

# **Beacon Council Scheme Round Five**

## **Housing Renewal Theme**

### ***Evidence on Current Practice, Best Practice and User Satisfaction***

#### **Background**

This paper presents key findings on current practice, best practice and user satisfaction in the selected theme. This information has been taken from the Round Five theme reports completed by the central government policy leads in each theme in late Spring 2003. The full theme reports can be found at:

[www.local.odpm.gov.uk/research/beacon/beacon.htm](http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/research/beacon/beacon.htm)

The user satisfaction data and analysis was completed by MORI in August 2003 and the full report on all themes is available at

[www.local.odpm.gov.uk/research/beacon5.pdf](http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/research/beacon5.pdf)

The evidence base on theme research and user satisfaction is designed to assist the Independent Advisory Panel in creating the selection criteria for the scheme. It is also designed to assist local authorities in applying for the scheme and in improving services generally. The research evidence base on the Beacon Council Scheme is crucial in identifying current and best practice in service provision whilst taking into account the satisfaction of those that receive the services. This evidence base also enables local authorities to identify areas for improvement as well as potential areas for innovation in attempting to achieve continuous improvement in service provision.

The research evidence base can also demonstrate whether the scheme is achieving its long-term objective of improving services. Warwick University Business School has commenced work on a three to five year ODPM / IDeA funded project entitled *An Impact Evaluation of the Beacon Council Scheme* and this will yield further evidence shortly and greatly contribute to the future evidence base on service improvement.

#### **Section A – Current and Best Practice**

##### **Vision and Strategy**

A private sector renewal strategy that:

- is based on a sound understanding of wider housing markets in the area and region and has clear links to the authorities' Housing Strategy;
- is based on a good understanding of the private sector housing in their area, including its condition, and the circumstances of its occupants;
- takes an approach to renewal that reflects the issues identified; and
- complements other, relevant strategies and policies including those for dealing with social sector stock.

## **Consultation**

- A private sector renewal strategy that is developed in consultation with the full range of stakeholders both in and outside the authority, including owners, tenants, and landlords.

## **Partnership**

- Works in partnership with other organisations to help ensure that its approach to renewal is effective (for example if an authority has a high proportion of elderly people living in poor condition homes they could forge partnership working arrangements with health professionals, HIAs and other relevant organisations).
- Works in partnership with others both in and outside the authority to make the best use of other resources available to help improve condition – including housing condition, in all tenures - in problem areas, (for example the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund or New Deal for Communities).

## **Innovation**

- Maximises resources available to the authority for renewal for example by accessing or leveraging in funds from private lenders.
- Provides assistance through third parties where this has benefits for the authority (for example, the third party has expertise in developing particular products, has experience in administering them and/or can lever in private funds).

## **Actions**

- Does not rely solely on grants, but promotes sustainable home ownership by offering other options for financial assistance that help owners and tenants make better use of their own resources, and stretch the authorities' further.
- Has developed effective means of providing practical assistance for owners and tenants.
- Has an organised system for reacting to information received about the condition of private sector homes.
- Takes an effective, proactive approach to dealing with conditions in the private rented sector.

## **Outcomes**

Potentially:

- demonstrates increases in the proportion of fit properties, number of properties improved or homes made decent;
- a certain percentage of expenditure is on either private sector renewal from private lenders, or on assistance as loans or equity release rather than grants.

## Consumer and user satisfaction

- Seeks feedback on service provided, which indicates high levels of satisfaction on objective measures, for example speed and quality of service (generally speaking consumers are unlikely to be highly satisfied to be offered a loan instead of a grant!)

## Section B - User Satisfaction

There is no national quantitative data which outlines the role local authorities play in developing and implementing a comprehensive renewal strategy for housing in the *private* sector, with research in this area primarily focused on *social* housing.

However, there is a wealth of national quantitative research on housing which provides some context for this theme from the point of view of all households, private tenants and owner occupiers. The main data source for housing is the ‘Survey of English Housing’ conducted on an annual basis on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). The most recent findings date from 2002, and are based on 9,800 households across England, although we have included data from previous studies where relevant.

The tables below provide general views about how satisfied people in England are with their accommodation. While overall views are largely positive, it is evident that renters – both social and private - are more negative than other owner occupiers.

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### Satisfaction with accommodation by tenure

<i>Base: All households (29,400).</i>	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither / Nor	Dissatisfied	Slightly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>All tenures</b>	<b>90</b>	60	30	3	<b>6</b>	4	2
All owners	<b>95</b>	67	28	2	<b>3</b>	2	1
All social rented sector tenants	<b>80</b>	47	33	5	<b>15</b>	8	7
All rented privately	<b>81</b>	43	38	6	<b>13</b>	8	5

*Source: Survey of English Housing, ODPM (2000/01).*

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**Q** *Taking everything into account, do you think the housing costs of your home represent good or poor value for money?*

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<i>Base: All GB residents (2,009).</i>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Poor</b>
	%	%
All	73	15
Owner occupiers	78	11
Social rented	64	24
<b><i>Rented privately</i></b>	<b>53</b>	<b>34</b>

*Source: MORI Omnibus (2001).*

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The Survey of English Housing also addresses the issue of renting, focusing on both social and private renters' attitudes towards their landlord. On the whole, private tenants are generally more positive than other tenants about their landlord; for instance, private renters are more likely to say their landlord keeps them informed and to be satisfied with the repairs and maintenance carried out by their landlord.

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**How good landlord is at keeping residents informed of things that affect them as tenants**

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<i>Base: All social and private renting households.</i>	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Fairly good</b>	<b>All good</b>	<b>Fairly bad</b>	<b>Very bad</b>	<b>All bad</b>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Council tenants	30	48	78	12	10	22
RSL tenants	42	42	84	9	7	16
All social sector tenants	33	46	80	11	9	20
<b><i>Rented privately</i></b>	<b>48</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>16</b>

*Source: Survey of English Housing, ODPM (2000/01).*

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**How much account landlord takes of tenants' views**

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<i>Base: All social and private renting households.</i>	<b>A lot</b>	<b>A little</b>	<b>None at all</b>
	%	%	%
Council tenants	18	50	32
RSL tenants	36	42	23
All social sector tenants	23	48	29
<b><i>Rented privately</i></b>	<b>51</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>18</b>

*Source: Survey of English Housing, ODPM (2000/01).*

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### Satisfaction with the way the landlord carries out repairs and maintenance

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<i>Base: All social and private renting households.</i>	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither/ Nor	Slightly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Landlord doesn't do any repairs
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Council tenants	25	34	8	14	19	1
RSL tenants	36	30	7	12	14	1
All social sector tenants	28	33	8	13	18	1
<b><i>Rented privately</i></b>	<b>43</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>

*Source: Survey of English Housing, ODPM (2000/01).*

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As can be seen from the table below, although the proportion of tenants who are satisfied with their landlord overall is consistent across all social and private renting households, the number who are very satisfied is highest among *private* tenants.

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### Overall satisfaction with landlord

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<i>Base: All social and private renting households.</i>	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	<i>Satisfied</i>	Neither/ Nor	Slightly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	<i>Dissatisfied</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Council tenants	24	43	67	11	12	11	23
RSL tenants	26	38	64	11	9	7	16
All social sector	27	41	68	11	11	9	20
<b><i>Rented privately</i></b>	<b>44</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>

*Source: Survey of English Housing, ODPM (2000/01).*

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The issue of *owner occupier* household repairs and maintenance is a key theme covered in the most recent Survey of English Housing. Results show that while half of owner occupiers would take out a loan from a commercial lender to pay for major repairs to their house, a third would not take out a loan from their local council largely to prevent getting into debt. The tables below demonstrates these findings:

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**How owner occupier households would pay for major repairs by age of household reference person**

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<i>Base: 9,800 households.</i>	<i>%</i>
Loan from commercial lender	48
Draw on savings	41
Borrow from family member/close friend	12
Try to get grant from local council	9
Draw on flexible mortgage flexibility	9
Other	3
Would not be able to pay for repair	5

*Source: Survey of English Housing, ODPM (2002).*

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**Whether owner occupier households would consider soft loan<sup>1</sup> from council, if available, to pay for major repairs by age of household reference person**

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<i>Base: 9,800 households.</i>	<i>%</i>
Would consider loan from council	58
Would not consider loan from council	34
Don't know	7
Have too much income or savings	1

*Source: Survey of English Housing, ODPM (2002).*

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**Owner occupier households who would not consider soft loan from council to pay for major repairs: by reason**

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<i>Base: All households who would not consider soft loan.</i>	<i>%</i>
Don't want to get into debt	48
Don't need any help from the council	18
Easier elsewhere (banks, building societies)	14
Wouldn't qualify: income, savings	14
Prefer to borrow from family or friends	7
Council asks too many questions	6
Too much council administration etc	5
Other	16

*Source: Survey of English Housing, ODPM (2002).*

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<sup>1</sup> Very low interest or interest free, secured on the value of the home. Such loans are not available at present.

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**January 2004**