into account what we already know about tenant and customer priorities. However, we should try to keep changes to a minimum so we can compare results year-on-year.

We will continue to collect satisfaction data from existing sources, stock improvement, repairs dissatisfaction and arrears, as long as they provide useful information that leads to action, and where they do not duplicate information that is collected using the two annual surveys.

10. How do we ensure that we use satisfaction data to drive service improvements?

We need to make sure that satisfaction data from TeSS and SUSS and other surveys are considered when we produce or revise plans and strategies. The following strategies, plans and policies need to take this data into account:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Departmental Service Plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Housing Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guide to Housing Options</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tenant Participation Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homelessness Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Temporary Accommodation and Support Strategy</td>
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<td>Information and Advice Strategy</td>
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<td>Consultation Strategy</td>
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<td>Community Safety and Substance Misuse Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home Energy Conservation Act Strategy (includes Fuel Poverty Strategy)</td>
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<td>Tayside Health and Homelessness Plan</td>
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<td>Homelessness Policy</td>
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<td>Allocations Policy</td>
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<td>Race Equality Scheme Functional Reviews</td>
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</table>
This list is not exhaustive and any new plans, strategies, and policies and any review of existing plans, strategies, and policies should evidence how customer satisfaction data has been used to influence conclusions, recommendations, and actions.

To help authors of plans, strategies, and policies meet this requirement, we will introduce a proforma for lead officers to complete which will demonstrate where they have used satisfaction data to formulate their conclusions, recommendations, and action plans. In this way we will be able to demonstrate the links between what customers tell us and the action we take.

We will also introduce a Quality Assurance check for all Departmental plans, strategies, and policies. One of the Quality Assurance team’s criteria will be to check that all relevant satisfaction data has been considered in the publication of the document. In this way we will ensure that the Department considers satisfaction data consistently and takes action accordingly.

We will ensure that customer satisfaction data is presented to staff and tenants using the following media:

- Annual conferences
- Tenants newsletters
- Website
- A-Z of services
- Housing Intranet
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What we will do</th>
<th>When we will do it</th>
<th>Who is responsible?</th>
<th>What extra resources do we need?</th>
<th>How will we evaluate and review?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form steering group of service representatives and service user representatives</td>
<td>Autumn 2005</td>
<td>QACOs</td>
<td>Service user expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agree budget and management responsibility for different parts of the process</td>
<td>Autumn 2005</td>
<td>Satisfaction Monitoring Steering Group</td>
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<td>Annual evaluation in report to stakeholders in Spring 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design brief and employ consultants to work with us on developing survey materials and monitoring tools</td>
<td>Autumn 2005</td>
<td>Research and Stats Officer</td>
<td>To be agreed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design questionnaires</td>
<td>Winter 2005</td>
<td>Satisfaction Monitoring Steering Group</td>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback from tenants groups and survey respondents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agree survey methods</td>
<td>Winter 2005</td>
<td>Satisfaction Monitoring Steering Group</td>
<td></td>
<td>Response level from different methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raise awareness among relevant agencies and service users</td>
<td>Spring 2006</td>
<td>Satisfaction Monitoring Steering Group</td>
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<td>Issue survey</td>
<td>Spring 2006</td>
<td>QACOs</td>
<td>Survey materials, prepaid envelopes, input data</td>
<td>Evaluation in analysis to stakeholders in Spring 2006</td>
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<td>Extract survey information</td>
<td>Spring 2006</td>
<td>QACOs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyse survey information</td>
<td>Spring 2006</td>
<td>QACOs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Present analysis to SMT, Housing Committee, Service Managers and Service Users in appropriate formats</td>
<td>Summer 2006</td>
<td>QACOs, as approved by the Satisfaction Monitoring Steering Group</td>
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<td>Introduce</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
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<td>Description</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Task</td>
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<td>satisfaction monitoring proforma for authors of policies strategies and plans</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Monitoring Steering Group</td>
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<td>Annual report to Housing Committee on the use of customer satisfaction data in Housing plans, strategies and policies and on service improvements made as a result.</td>
<td>Starting Summer 2007</td>
<td>QACOs</td>
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