



**Customer Opinion Panel Minutes  
Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2015 – Council Chambers**

**Gosport Borough Council**

Corinne Waterfield	-	Housing Services Manager
Charles Harman	-	Head of Operational Services
Denise Hudson	-	Resident Involvement Officer
Sam Downing	-	Resident Involvement Officer
Syed Haque	-	Housing Officer
Laura Wise	-	Administration Officer
Nye Onessy	-	GAIN (Gosport Advice & Information Network)

**Guests:**

Mrs S Greenwood	Mr B Wakefield	Mr K Burns	Mr Milligan
Mrs R Hill	Mrs V Carter	Ms L Hay	Mrs Milligan
Mrs M Cook	Mr G Lidgley	Mr B Hudson	Miss Bellerby
Miss Kimbley-Brown	Ms S Johnson	Mrs V Twyman	Mrs L Smith
Mr P Batty	Councillor Bateman	Mr Cantle	
Cllr Mrs Batty	Miss S Bellerby		

**Apologies:**

Mrs Spelzini	Ms J Rowe	Mrs A Barnes	Miss J Reed
Mrs W Burnett	Mr J Kennewell	Mrs J Carter	Mr R Forster
Mrs P Grant			

		<b>Action</b>
1.	<p><b>Welcome and Introduction</b></p> <p>Denise Hudson opened the meeting and gave introductions.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Mr Nye Onessy – GAIN (Gosport Advice and Information Network)</b></p> <p>Nye Onessy promoted the GAIN project. He explained that the project will provide advice and information about employment, housing, debt and money management, welfare benefits and health.</p> <p>He stated that the project will offer free money skills workshops and on-line computer training to the residents of Gosport and in particular to those who qualify for the new Universal credit.</p> <p>The website address is <a href="http://www.gain-gosport.org.uk">www.gain-gosport.org.uk</a> if you would like more information about this service or if you are interested in</p>	

	volunteering to help promote this project.	
2	<p><b>Corinne Waterfield – Head of Housing Services Presentation on the Allocations Policy</b></p> <p>Corinne Waterfield gave a presentation on the proposed changes to the allocations (please see attached presentation).</p> <p>Questions raised:</p> <p><b>Q: Will the process go back to the old way- which was three refusals and then you would go to the bottom of the list?</b> A: Not as such but there will be a process that if people repeatedly refuse we may cancel their application; we want to try and avoid this and encourage people to think about what they really want before they bid.</p> <p><b>Q: What about the people that just keep bidding to stay on the housing register?</b> A: It does seem that some people just wait on the “perfect” property. We are looking at how we can improve the way in which we advertise properties. This includes providing more information including the location of the property, room sizes etc - providing customers with more information and helping them to decide whether or not a property is suitable before placing a bid.</p> <p><b>Q: What about the unsuitable properties? It has been known that the unsuitable ones have been “pushed” on people to view and then once they are viewed it becomes clear that the property is unsuitable for example “no garden”? Can someone other than a housing officer, for example an independent person do the viewing instead?</b> A: Again this goes back to the advertising of the property. If the advert is clear from the start then people will get a better idea of what a property has to offer and should not be shown unsuitable ones. Having a garden is not deemed as a necessity unless for medical reasons. With regards to getting an independent person to carry out a viewing rather than a housing officer this will be looked at as part of the voids review however, a housing officer would have good knowledge of a property’s location, schools and local amenities which could help the prospective tenants build a picture of life living in that property. There are certainly pros and cons that need to be considered.</p> <p><b>Q: What can be done about properties that are looking shabby and are being refused?</b> A: We do look at what can be improved and we have a kitchen and bathroom programme too. Refusals are often the location of the property or because the advertising has not been clear.</p> <p>Ted Withers from Woodlands House stated that he had assisted in an ‘open day’ at Woodlands House last year. He explained that</p>	

	<p>the open day gave potential customers the chance to see if Sheltered Housing is something that would suit them. It also allowed customers an opportunity to look around the sheltered scheme and individual flats. He stated that giving them the opportunity to look at a furnished flat gave them a good idea of room sizes and the lay out. Ted felt that the open day was a good way of promoting sheltered housing and helping potential customers to decide whether or not this type of housing is suitable for them.</p> <p><b>Q: There was a TV programme recently called “How to get a Council house” - There was a bidding system, the top 3 bidders all attended the viewing together and it seemed to be a good idea. Could this system work for Gosport Borough Council?</b></p> <p>A: We are aware of this system and there are positives and negatives regarding this system. There is a concern that this process could encourage “back handers”.</p> <p><b>Q: With reference to the homelessness prevention on your presentation, would this not encourage parents to “throw out” co-habiting or married couples that live with them?</b></p> <p>A: No, as we would be looking at a managed move rather than a crisis move. We will make the policy clearer that this only applies to households that would be considered to be in ‘priority need’ under the homeless legislation.</p> <p><b>Q: Recently someone that I know moved from a three bedroom house to a one bedroom house and only had two days to move, which is a big task to ask as they have packing and items to dispose of. I think this is a big ask. Can we give an extension?</b></p> <p>A: The process for allocating properties is being reviewed through the voids review. However, we have to consider the impact that changes to our procedures will have on the void turnaround time.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Charles Harman – Head of Operational Services Presentation on the annual STAR Survey results for 2014/2015</b></p> <p>Charles Harman gave a presentation on the results of the STAR Survey (please see attached presentation).</p> <p>Charles pointed out that some of the questions asked on the 2014/15 survey were different to previous year’s questions. He added that the responses given by tenants and leaseholders are confidential and the results provide an overview as to how the Council is performing and identifying where improvements can be made.</p> <p>The full report detailing the results of the STAR survey can be found on the Gosport Borough Council website</p>	

	<p><a href="http://www.gosport.gov.uk">www.gosport.gov.uk</a></p> <p><b>Questions raised:</b></p> <p><b>Q: Who would pay for the upgrade to Kier's computer systems and when would the upgrade take place?</b>  <b>A:</b> Kier would be responsible for the payment and installation of a new computing system, although this has not been discussed and I will keep you updated of any news relating to the upgrade.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Any other business</b></p> <p><b>Denise Hudson, Resident Involvement Officer</b>  <b>Resident Involvement Update</b></p> <p><b>Tenancy Fraud Workshop:</b>  Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2015 6pm-7.30pm at Gosport Borough Council. Denise confirmed that this workshop had been organised following a request by tenants at a previous Customer Opinion Panel meeting in August last year. Please speak with Denise Hudson or Sam Downing in the Resident Involvement Team if you would like any information on this or would like to attend.</p> <p><b>Contract Monitoring Group:</b>  Denise explained that a small sub group of tenants visited the Kier depot to see the work that they did there. This was well received and another group are due to visit the depot in March. Denise also confirmed that a small sub group were due to look at the planned over cladding work currently taking pace at St Johns Square and that the groups would report back to the next Contract Monitoring Group.</p> <p>A Contract Monitoring Group will be established soon to monitor Novus, the recently appointed painting contractor.</p> <p><b>Getting Involved leaflet:</b>  Denise stated the 'Opportunities for Getting Involved' flyer will be replaced with a new leaflet which a group of involved tenants had helped to design. Denise thanked those tenants who had been involved with this and confirmed that the leaflet would be sent to the 'reading panel' before being printed and distributed.</p> <p><b>Estate Walkabouts:</b>  Denise explained that she is reviewing the Estate walkabouts and will update tenants at the next Customer Opinion Panel Meeting.</p>	
5.	<p><b>Date of next COP</b></p>	

**Distribution:-**

Attendees, HMT, Chairman of Community Board, Housing Spokesmen, Group Leaders,  
Web Site

# COP 18/2/15

## Allocations Policy Review

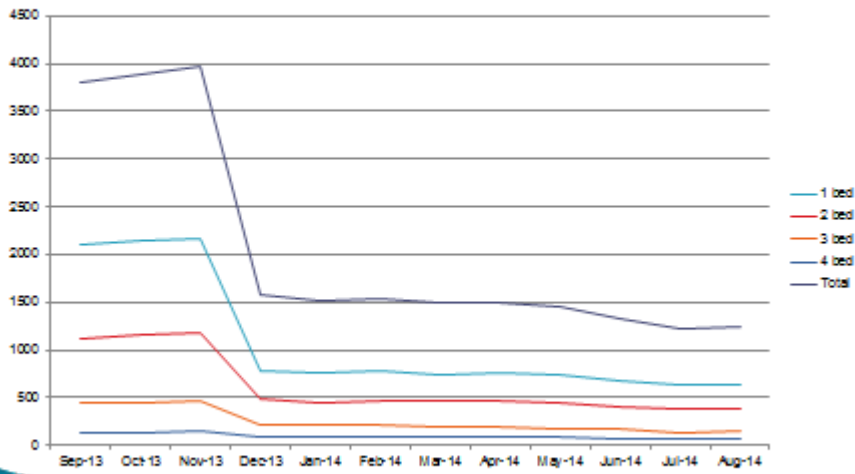


### Scheme of Allocation

- ▶ Main changes
- ▶ Timetable

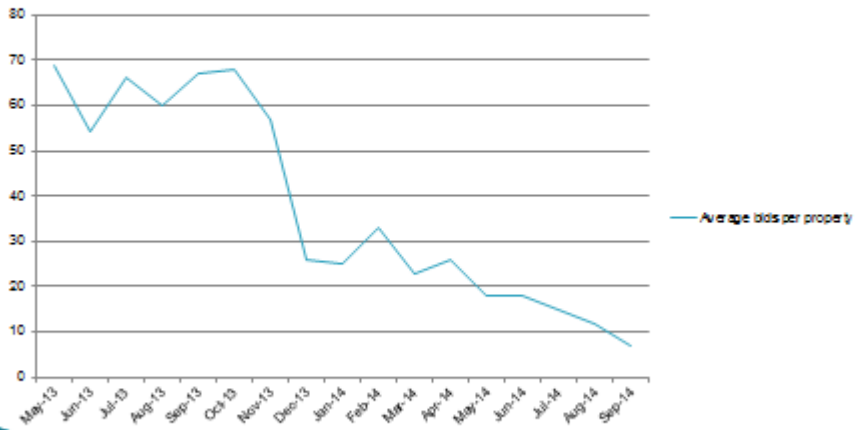


# Housing Register Numbers



# Bids per property

Average bids per property



## Bids by property type

Property type	Average Bids
1 bed	5.8
1 bed elderly designated	13.1
1 bed sheltered	2.6
1 bed multi-storey flats	3.6
2 beds	27.2
2 bed sheltered	4
2 bed multi-storey flats	2.5
3 beds	6.3
4 beds	14



## Repeat Refusals

- ▶ Applicants to the Housing Register will get two offers of accommodation.
- ▶ If refuse second offer application will be cancelled.
- ▶ Right to review if application cancelled
- ▶ Hope to improve quality of bids and speed of allocation





## Bedroom Size Criteria.

- ▶ Extend eligibility for three bedroom properties to families with 2 children (provided there are no families who are eligible for 3 beds).
- ▶ Properties will be advertised for 2 and 3 bed need – with preference to families with 3 bed need.
- ▶ Risks been assessed and are manageable.



## Homelessness Prevention

- ▶ Points will be awarded to households who are working with the Housing Advice and Prevention Team.
- ▶ Allowed to bid or offered a direct let.
- ▶ Once no longer actively involved eligibility for points removed.



## Direct Lettings

- ▶ Properties that have been unsuccessfully advertised will be offered to homeless or homeless prevention cases without the need for bidding.
- ▶ One offer only (same as currently)
- ▶ Seeking to address properties which are being advertised multiple times.



## Financial Qualification Criteria

- ▶ Introduce discretion for Housing Services Manager to agree qualification for applicants
  - With urgent medical need
  - Who are unable to secure alternative housing.
- ▶ In response to feedback regarding particular cases



## Conclusion

- ▶ Measures are being introduced to encourage better quality bidding
- ▶ Intended to increase number of bids for certain types of property and
- ▶ Better reflect housing needs.



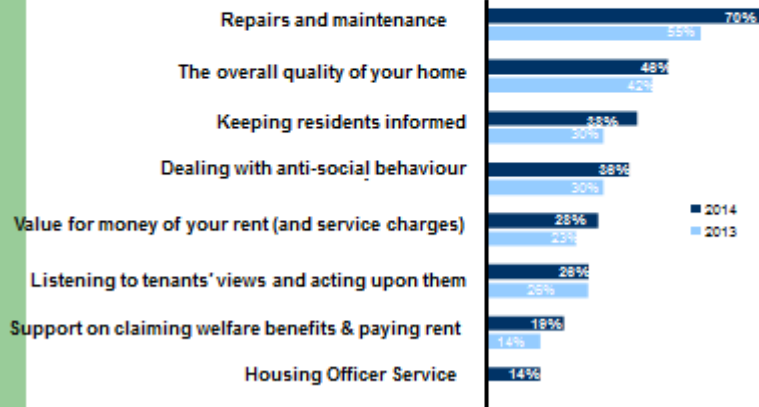
## STAR Survey Results 2014-15

Charles Harman

### Method

- The survey was conducted by telephone during October & November 2014
- A total of **525** tenants and leaseholders were interviewed by telephone
- **449** interviews for General Needs tenants, **29** interviews for Sheltered tenants and **47** for Leaseholders
- The full Survey will be available on the Gosport Council Website soon

## Your Service Priorities



## Your Neighbourhood



## Your Views

Measure	2012 (%)	2013 (%)	2014 (%)
Satisfied with services provided	83%	85%	82%
Satisfied with quality of home	84%	80%	77%
Satisfied with neighbourhood as a place to live	90%	82%	81%
Satisfied with value for money for your rent	89%	90%	84%
Satisfied with repairs and maintenance service	78%	75%	71%
Satisfied with listening to views and acting upon them	70%	67%	65%
Keeping tenants informed	85%	86%	79%

## Perceptions of Housing Services

Perceptions of Gosport BC Housing Services are very positive, with the following results in this section:

- 83% feel Gosport BC Housing Services has **friendly and approachable staff** (86%)
- 79% said they **trust their landlord** (86%)
- 77% agree that Gosport BC Housing Services **provides an effective and efficient service** (82%)
- 77% agree that Gosport BC Housing Services **is providing the service tenants expect from their landlord** (82%)
- 76% feel Gosport BC Housing Services **treats its residents fairly** (85%)

## Responsive Repairs Service

Satisfaction levels are highest with the workers and their conduct whilst doing the repair

		2013	2012
• keeping dirt and mess to a minimum:	92%	(96%)	(94%)
• attitude of workers:	93%	(96%)	(92%)
• Contractor doing work you expected	86%	(92%)	(90%)
• The service you received on last occasion	92%	(92%)	(91%)
• Speed taken to do work	82%	(90%)	(87%)
• Quality of work	85%	(90%)	(87%)

On those areas that were poorer last time around...

• being told when workers would call	79%	(87%)	(78%)
• being able to make an appointment:	75%	(88%)	(80%)
• The repair being done 'right first time'	73%	(86%)	(79%)

## Areas Improving

Results in this section show fairly average satisfaction levels:

- **64%** (57%<sub>2013</sub>) (53%<sub>2012</sub>) are satisfied with the way Gosport Housing Services **deals with ASB**
- **60%** (56%<sub>2013</sub>) (52%<sub>2012</sub>) are satisfied with the way Gosport Housing Services **deals with complaints**

## Needing Improvement

	2012	2013	2014
Satisfied with quality of home	84%	80%	77%
value for money for your rent	89%	90%	84%
keeping tenants informed	85%	86%	79%
Satisfied with repairs and maintenance service	78%	75%	71%

## COMPARED TO OTHERS

Table 32014 for Gosport BC Housing Services against similar housing providers (excluding no opinion results)

Core questions	Gosport	Peer group 2011 -2014*		
		Lower quartile	Median	Upper quartile
Satisfied with services provided	82%	87.1	90.0	90.6
Satisfied with quality of home	77%	86.8	87.9	88.6
Satisfied with neighbourhood as a place to live	81%	87.1	88.3	91.0
Satisfied with value for money for your rent	84%	86.0	86.4	88.0
Satisfied with value for money for your service charges	73%	78.4	81.0	82.2
Satisfied with repairs and maintenance service	71%	81.0	86.0	87.0
Satisfied with listening to views and acting upon them	65%	68.7	77.0	81.0

■ = Upper quartile 
 ■ = above median 
 ■ = below median 
 ■ = Lower quartile



## SUMMARY

- The 2014 results are generally positive, with the majority of indicators similar to previous results.

The following are areas of concern:

- Satisfied with quality of home
- value for money for your rent
- keeping tenants informed
- Satisfied with repairs and maintenance service
  
- We need to understand why we are lower than other councils
  
- Again, as last year there is much detail to be worked through to understand the full picture

Questions?

# MANAGING EMPTY PROPERTIES UPDATE

Charles Harman

## The Problem

Empty Property Turnaround times: Key to key

2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
23 days	29 days	32 days	29 days	36 days	51 days (April/Dec)

## Are too many properties being refused?

2013-14	No of void properties at each stage	% of properties for letting		offers
				210
Accept 1 <sup>st</sup> time	153	73%	Refused 1 <sup>st</sup> Time	57
Accept 2 <sup>nd</sup> time	33	16%	Refused 2 <sup>nd</sup> Time	24
Accept 3 <sup>rd</sup> time	16	8%	Refused 3 <sup>rd</sup> time	8
Accept 4 <sup>th</sup> time	8	4%	Refused 4 <sup>th</sup> time	0
		100%		299
To let 210 properties it is required to make 299 offers – a let to offer ratio of 1:1.42				

## Do Refusals Matter?

To let	Let first time	% accepted	% refused	Turnaround time (cal/days)	Turnaround time (w/days)	
210	153	73	27	51.21	36.58	7.33 days between 73% & 100% 1 <sup>st</sup> time let  Penalties should see 1.67 days improvement (51.21 to 49.54 days)
210	160	76	24	50.31	35.93	
210	166	79	21	49.54	35.38	
210	170	81	19	48.76	34.83	
210	176	84	16	47.99	34.28	
210	183	87	13	47.22	33.73	
210	189	90	10	46.45	33.18	
210	195	93	7	45.68	32.63	
210	201	96	4	44.91	32.08	
210	208	99	1	44.14	31.53	
210	210	100	0	43.88	31.34	

## Do Property Types Matter?

Type of property	No. let first time	% let first time
let first time (Houses)	41/48	85%
let first time (flats & bungalows; mature lets: all floors)	29/37	78%
let first time (flats & bungalows: elderly designated; all floors/bed sizes)	23/31	74%
let first time (elderly designated)	23/31	74%
let first time (flats & bungalows; mature lets: ground floor)	11/15	73%
Properties let first time (ALL)	153/210	73%
let first time (all flats excl. sheltered)	61/85	72%
let first time (flats & maisonettes: upper floors general needs 2 & 3 beds)	18/27	67%
let first time (flats: general needs all floors all bed sizes)	33/50	66%
let first time (flats & maisonettes: general needs all bed sizes)	48/74	65%
let first time (flats & maisonettes: all floors general needs 1 beds)	30/47	64%
let first time (maisonettes: general needs all floors all bed sizes)	15/24	62%
let first time (all sheltered all bed sizes excl bungalows)	9/15	60%
let first time (flats & maisonettes: upper floor general needs all bed sizes)	25/43	58%
let first time (flats & maisonettes: upper floors general needs 1 beds)	14/26	54%

## Are Kier taking too long?

Average number of days that an empty property is with Kier to undertake repairs

2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15 (April-Dec)
32	19	20	21

## Are we taking too long to offer?

refusal to allocations date = 1<sup>st</sup> offer = 9.9 days

refusal to allocations date = 2<sup>nd</sup> offer = 5.04 days

refusal to allocations date = 3<sup>rd</sup> offer = 17.5 days

96/207 allocated before Kier return date = 46%

111/207 allocated on or after Kier return date = 54%

**Questions?**