

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Tenants Strategic Group – 26th September 2022

2022/23 Housing Performance and Finance Report Quarter 1 April – June 2022

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

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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 (April to June 2022).

2 Recommendations

2.1 To note content of the housing scorecard for quarter 1 (April to June 2022). The executive summary of the HRA finance report (2022/23 Housing Revenue Account Financial Monitoring as at Quarter 1).

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 May 2022 covering the performance in Q4 (Jan-Mar). This report covers the first quarter of 2022/23 April-June.

3.2 This report covers a total of 22 measures. Customer 5, Rent Recovery 2, Supported Housing 1, Lettings and Voids 1, Housing Repairs 2, Tenancy Management 4, Compliance 6, Development 1. Additional compliance measures have been added to this report.

3.3 15 indicators have targets, 12 are green (on target or better), two are red (off target but targets are 100%) and one is amber.

3.4 Customer

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22
Customer					
% of stage 1 complaints closed in 10 working days	100%	95%	38%	63%	73%

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

The Housing Ombudsman’s revised Complaint Handling Code now allows the 10 working day target to start from the point the complaint is triaged and acknowledged with the customer, rather than from when the complaint was received by the Council. This has made a positive improvement to the response time figures which previously showed as (May 44% (now 63%), June 68% (now 73%). However vacancies in key areas, staff leave and sickness continues to impact our ability to respond to complaints on time. Extensions that are agreed are not reflected in the figures.

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22
Customer					
% of new tenants satisfied with the lettable standard of the property	85%	82%	100.00%	-	100.00%

During April, May and June, satisfaction surveys were conducted with all new tenants. Satisfaction remains high. In the March 2022 meeting of TSG the number of new lets each month was requested alongside this satisfaction percentage.

April 2022: 17 properties let, (13 responses), 100% satisfaction

May 2022: 19 properties let (this was the first month of electronic surveys, no survey responses received as there was an ICT error with the survey link)

June 2022: 19 properties let (6 responses), 100% satisfaction

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22
Customer					
% of tenants satisfied with most recent repair	85%	78%	92%	87.5%	94.1%

We continue to use an electronic questionnaire sent to customers of our Repairs service as soon as the repair completes. Data above reports the results of those surveys.

Satisfaction with repairs formed part of the pilot Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey completed in May 2022 on the telephone with customers to provide further data on this indicator. 75% of customers surveyed in this perception survey are satisfied with the way SWT deals with repairs and maintenance.

At the Tenants’ Strategic Group meeting in January, we were asked to specify numbers of transaction surveys going out and responded. This data was discussed fully in the March meeting, and it was decided that surveys would continue to be sent, although statistically this is a low sample and not sufficiently indicative. New software will be sourced once Open Housing is live, with consideration given to digitally excluded customers and how surveys may be able to be completed on the handheld devices of

trade staff.

In April 2022 301 surveys were sent, with 26 responses received giving an 92% satisfaction rate (24). In May 2022 296 surveys were sent, with 32 responses received giving a 87.5% satisfaction rate (28). In June 2022 331 were surveys sent, with 17 responses received giving a 94% satisfaction rate (16).

Results returned indicate that we are exceeding target for our levels of satisfaction where surveys are completed (it is acknowledged that not all tenants are currently receiving surveys as it is restricted to mobile users with access to internet via their phone). However, it is encouraging to note that those who choose to respond are responding positively.

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22
Customer					
Number of compliments received	n/a	n/a	3	6	11

We have been receiving a steady number of compliments and the total for the year to date is 20.

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22
Customer					
Overall tenant satisfaction (STAR/TSM results)	77%	75%	83%	76%	76%

Our STAR survey during November/December 2020 recorded 83% tenancy satisfaction overall. During 2022 we are surveying twice, as a TSM (tenant satisfaction measure pilot), once in May and one in November to obtain our statistical sample. The May survey results indicate a drop in overall satisfaction to 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	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22
Rent Recovery					
True current tenant arrears at the end of month %	2.72%	3.02%	2.51%	2.65%	2.61%
Total number of all evictions	n/a	n/a	0	1	1

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 June was £707,796.

There have been 2 evictions from April 2022 - June 2022 due to rent arrears.

We are currently undertaking a ‘deep dive’ review of rent recovery now that Open Housing is in place and the team can be re-established to bring greater focus to this service. This review will give us an up-to-date detailed view on current trends and direction of travel in terms of our debt and set out our next steps in terms of performance improvement.

3.6 Supported Housing

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22
Customer					
Supported Housing					
Sheltered housing - % of tenants receiving annual reviews of support plans	100%	99%	96.90%	96.90%	97.40%

Our performance continues at just below 100% reporting 97.4% for June (this shortfall represents 23 tenancies). We are confident that vulnerable tenants are receiving regular contact based on a current assessment of their need. Temporary resource has been recruited to ensure that service is maintained during prolonged periods of staff absence. 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	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22
Lettings and Voids					
Average re-let time in calendar days (key to key)	44	53	42	49	40

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.

3.8 Housing Repairs

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22
Housing Repairs					
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. Data and software changes are being implemented to enable accurate reporting of this non-emergency repair indicator.

3.9 Tenancy Management

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22
Tenancy Management					
Total new ASB cases in the month	n/a	n/a	16	20	15
Total number of ASB cases that were closed in the month	n/a	n/a	4	0	27
Number of ASB cases open on the last day of the month	n/a	n/a	44	64	52
Number of new ASB cases reported per 1,000 properties	n/a	n/a	2.80	3.50	2.63

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 June 2022 is 2 cases or less per 1,000 (median performance is 3.64 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 6 referrals. 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	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22
Compliance					
% 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	99.73%	100.00%	100.00%
% of communal areas with all asbestos safety checks complete	100%	n/a	98.92%	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	97.30%	97.30%	100.00%
% of passenger lifts and through floor lifts with annual and 6 monthly service and inspection complete	100%	n/a	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

We are pleased to report 100% compliance in these areas during June. During April there were 3 items delayed, one each in electrical certification, water safety equipment checks and asbestos condition inspection. These delays were due to delayed receipt of certification from our contract suppliers on both water and electrical inspection condition reports following a system patch.

3.10 Development

Indicator	Target 2022 -23	Amber Threshold	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22
Development					
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. In June 2021 planning permission was secured for 54 new homes at Seaward Way in Minehead and we started on site January 2022. Further homes will be started in North Taunton during this year.

4. Executive summary of the HRA Finance report (2022/23 Housing Revenue Account Financial Monitoring as at Quarter 1).

The full finance report will be presented to the following elected committees, Community Scrutiny on the 31 August 2022, Executive on the 21 September 2022. Papers are therefore in the public domain (only the executive summary has been presented as requested by TSG).

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 June 2022).

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. The risks to day to day service costs are seen with inflationary pressures for rising costs of utilities, energy, fuel etc and a provision for potential staff pay award exceeding budget.

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

Revenue Budget	£0.745m forecast overspend	Red
General Reserves	£2.468m forecast balance = favourable (though low) compared to £2m minimum requirement	Amber
Earmarked Reserves	£54k opening balance	Green

4.4 The projected overspend of £0.745m is significant, driven mainly by forecast costs of void repairs, tenancy management costs and the estimated pay award. 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 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.

4.5 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.

4.6 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.

4.7 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 £2.052m; £1.679m due to slippage of work into 2023/24 and £249k budget to be returned.

Democratic Path:

- **Housing Briefing - 13th September 2022**
- **Tenants Strategic Board – 26th September 2022**

Reporting Frequency: Quarterly

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