



# Somerset Council

## **Tenants' Strategic Group – 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

### **2023/24 Housing Performance and Finance Report Quarter 3, October to December 2023.**

**This matter is the responsibility of Councillor Smith Roberts, executive lead member for communities.**

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#### **1. Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report**

This report provides an update on housing performance through key performance measures and financial information for the third quarter of 2023/24 (October to December 2023).

#### **2. Recommendations**

The Tenants' Strategic Group is asked to note content of the housing performance scorecard and finance report for quarter 3 (October to December).

#### **3. Background and Full details of the Report**

The Housing Performance Scorecard is a tool to measure our performance in key areas. The scorecard was last presented to Tenants' Strategic Group (TSG) in November 2023 covering the performance in Q2 (July to September 2023). This report covers the third quarter of 2023/24 October to December 2023.

This report includes the (data) Tenant Satisfaction Measures which the regulator will ask us to submit in March 2024. The total number of measures reported is 35, the breakdown of measures is as follows: Customer 10 (2 new), Rent Recovery 2, Supported Housing 1, Lettings and Voids 1, Housing Repairs 2, Tenancy Management 6 (1 new), Compliance 10 (3 new), Asset Management 2 (2 new),

Development 1.

27 indicators have targets, 16 are green (on target or better), 6 are red (off target but targets are 100%) and 5 are amber.

**4. Risk Assessment (if appropriate)**

A risk assessment is not required to accompany this report.

**5. Are there any Finance / Resource, Legal implications?**

There are no financial implications directly to do with the recommendations in this report.

**6: Are there any Equality and Diversity Implications?**

There are no equality impact assessment linked with this report.

**7. Are there any Data Protection Implications?**

There are no data protection implications linked with this report.

**Performance Report**

**8. Customer**

**8.1 Customer – Complaints**

Indicator	Target 2023-24	Amber Threshold	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23
<b>Customer</b>					
% of stage 1 complaints closed in 10 working days (as per policy HRA) (TSM CH02)	93%	80%	71%	68%	29%
All HRA Complaints relative to the size of the landlord per 1000 homes.	2.27	3.93	5.37	3.93	2.68
Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales.	93%	83%	87%	86%	87%

8.1.2 As part of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) introduced by the Social Housing Regulator, complaints data is now reported to show the % of all complaints that are answered within the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code timescales. This measure includes all complaints which were closed within policy timescales, and any complaints that were extended in line with the Code.

8.1.3 A decision was made in December to extend all stage 1 complaints which fell due over the Christmas and New Year period by an additional 10 working days, in recognition of the service having skeletal staff over the festive period. Although this affected the percentage of complaints responded to within policy timescales for December, all residents were contacted in advance and advised of a new response date, and 87% of complaints overall in December were responded to within the extension timescales in line with the Complaint Handling Code.

8.1.4 Complaint numbers fell during quarter 3, but this is typical towards the end of the calendar year based on previous years' data. The new Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code which will become statutory as from April 2024 states that complaints should be welcomed and a higher number of complaints should not cause concern, as it demonstrates that residents feel they are able to bring complaints to their landlord and know they will be listened to, and the complaint acted upon.

## 8.2 Customer - Lettable Standard Satisfaction

Indicator	Target 2023-24	Amber Threshold	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23
<b>Customer</b>					
% of new tenants satisfied with the lettable standard of the property	90%	85%	100%	N/A	N/A

8.2.1 These surveys are undertaken on the phone. The number of new lets each month for quarter 3 are below:

October 2023: 30 properties let, (5 responses, satisfied or very satisfied), 100% satisfaction

November 2023: 48 properties let.

December 2023: 42 properties let.

8.2.2 Tenant satisfaction data was not available during November and December 2023 due to key staff absence.

## 8.3 Customer - Repair Satisfaction

8.3.1 Work continues to investigate a software and telephone survey solution. A software solution will ideally integrate with our housing system and carry out repair surveys however we are also we are discussing costs and feasibility of telephone surveys through an independent company.

8.3.2 Satisfaction with repairs forms part of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey completed in May 2023 and November 2023, by an independent company. The TSM question focuses on repairs in last 12 months. 76% of customers surveyed in May

2023 and 79% surveyed in November 2023 were satisfied with the repair carried out in their home in the last 12 months. The combined result was 78% which is above median of 76% (comparison with other landlords by Acuity). Results were reported to TSG in March 2024 and will be submitted to the Regulator in April 2024.

#### 8.4 Customer – compliments

Indicator	Target 2023-24	Amber Threshold	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23
<b>Customer</b>					
Number of compliments received	n/a	n/a	6	2	4

8.4.1 We have been receiving compliments and the total for the year to date ending December 2023 is 43. Formally recorded compliment volumes in the service have dropped from 2022/23, and so we are currently looking at ways in which compliments are recorded to ensure this data is accurately captured.

#### 8.5 Customer – Overall Satisfaction

Indicator	Target 2023-24	Amber Threshold	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23
<b>Customer</b>					
Overall tenant satisfaction (TSM Results)	77%	75%	76%(May 23)	73% (Nov 23)	73% (Nov 23)

8.5.1 During 2023 we have surveyed twice using an independent company, called Acuity, once in May and again in November to obtain our statistical sample. The combined May and November results show an overall satisfaction of 75% for the year.

8.5.2 Results from the last survey in 2023-24 were obtained in November 2023, 73% satisfaction. To provide context, the Housemark Pulse results for the first quarter of the year show 70% a median and 80% as upper quartile. A report presenting all TSM survey results was presented to TSG in March 2024 and will be reported again after the next survey in May 2024.

#### 8.6 Customer – Call Statistics

Indicator	Target 2023-24	Amber Threshold	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23
<b>Customer</b>					
Average wait time in the repairs queue	00:01:00	00:05:00	00:02:49	00:03:19	00:04:06
% of abandoned calls in the repairs queue	10%	10%	9%	11.4%	13%
Average wait time in the housing estates and tenancy queue	00:01:00	00:05:00	00:02:54	00:02:36	00:03:36
% of abandoned calls in the housing estates and tenancy queue	10%	10%	10%	11%	13%
<b>NEW</b> Percentage of calls answered within 2 minutes	80%		56%	51%	TBC

8.6.1 In September 2023 TSG agreed to include a new measure to allow benchmarking with HiS (target of 80% calls answered in two minutes), this will be reported from Q3 of 2023-24.

8.6.2 The organisation's (Somerset Council) agreed target for calls waiting to be answered is 5 minutes and for no more than 10% calls to be abandoned. Although waiting times in the repairs queue for quarter 3 remain within the amber threshold, call waiting times increased by between 31 and 69 seconds over the course of the quarter. Consideration is currently being given to look at how we can manage incoming repair calls to improve this service to tenants.

8.6.3 Call waiting times to the housing estates and tenancy queue in quarter 3 have reduced by more than half in comparison to July and August 2023 (quarter 2). This quicker response time has resulted in the percentage of calls being abandoned into the housing estates and tenancy queue dropping by more than half of the abandonment rate for July and August.

8.6.4 Customer Service performance continues to improve, and the Customer Services and Housing management teams meet regularly to review performance and identify training needs. The Housing phone lines are given priority over general calls to ensure the standard or performance remains within target as much as possible.

## 8.7 Rent Recovery

Indicator	Target 2023-24	Amber Threshold	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23
<b>Rent Recovery</b>					
True current tenant arrears at the end of the month%	2%	2.2%	1.67%	1.58%	1.96%
Total number of all evictions			0	0	0

8.7.1 The performance in rent arrears is now being measured by the Housemark indicator "true current arrears". Performance in this area has continued to improve since June 2023.

## 8.8 Supported Housing

Indicator	Target 2023-24	Amber Threshold	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23
<b>Supported Housing</b>					
Sheltered housing - % of tenants receiving annual reviews of support plans	98%	97%	98.2%	97.2%	97%

8.8.1 Our performance in this area has dipped slightly from quarter 2, but not significantly; remaining within our amber target threshold. This slight drop in performance is attributed to sickness levels within the team putting remaining resource under pressure.

## 8.9 Lettings and Voids

Indicator	Target 2023-24	Amber Threshold	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23
<b>Lettings and Voids</b>					
Average re-let time in calendar days (key to key)	45.9	50.5	56	57	62

8.9.1 Our void turn-around times have not met the targets set for quarter 3, although they have remained a focus for the Voids and Lettings team.

8.9.2 The team has had to deal with long-term absence from key members of staff.

## 8.10 Housing Repairs

Indicator	Target 2023-24	Amber Threshold	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23
<b>Housing Repairs</b>					
Completion of housing emergency repairs within 24 hours	100%	99%	100%	100%	100%
Completion of housing non-emergency repairs within timescale agreed with tenant (TSM RP02)	93%	90%	98.5%	98.1%	98.1%

8.10.1 Our performance is on target in both emergency and non-emergency repairs this quarter.

## 8.11 Tenancy Management

Indicator	Target 2023-24	Amber Threshold	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23
<b>Tenancy Management</b>					
Total New ASB cases in the month			17	16	8
Total number of ASB cases that were closed in the month			18	11	25
Number of ASB cases open on the last day of the month			90	94	78
Number of new ASB cases reported per 1,000 properties	2.08	2.29	3.04	2.86	1.43
Number of safeguarding referrals			10	8	4

**8.11.1 ASB** - Somerset Council ASB satisfaction 61% Nov 2023 (Acuity) - Top Quartile for 20 LAs, and 2nd quartile for Acuity 75 landlords.

The higher number of ASB cases previously reported in quarter 2 have continued into quarter 3, which are likely to be a result of ensuring that cases are logged within the ASB module rather than through other routes. ASB reduced during December which could be attributed to festive cheer and a focus on family time.

**8.11.3 Safeguarding** – We currently raise low numbers of safeguarding referrals to Somerset Council. This quarter we have made 22 referrals which is a significant drop from last quarter when we made 42 referrals. This fall will partially reflect a real drop

in cases during that quarter but also a reduction in reporting over the December / Christmas period. As with antisocial behaviour, we normally experience increased cases during the Summer months and summer holiday period and then a reduction over the winter months.

## 8.12 Compliance

Indicator	Target 2023-24	Amber Threshold	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23
<b>Compliance</b>					
% of housing dwellings with a valid gas safety certificate (LGSR) (TSM BS01)	100%		100%	100%	100%
% of housing dwellings with a valid electrical safety certificate (EICR)	100%		94.12%	94.24%	94.24%
% of housing communal areas with a valid electrical safety certificate (EICR)			100%	100%	100%
% of communal areas with all asbestos safety checks complete	100%		100%	100%	100%
% of communal areas with a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) in place and FRA Review complete (where applicable)	100%		100%	100%	100%
% of communal areas with periodic water safety equipment checks complete	100%		100%	100%	100%
% of passenger lifts and through floor lifts with annual and 6 monthly service and inspection complete (TSM BS06)	100%		83.33%	100%	100%
Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out. (TSM BS02)	100%		100%	100%	100%
<b>NEW</b> – Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out. (TSM BS04)	100%		100%	100%	100%
Carbon Monoxide Alarms	100%		100%	100%	100%

8.12.1 We are pleased to report 100% compliance for the indicators above, except for electrical safety and through floor lifts.

8.12.2 Electrical safety certificates continue to demonstrate a month-on-month improvement and a programme is on track to achieve 100% compliance during this financial year.

8.12.3 As reported in our quarter 2 update, figures for lift service and inspection dropped to 50% in September due to two properties with through floor lifts and not passenger lifts. The impact of this was felt into quarter 3 (October) after one property service and inspection was completed during this month, increasing the non-compliance figure for October to 83%.

### 8.13 Asset Management

Indicator	Target 2023-24	Amber Threshold	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23
<b>Asset Management</b>					
Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	57	226	344	350	357
Target % Non-Decent Homes Compliance (TSM)	1%	4%	6.09%	6.12%	6.25%
Percentage of properties EPC C or above					68%

8.13.1 The Decent homes measure will be reported as part of the TSM measures to the regulator at the end of the year. Decent homes percentage has decreased slightly from quarter 2 into quarter 3. Contracts for the replacement of components are being finalised and those with decent homes elements will be prioritised.

8.13.2 The % of properties with EPC C or above will remain targeted at 100% EPC C by 2030 as per the strategy. There is no need for milestones until circa 2025/2026 when the final waves of grants will start to emerge, our data will be much more accurate, our capital programme will be making inroads into SAP scores through better 'U' value specifications of replacement heating, windows, doors and loft insulation. We are also not clear on the future requirements of the new decency standard which is pending release, and which may require social landlords to achieve a certain rating, and by default the government will need to enable this through subsidy or rent setting freedoms.

### 8.14 Development

8.14.1 The North Taunton Woolaway Project is progressing well, we have completed 36 of the new homes with the remaining 11 due to complete by the end of March 2024. There will be highway works outstanding as Equans are leaving site in March and these will be picked up by the new contractor. Approval to Appoint the new build contractor for future phases is being considered by Executive on 6 March 2024, but to various standstill requirements, the name of the new contractor is embargoed until 27 March 2024. The demolition contractor for Phase B, Ci and Di has been appointed and demolition will commence on 11 March with the site being hoarded.

The development of 54 new homes in Minehead is progressing well with some handovers anticipated during the Spring, and the whole scheme completed by Autumn 2024.

The demolition contractor is also undertaking the demolition of Wordsworth Drive and Coleridge Crescent Flats. Demolition is due to start in April 2024.

## 9. Executive summary of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Finance report (2023/24 Housing Revenue Account Financial Monitoring as at Quarter 1).

Executive Summary



39.1 This report provides an update on the projected outturn financial position of the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the financial year 2023/24 (as at 31st December 2023).

9.2 The headline estimates for revenue costs are:

Revenue Budget	<u>Forecast</u> overspend of £275k	Amber
General Reserves	£11.774m forecast balance = favourable compared to £3.722m minimum requirement	Green
Earmarked Reserves	£258k opening balance	Green

9.3 The forecast outturn variance position has improved since the Q2 position (of an overspend of £2.074m) mainly due to a new projected underspend on interest payments and reduced forecast spend on repairs and voids maintenance.

9.4 The HRA is a ring-fenced account which must abide by the accounting regulations and ensure that cross subsidy does not occur. Whilst self-financing has provided some flexibilities, the HRA is heavily regulated which restricts income growth and increase cost pressures.

9.5 The HRA has set a balance budget for 2023/24 however areas of risk for the year will relate to the economic operating environment and the impact this may have on any variation from the forecasts assumed when setting the budget, for example the cost of borrowing for the refinancing of debt, pay awards, cost of materials and utilities, etc.

9.6 In addition, there are risks associated with regulatory and compliance requirements. For example, changes are expected during the year in relation to the decent home standard where the cost impact is unknown, as well as a Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 which places new emphasis on customer safety, quality of accommodation, engagement, communication and greater evidence of listening to our tenants. New tenant satisfaction measures are now established and reported on.

9.7 From an operational perspective, the challenge here relates to the levels of demand from our tenants for support and service, for example for debt and benefit advice, repairs and maintenance on their properties, and the number and condition of void properties. This is a very reactive service based on the needs of the tenants.

9.8 The challenge also relates to revenue and capital investment to ensure homes achieve higher safety standards, tenants are engaged and influence their services and the service is able to deliver core services to increasingly high standards. The risk here relates to improve services within capped HRA income.

9.9 The headline estimates for capital costs are:

9.10 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme for 2023/24 onwards is £125.919m. This consists of £32.208m of new schemes approved for 2023/24 plus £90.397m approved budget carry forward and a supplementary budget of £3.314m.

9.11 The current forecast outturn is an underspend of £7.735m for the Major & Improvement Works. The Social Housing Development schemes will be delivered over the next eight years, with the profiled budget for 2023/24 reporting an underspend of c.£500k.

**Democratic Path:** Finance report is reported to Resources Scrutiny and Community Scrutiny and Executive committee meetings and Tenants Strategic Board – 25th March 2024.

**Reporting Frequency: Quarterly**

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