



# Somerset Council

**Tenants' Strategic Group – 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

**Name of Report: Quarterly Housing Performance report – proposal to TSG**

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Member for Communities

Report Authors: Claire Reed and Shannon Lewis

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

The report is to propose a minor change in how the Housing service reports quarterly performance data to the Tenants' Strategic Group. We are asking for the group's agreement to present data in a revised format from the first quarter of the new financial year 2025/26.

## **2. Recommendations**

The Tenants' Strategic Group is invited to ask questions and/or provide feedback about how the group would like to see this report collated, and its content.

## **3. Background and full details of the report**

Historically, a quarterly performance report for the in-house landlord service has been presented by the Housing service to Tenants' Strategic Group. Snapshots of the Q2 report from 2024/25 are included later in this report, as a reminder of how this document currently looks.

In addition to the quarterly report we provide to TSG, as a service we must present performance data to various bodies, including:

- 10 Corporate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to Somerset Council’s Performance Board (which is presented to Full Council).
- 36 Directorate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) reported in a monthly HRA performance meeting (presented to the Executive Director of Communities).
- Mandatory annual returns to the Regulator for Social Housing (Local Authority Housing Statistics [LAHS] and Tenant Satisfaction Measures [TSM]).
- Mandatory annual return to central government (Local Authority Data Returns [LADR]).
- Optional monthly (15 indicators) return to Housemark to facilitate national benchmarking and comparison against our sector peers. A larger annual return is also required as part of our membership with Housemark.

We have recently conducted a piece of work to ensure that the 10 corporate and 36 directorate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) align with the Regulator’s consumer standards, which are:

- Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard
- Tenancy Standard
- Safety and Quality Standard
- Neighbourhood and Community Standard.

We have also made sure the data we are collecting exactly matches Housemark definitions; and where available, we have used Housemark quartile performance data to set the HRA’s performance targets for 2025/26.

Alongside, we have worked with Homes in Sedgemoor so that both landlords are reporting on the same indicators and definitions. This will ensure we are in a position to report consistent performance data for both landlords to Corporate Performance Board.

We have also asked Homes in Sedgemoor to adopt the same reporting model for our Directorate KPIs, and work to deliver this is ongoing.

In the current performance report brought to TSG, the reader is provided with a visual representation of the most recent quarter’s performance, broken down by month. Using snapshots of tenant satisfaction and complaints as examples, in the quarterly performance report for Q2 2024/25, this is how our data looked:

Customer – Overall Satisfaction

Indicator	Target 2024-25	Amber Threshold	July-24	Aug-24	Sep-24
Overall tenant satisfaction (TSM Results)	75%	70%	74% from May survey	74% from May survey	74% from May survey

In the Q2 report on overall satisfaction, the table was accompanied by three paragraphs of text which explained why Homes in Sedgemoor achieved a higher

rate than the in-house landlord and what the Housemark quartile performance scores were for 2023/24.

There was no commentary to indicate whether the 74% achieved was an improvement on the previous tenant satisfaction survey in November 2023, and no explanation provided to explain how the targets for this indicator were set.

### Customer – Complaints

Indicator	Target 2024-25	Amber Threshold	July-24	Aug-24	Sep-24
% of stage 1 complaints closed in 10 working days (as per policy HRA) (LCRA)	90%	80%	54%	43%	67%
All HRA Complaints relative to the size of the landlord per 1000 homes.	2.8 (Benchmark)	4 (Benchmark)	4.25	4.61	4.79
Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales.	95%	90%	54%	50%	74%

In the Q2 performance report on complaints, there followed three paragraphs of explanatory text which gave an updated position on complaint handling within the service, but which did not include any information about how we performed in that period in comparison to Homes in Sedgemoor or our sector peers. A lot of the text provided in the quarterly performance report was a repeat of that already provided to TSG in the Directorate Report.

The report lacked explanation as to how the targets were calculated, gave no indication whether the ‘benchmark’ figure on line two was a top, median, or lower score in line with Housemark data, and did not provide information to say whether we had improved or worsened in our complaint handling performance since Q1.


### **Proposal**

As a result of the improvements we have made to our data collection and reporting, we are now able to present a more meaningful quarterly performance report to TSG. We would therefore like to focus on providing the Group with a quarterly performance report which will give a stronger, better understanding of the in-house landlord service’s performance.

The focus of this report will remain on the in-house landlord of Somerset Council to ensure transparency to our own engaged tenants, but for the purpose of benchmarking, the report includes limited data from the council’s ALMO.

Please consider the table below, which presents the same snapshot for Q2 2024/25 for overall tenant satisfaction and complaints, in the proposed new format.

## Proposed report format: Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard



					In-House						HIS
Indicator	Housemark Top Quartile	Housemark Median Quartile	Housemark Lower Quartile	SC Target Amber Threshold	Prev (Q1)	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Current (Q2)	Direction	Current (Q2)
<b>Customer Satisfaction</b>											
Overall Satisfaction (TSM Perception Survey Measure)	79.8%	71.4%	65.1%	>80% <71%	74%				74%		84%

### Comments

The National Federation of ALMOs reported in January 2024 that 2023/24 figures demonstrated ALMOs were performing an average of 9% higher than Local Authority landlords nationally. This is reflected in the figures reported for both landlord models operating under Somerset Council.

According to Housemark quartile figures for 2023/24, the in-house landlord perform above the median quartile, and the ALMO is performing at top quartile for overall satisfaction.

NB – surveys are conducted monthly with Homes in Sedgemoor residents, and six monthly for the in-house landlord.

					In-House						HIS
Indicator	Housemark Top Quartile	Housemark Median Quartile	Housemark Lower Quartile	SC Target Amber Threshold	Prev average (Q1)	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Current average (Q2)	Direction	Current average (Q2)
<b>Complaints</b>											
All HRA complaints received in the month, relative to the size of the landlord (per 1000 homes).	5.3	3.4	2.1	5.3 3.4 benchmark	3.48	4.43	4.61	4.96	4.67		2.68
Percentage of complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales.	98.6%	82.7%	64.6%	>98% <83%	58%	57%	50%	75%	72%		TBC

### Comment

The in-house landlord benchmarks successfully against Housemark's expected number of complaints being received into the service. Homes in Sedgemoor have received approximately half of the number of complaints of the in-house landlord, but the Housing Ombudsman see high numbers of complaints as a positive.

Response times performance for the in-house landlord has improved since Q1, however staff resourcing and workloads show that the current model of complaint handling is failing. We are lower quartile in our complaint handling timescales according to Housemark, and therefore not compliant with the Complaint Handling Code in this measure.

We are confident that the imminent creation of three new posts in the complaints team will improve performance.

Raw data is not currently available on response times for the ALMO, but we aim to be able to include this when the report goes live.

The new report format provides the reader with:

- Housemark quartiles (top, median lower scores) for the previous year, so we can identify how we are performing against our sector peers. Our peers are categorised as Local Authority landlords or ALMOs with less than 10,000 units.
- Somerset Council targets – these are applicable for both landlords and have been set (where possible) in line with Housemark data. Where Housemark quartiles are not available, targets have been agreed by both landlords, in line with the previous year's performance and an uplift applied.
- The previous quarter's score for the in-house landlord. Where this represents an 'average' of the three months within the quarter, this will be explained.
- A breakdown by month of performance for the current quarter for the in-house landlord.
- The current quarter's average score for the in-house landlord. Where this figure represents an 'average' of the three months within the quarter, this will be explained.
- Direction of travel - whether the in-house landlord has improved or dropped in performance on the previous quarter.
- How Somerset Council's ALMO is performing in comparison with the in-house landlord, to help us identify best practice across both services.

It must be noted that for now, we are not able to provide Homes in Sedgemoor's data on all indicators provided in the proposed quarterly report, as work to align service level PIs continues. Where this information is not available, the relevant box will be marked N/A.

- A free text box in which the appropriate Manager can provide brief, explanatory notes if needed.

In addition, to make the report accessible, the author will provide ALT text where there are tables or graphs.

We believe using this format will provide consistency and transparency, and present TSG with more meaningful data as to how the in-house landlord is performing.

## **Considerations**

At present, the in-house landlord presents data on 35 performance indicators to TSG.

We have identified that there are 3 indicators in the current TSG quarterly performance report where we have been unable to capture the relevant data for some time (and do not see a way of recording this data going forward). These

indicators are capturing tenant satisfaction on the lettable standard (Lettings); the percentage of properties at EPC C or above (Assets); and the number of new homes completed since 2019 (Development).

We propose that these indicators are omitted from the new TSG quarterly performance report from 2025/26, or until such time as we can start to record the relevant data.

As mentioned above, we are in the process of revising an in-house landlord suite of Service Level Performance Indicators (PIs) which has historically been managed at a local level by Housing Heads of Service and Service Managers. By refining this data, it will allow us to better focus on identifying risks or improvements within the in-house service. As part of this piece of work, we will explore the possibility of whether the above indicators can be captured in the future.

It is also our plan going into 2025/26 to set up an automated Power Business Intelligence report to capture our corporate and directorate KPIs directly from our systems. This will remove some manual inputting work currently needed and improve accuracy of our data. It will also mean there will be wider scope in the future to record additional performance data, and present this in the form of more appealing graphs and visuals for our tenants.

We would welcome TSG's feedback and input into the above proposal. Although not a momentous change to the way we are presenting data, we are keen to ensure it provides the Group with valuable performance data about the things that matter to our tenants.

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

A risk assessment is not required to accompany this report.

**5. Are there any Finance / Resource, Legal implications directly to do with this report?**

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 implications directly to do with this report.

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

There are no equality implications directly to do with this report.

Name of Contact Officers: Claire Reed

Telephone number: 01823 217505

Email address: [housingperformance@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:housingperformance@somerset.gov.uk)