

# Somerset West and Taunton Council

## Tenants Strategic Group – 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022

### 2022/23 Housing Performance and Finance Report Quarter 2, July – September 2022

This matter is the responsibility of Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Report Author: Shari Hallett (Housing Performance Manager) and Kerry Prisco (Management Accounting and Reporting Lead)

#### 1 Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides an update on the housing performance through key performance measures and financial information for the first quarter of 22/23 (July - September 2022).

#### 2 Recommendations

2.1 To note content of the housing scorecard for quarter 2 (July to September 2022). The executive summary of the HRA finance report (2022/23 Housing Revenue Account Financial Monitoring as at Quarter 2).

#### 3 Housing Performance Scorecard

3.1 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 September 2022 covering the performance in Q1 (April-June). This report covers the second quarter of 2022/23 July to September.

3.2 This report covers a total of 23 measures. Customer 5, Rent Recovery 2, Supported Housing 1, Lettings and Voids 1, Housing Repairs 2, Tenancy Management 4, Compliance 7, Development 1. Additional compliance measures have been added to this report since Q1 in this report we have also added the new carbon monoxide measure to the compliance section.

3.3 16 indicators have targets, 9 are green (on target or better), 3 are red (off target but targets are 100%) and 4 amber.

#### 3.4 Customer

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22
<b>Customer</b>					
% of stage 1 complaints closed in 10 working days	100%	95%	42%	85%	96%

This year we are reporting Housing Revenue complaints separately to those outside social housing in line with Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM).

We are pleased to report our performance has improved, reporting 96% in September (23 out of 24 complaints closed in timeframe). The overdue complaint was a complex complaint which had to be delayed to allow us to arrange a convenient visit with the resident. A personal visit was required due to a mental health condition. The complaint was upheld, actions agreed and completed.

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22
<b>Customer</b>					
% of new tenants satisfied with the lettable standard of the property	85%	82%	80.00%	100.00%	82.00%

During July, August and September, satisfaction surveys were conducted with all new tenants, these surveys are undertaken on the phone. In the March 2022 meeting of TSG the number of new lets each month was requested alongside this satisfaction percentage.

July 2022: 16 properties let, (5 responses, 4 satisfied or very satisfied), 80% satisfaction

August 2022: 29 properties let, (6 responses, 6 satisfied or very satisfied), 100% satisfaction

September 2022: 18 properties let (11 responses, 9 satisfied or very satisfied), 82% satisfaction

Any issues arising have been resolved or are in progress.

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold
<b>Customer</b>		
% of tenants satisfied with most recent repair	85%	78%

To obtain these results we use an electronic questionnaire link, sent to customers of our Repairs service as soon as the repair completes. The numbers of responses have been low and results are therefore not considered representative. This matter was discussed in the TSG meeting September 2022. We will stop “officially” reporting this metric until a new solution can be found.

Due to the numbers of repairs undertaken there is not sufficient staff resource to call all repairs to complete a survey. We currently do not have another survey solution available for transactional surveys but do have an alternative for perception surveys – see below. A survey tool called “Voicescape” is being investigated for feasibility on transactional surveys if agreed, funding will need to be found and an implementation plan will need to be produced.

Satisfaction with repairs formed part of the pilot Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey completed in May 2022. This provides representative data on this indicator (the survey is conducted on the telephone with a representative sample of customers by a third party company). 75% of customers surveyed in this perception survey are satisfied with the way SWT deals with repairs and maintenance. This survey will be repeated in November 2022 to complete the representative sample.

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22
<b>Customer</b>					
Number of compliments received	n/a	n/a	10	9	12

We have been receiving a steady number of compliments and the total for the year to date is 51.

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22
<b>Customer</b>					
Overall tenant satisfaction (STAR/TSM results)	77%	75%	76%	76%	76%

During 2022 we are surveying twice, as a TSM (tenant satisfaction measure pilot), once in May and again in November to obtain our statistical sample. The May survey results indicate an interim overall satisfaction at 76%. This result is disappointing, however a decline of 5% landlord satisfaction is reported by Housemark across the sector. We are examining the results of this survey and preparing an action plan to address points raised by survey respondents. We will repeat the survey again in November to complete the sample size and gain an overall result.

### 3.5 Rent Recovery

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22
<b>Rent Recovery</b>					
True current tenant arrears at the end of month %	2.72%	3.02%	2.77%	2.63%	2.59%
Total number of all evictions	n/a	n/a	0	1	0

The performance in rent arrears is now being measured by the Housemark indicator “true current arrears”. Performance in this area is currently on target, the rent arrears figure at end of September was £703,285.

There has been 1 eviction from July 2022 - September 2022 due to rent arrears.

We have recently undertaken a ‘deep dive’ review of rent recovery. Our performance is close to top quartile when compared to other housing providers and we have been able to refocus the team on rent recovery now Open Housing has been implemented. A proposal paper on ‘voice-scape’ - an automated calling and texting service is being reviewed by management in December to determine whether introducing this would lead

to more cost-effective and better performance to reduce arrears further.

### 3.6 Supported Housing

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22
<b>Supported Housing</b>					
Sheltered housing - % of tenants receiving annual reviews of support plans	100%	99%	97.40%	96.70%	Data not available

Our latest performance data (at 1<sup>st</sup> November) shows us that only 6 households have not got any support plan in place yet and this is being addressed. We are aware that our performance has dropped for number of support plans reviewed in last 12 months and are now refocussing the team on this. Our priority over the past two months has been on ensuring all fire risk assessments and related actions have been progressed and this has meant less focus on reviews. We are confident that vulnerable tenants are receiving regular contact based on a current assessment of their need. The team have now had some staff return from sickness and increased capacity will allow us to bring performance back to 100% in the next quarter.

### 3.7 Lettings and Voids

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22
<b>Lettings and Voids</b>					
Average re-let time in calendar days (key to key)	44	53	44	51	38

We are pleased to report that our plans to improve turn-around times has brought us back to target performance by March 2022 and continues. During August times increased due to the number of major voids (properties requiring considerable repairs).

### 3.8 Housing Repairs

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22
<b>Housing Repairs</b>					
Completion of housing emergency repairs within 24 hours	100%	95%	100%	100%	100%

Data for this indicator is taken from Open Contractor software system (which is used to hold repair jobs against the core property database). As previously reported, this data is unfortunately not currently available for non-emergency repair reporting purposes. As part of our Repair Action Plan we are making data and software changes are being to enable accurate reporting of this non-emergency repair indicator.

### 3.9 Tenancy Management

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22
<b>Tenancy Management</b>					
Total new ASB cases in the month	n/a	n/a	11	16	17
Total number of ASB cases that were closed in the month	n/a	n/a	6	29 manually;9 Open Housing = 38	19
Number of ASB cases open on the last day of the month	n/a	n/a	57	38	54
Number of new ASB cases reported per 1,000 properties	n/a	n/a	1.92	2.80	2.98

**ASB** - These figures represent “high level” ASB cases opened and closed in the month. We are content with our performance in this area but ideally would like the numbers to be as low as possible. Benchmarking data shows top quartile performance September 2022 is 2.3 cases or less per 1,000 (median performance is 3.97 cases), our performance is close to top quartile performance.

**Safeguarding** – We currently raise low numbers of safeguarding referrals to Somerset County Council. This quarter we have made 20 referrals. These are largely related to identifying higher levels of concerns for adults who require a ‘care and support needs assessment’ from Adults Social Care and this has driven our referrals up.

Where we do have concerns, we will frequently help to address these through a multi-agency approach to provide the required support and interventions to the affected households. Awareness and training in the Council has taken place to ensure that all incidents are identified and managed within policy.

### 3.10 Compliance

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22
<b>Compliance</b>					
% of housing dwellings with a valid gas safety certificate	100%	n/a	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
% of housing communal areas with a valid electrical safety certificate (EICR)	100%	n/a	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
% of communal areas with all asbestos safety checks complete	100%	n/a	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
% of communal areas with a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) in place and FRA Review complete (where applicable)	100%	100%	100.00%	100.00%	98.39%
% of communal areas with all periodic water safety equipment checks complete	100%	n/a	100.00%	97.37%	100.00%
% of passenger lifts and through floor lifts with annual and 6 monthly service and inspection complete (TSM BS06)	100%	n/a	100.00%	100.00%	50.00%
Carbon Monoxide Alarms			100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

We have added the carbon monoxide indicator to show where carbon monoxide alarms have been installed in properties that require them (this programme was completed last year but is monitored). We are pleased to report 100% compliance all areas except lift and fire risk assessments.

Fire Risk Assessments in communal areas is 98.39% due to our contractors' attendance being delayed in July and August. This affected 8 buildings (one hall and seven communal areas). All risk assessments have now been completed by in house specialist.

Lift inspection percentage compliant is 50% due to one lift that cannot be inspected due to access issues as the resident is in hospital.

### 3.10 Development

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22
<b>Development</b>					
Number of SWT HRA new home completions since April 2019		20 per year	62	62	62

62 new homes have completed since April 2019, the performance indicates this cumulative number of homes built. Contractors are onsite delivering 47 new properties in North Taunton and 54 in Minehead. A planning application will be considered in November for 8 new homes in Halcon and a new planning application for two additional homes at North Taunton is being prepared.

#### 4. Executive summary of the HRA Finance report (2022/23 Housing Revenue Account Financial Monitoring as at Quarter 2).

The full finance report will be presented to the following elected committees, Community Scrutiny on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022, Executive 21<sup>st</sup> December 2022. Papers are therefore in the public domain.

4.1 Executive Summary - This report provides an update on the projected outturn financial position of the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the financial year 2022/23 (as at 30 September 2022).

4.1 The headline estimates for **revenue costs** are:

Revenue Budget	£0.330m forecast overspend	Red
General Reserves	£2.712m forecast balance = favourable (though low) compared to £2m minimum requirement	Amber
Earmarked Reserves	£54k opening balance	Green

4.2 It is well reported that the economic situation is challenging with the cost of living crisis, high inflation, and rising interest rates. These factors will hit our communities and businesses, and the Council is also not immune as seen in the latest forecasts.

4.3 The Q1 forecast outturn position reported an overspend of £745k. The Senior Management Team have since undertaken a thorough and in-depth review of all budgets, updated projections based on mid-year information, requested services to manage inflationary pressures within services where possible (e.g. pay award, utilities and material costs) and driven a focus on essential spend only where possible in order to bring the position back to budget. There have also been some contractual delays on delivering capital schemes pushing spend into future years and a need increase reserve balances this year to provide budget flexibility and financial resilience in 2023/24 on the face of significant financial pressures.

4.4 The updated projected outturn position of a £330k overspend is still significant. This is mainly driven by depreciation charges, the recently agreed national pay award, void repairs and tenancy management costs.

4.5 It is important to note that this is mid-year forecast for the year with 6 months remaining until year end. This will be carefully monitored with updates reported to Members on a quarterly basis. The level of General Reserves does provide the ability to cover the current predicted overspend, if required, but does not provide resilience to mitigate the risk of any further significant overspend or additional pressures. Housing Management will continue to take steps to reduce and halt spend especially for discretionary activities, to help mitigate the current position, and to try to maintain a more secure reserves position.

4.6 Members will be aware that budget setting for 2022/23 was significantly challenging, where some budgets required re-basing especially around repairs and maintenance,

and consequently the service will be pursuing efficiency targets into next financial year and beyond.

4.7 Whilst best endeavours are used to forecast with as much accuracy as possible we have seen a historical change in forecasts each quarter and to year end. However, it is essential that control over spending continues to reduce the forecast overspend and maintain adequate reserves to support the budget gap in 2023/24.

4.8 The HRA **Capital Programme** has a total approved budget of £109.4m. The profiled budgeted spend for 2022/23 is £36.347m and this is currently forecast to underspend in the year by £9.073m; £8.700m due to slippage of work into 2023/24 and £373k budget to be returned.

**Democratic Path:**

- **Tenants Strategic Board – 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

**Reporting Frequency: Quarterly**

**Contact Officers**

Name	Shari Hallett, Kerry Prisco
Direct Dial	Shari 01823 219425 Kerry 01823 218758
Email	<a href="mailto:s.hallett@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk">s.hallett@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:k.prisco@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk">k.prisco@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk</a>