

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Tenants Strategic Group – 27th March 2023

2022/23 Housing Performance and Finance Report Quarter 3, October – December 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 third quarter of 22/23 (October - December 2022).

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To note content of the housing scorecard for quarter 3 (October to December 2022). The executive summary of the HRA finance report (2022/23 Housing Revenue Account Financial Monitoring as at Quarter 3).

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 November 2022 covering the performance in Q2 (July-September). This report covers the third quarter of 2022/23 October to December.
- 3.2 This report covers a total of 27 measures. Customer 9 (4 additional this quarter), 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. An additional four call answering measures were requested by TSG in the November meeting and these have been added to the customer section.
- 3.3 19 indicators have targets, 11 are green (on target or better), 6 are red (off target but targets are 100%) and 2 amber.

3.4 **Customer**

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22
Customer					
% of stage 1 complaints closed in 10 working days (HRA as per policy)	100%	95%	91%	89%	60%

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

Our complaints performance has remained high in October and November but has decreased in December. We are experiencing complex and multi-faceted complaints and often these have required extended response times which cannot be reflected in the figures above. Christmas also is a time when staff take leave and complaints may take slightly longer to investigate (there is limited cover available and day to day priorities have to be covered first). Considerable effort is being put into the investigation at stage one which is much more demanding of our resources but when we review performance at the end of the year we hope to report a lower number of stage 2 and ombudsman complaints as a result. We have also been managing vacancies being carried in key positions in the service which puts further pressure on complaint handling.

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22
Customer					
% of new tenants satisfied with the lettable standard of the property	85%	82%	87.50%	100.00%	93.00%

During October, November and December, 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.

October 2022: 27 properties let, (16 responses, 14 satisfied or very satisfied), 87.5% satisfaction

November 2022: 12 properties let, (11 responses, 11 satisfied or very satisfied), 100% satisfaction

December 2022: 22 properties let (15 responses, 14 satisfied or very satisfied), 93% satisfaction

Performance is meeting target.

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

This matter was discussed in the TSG meeting September 2022. We will stop “officially”

reporting this transactional metric until a new survey 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 and November 2022 by an independent company. 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). The TSM question focuses on repairs in last 12 months. 76% of customers surveyed in May and 81% surveyed in November were satisfied with the repair carried out in their home in the last 12 months. The combined result was 79% which is above median of 75% (comparison with other landlords by Acuity). Results were reported to TSG in January 2023. The next survey will be in May 2023.

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22
Customer					
Number of compliments received	n/a	n/a	6	16	11

We have been receiving a steady number of compliments and the total for the year to date (end December 2022) is 84.

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22
Customer					
Overall tenant satisfaction (TSM results)	77%	75%	76%	77%	77%

During 2022 we have surveyed twice using an independent company, (as a TSM “tenant satisfaction measure” pilot), once in May and again in November to obtain our statistical sample. The combined May and November results indicate an overall satisfaction at 77%. A decline of 5% landlord satisfaction is reported by Housemark across the sector, however we are pleased to have been able to meet our target and improve on the interim result of 76% in May. Our next survey will take place May 2023.

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22
Customer					
Average wait time in the repairs queue	60 Seconds	?	00:01:58	00:01:41	00:03:32
% of abandoned calls in the repairs queue	10.00%	?	8%	8%	13%
Average wait time in the housing estates and tenancy queue	60 Seconds	?	00:05:42	00:03:35	00:03:27
% of abandoned calls in the housing estates and tenancy queue	10.00%	?	22%	16%	13%

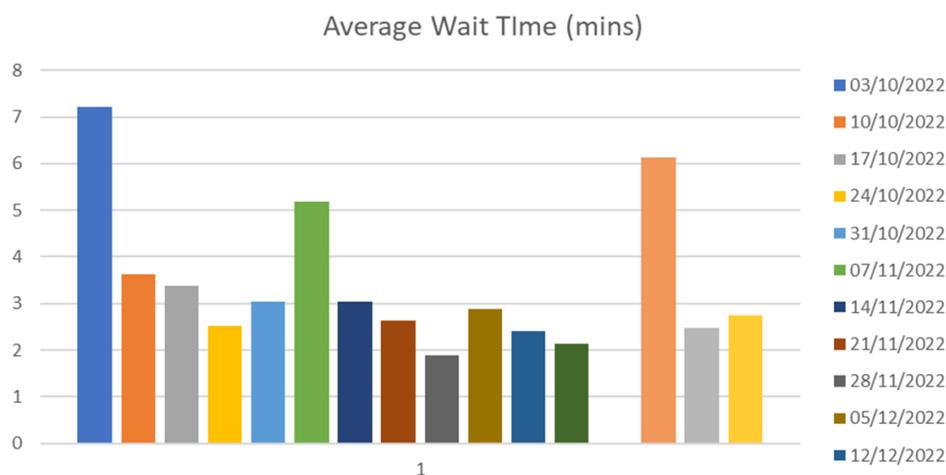
Following a request in the January 2023 TSG meeting the statistics for call handling on repairs and housing estates call queues are now included in this report. These statistics are considered by the corporate Scrutiny and Executive Committee, but we are also happy to report these here.

The customer contact function is part of the Internal Operations directorate and not directly managed by Housing Directorate. Internally a council target of 60 seconds for call wait times was set for all council lines and 10% for abandoned calls. This is an ambitious target when compared to other organisations where it is not uncommon to be waiting longer than 5 mins, which would make our performance mostly “green”. An amber threshold was not corporately set this year as it was felt this was pass/fail. New call waiting times for Somerset Council will be set at 5 minutes (call durations have become longer due to more customers calling us than visiting since Covid, longer call durations and complexity of calls).

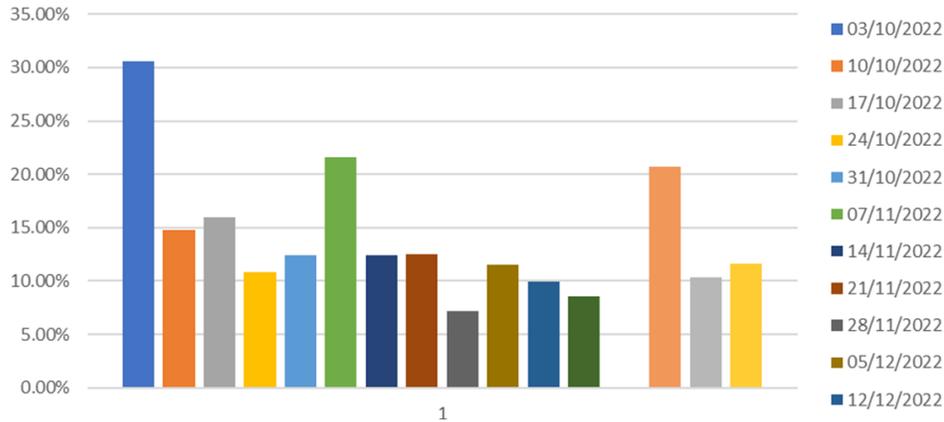
Dedicated repair staff were moved to answer only repair calls in October 2022. The call wait and abandonment times improved as a result, however staff shortages and turnover in a small team mean fluctuations in staffing have a great effect on the call performance. It should however be remembered these are averages and during certain times of the day performance is improved. We do also offer tenants an online reporting tool for non-urgent repairs. Work continues to ensure call wait and abandonment times are kept as low as possible.

A solution was put in place for Housing Estate calls, but this has not been successful in resolving wait and abandon times. A new solution is being trialled from February 2022 where housing estate calls have priority over other calls and progress within will be monitored (in relation to housing and other council services).

Charts below show variations in average wait times and abandonment rates each week.



Abandonment



Our tenant representatives completed a mystery shopper exercise recently and the results show an improvement on the last exercise which is encouraging. We acknowledge the current challenges which are in part due to an overly ambitious target, however improvements have been made and can be built upon.

The average wait time was 2 minutes 30 seconds compared with an average wait time of 5 minutes and 7 seconds last time.

Customer Service Assistants were able to help and resolve 100% of the calls made.

100% reported that the customer service representative gave their name.

100% said the customer service representative was polite and helpful.

Two calls were promised call-backs, and these happened within an hour.

73% very satisfied compared to 50% last time

13% were satisfied compared to 25% last time

13% were partly satisfied compared to 16.7% last time

0% were not at all satisfied compared to 8.3% last time

3.5 Rent Recovery

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22
Rent Recovery					
True current tenant arrears at the end of month %	2.72%	3.02%	2.53%	2.60%	2.88%
Total number of all evictions	n/a	n/a	1	2	1

The performance in rent arrears is now being measured by the Housemark indicator “true current arrears”. Performance in this area slipped off target in December which is a challenging month for rent arrears. The rent arrears figure at end of December was £780,006.

Although rent arrears as a percentage is slowly increasing, this is reflective of the very challenging financial climate we are in and is also being mirrored across the housing sector. Our performance for rent arrears when compared to Pulse benchmarking data in December 2022 shows we are above the median of 3.10% and therefore better than

average.

There have been 4 evictions from October 2022 - December 2022 due to rent arrears.

3.6 Supported Housing

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22
Supported Housing					
Sheltered housing - % of tenants receiving annual reviews of support plans	98%	97%	99.10%	98.90%	98.90%

In the December 2022 Performance meeting a new target of 98% (changed from 100%) was proposed and agreed. This is due to 100% not ever being achievable due tenants being in hospital, and properties being void when the annual review falls due. This target is now reflected above, and our performance is on track.

We are confident that our procedures ensure that vulnerable tenants are receiving regular contact based on a current assessment of their need.

3.7 Lettings and Voids

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22
Lettings and Voids					
Average re-let time in calendar days (key to key)	44	53	54	53	41

We are pleased to report that our void turn around times are back on target in December 2022 having slipped slightly above target due to high numbers of voids in October and November 2022.

3.8 Housing Repairs

Indicator	Target 2021-22	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22
Housing Repairs						
Completion of housing emergency repairs within 24 hours	100%	100%	95%	98.10%	99.70%	99.20%

Data for this indicator is taken from Open Contractor software system (which is used to hold repair jobs against the core property database). Whilst progressing the Repairs Improvement Plan, we have examined our reporting methodology for emergency and non-emergency repairs. We have widened the report so that it includes all emergency jobs issued to contractors and other trades, which were not previously included. The figures reported since April now reflect this. Where we have not achieved 100% it is due to 24-hour repair deadlines being missed by short periods of time and repairs have been completed the next day in consultation with the customer.

The asset management service has produced a Damp and Mould Action Plan which

includes significant contributions from the Tenants Damp and Mould working group including a new D&M leaflet which has also supported the wording in our website and tenants' handbook. There are 52 actions of which 12 are complete, 14 are in progress and on schedule, 12 are behind time and 14 have yet to reach their start by date. The actions behind time are primarily relating to the production of a new D&M procedure linked to the repair's procedure.

3.9 Tenancy Management

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22
Tenancy Management					
Total new ASB cases in the month	n/a	n/a	11	11	13
Total number of ASB cases that were closed in the month	n/a	n/a	7	23	2
Number of ASB cases open on the last day of the month	n/a	n/a	52	40	51
Number of new ASB cases reported per 1,000 properties	n/a	n/a	1.79	1.79	2.11

ASB - These figures represent “high level” ASB cases opened and closed in the month. We would like the numbers to be as low as possible. Benchmarking data shows median performance is 1.85 cases per 1000 in December 2022. Our performance is better than the median performance in October and November but four cases were reopened in December which has caused our performance to be lower than median. For context 3rd quartile is 3.12 in December 2022; even with slippage we are still close to median.

Safeguarding – We currently raise low numbers of safeguarding referrals to Somerset County Council. This quarter we have made 30 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	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22
Compliance					
% of housing dwellings with a valid gas safety certificate (LGSR)(TSM BS01)	100%	n/a	100.00%	100.00%	99.98%
% of housing communal areas with a valid electrical safety certificate (EICR)	100%	n/a	99.46%	99.46%	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%	100.00%
% of communal areas with all periodic water safety equipment checks complete	100%	n/a	100.00%	100.00%	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%	100.00%
Carbon Monoxide Alarms			100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

We are pleased to report 100% compliance the indicators above, except gas safety. The slippage was due to one property having a hybrid system air source heat pump and gas boiler combination appointed beyond its anniversary date. This was resolved in January when work was scheduled in agreement with the tenant.

The electrical safety in communal areas was off target due to Newton Road Meeting Room and guest room requiring an EICR. This was late due to staff shortages and rescheduling. All was back on target in December 2022.

3.11 Development

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22
Development					
Number of SWT HRA new home completions since April 2019 linc new HRA homes RSAP/LAHF)		20 per year	62	62	62

62 new homes have completed since April 2019. The next three quarters will see 47 new homes at North Taunton complete. The development of 54 new homes in Minehead is progressing well with the contractors currently erecting block work. The demolition and development of NTWP phase B&Ci has been impacted on by the withdrawal of Equans, SWTs contractor, from new work in the South-West of England. The team are reprocurring a contractor to progress this priority regeneration scheme. The Oxford Inn planning application was approved, and a preferred contractor has been identified. Unfortunately, due to market inflation since the original approval the service is preparing a new supplementary budget approval report.

4. Executive summary of the HRA Finance report (2022/23 Housing Revenue Account Financial Monitoring as at Quarter 3).

The full finance report will be presented to the following elected committees, Community Scrutiny on the 22nd February 2022, Executive 15th March 2023. Papers are therefore in the public domain.

Executive Summary

1.1 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 31 December 2022).

1.2 The headline estimates for revenue costs are: Revenue Budget £91k forecast underspend Green General Reserves £3.134m forecast balance = favourable compared to £2m minimum requirement Green Earmarked Reserves £54k opening balance Green

1.3 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.

1.4 The Q1 forecast outturn position reported an overspend of £745k. In response to this variance the Senior Management Team undertook 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 focused on essential spend only where possible in order to bring the position back to budget. There were also 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. This resulted in an improved position report at Q2 of an overspend of £330k.

1.5 The Senior Management Team have continued to monitor spend closely and explore options to bring the position back to budget. The Q3 forecast outturn position reports an underspend of £91k. This has been achieved mainly by an increase in investment income as a direct result of a reduction in spend on the capital programme and increasing interest rates, capitalisation of material costs and a reduction in central recharges. These have offset the main financial pressures including depreciation charges, the recently agreed national pay award, the rising cost of materials for void and general repairs, and tenancy management costs.

1.6 Whilst forecasts have been updated and management continue to control the overall position to remain within budget, the final outturn position may still present further underspends or variances to budget. This will be carefully monitored over the next few months by management and the final outturn position will be reported to Members.

1.7 The level of General Reserves has improved providing the service with some resilience to mitigate the risk of an overspend or additional pressures. However, in light of the volatile nature of the business these levels may not be sufficient, and a more secure reserves position will need to be maintained in future years.

1.8 The HRA Capital Programme has a total approved budget of £110.9m. The profiled budgeted spend for 2022/23 is £36.447m and this is currently forecast to underspend in the year by £15.892m; £15.627m due to slippage of work into 2023/24 and net budget of £266k budget to be returned.

Democratic Path:

- **Tenants Strategic Board – 27th March 2023**

Reporting Frequency: Quarterly

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