



Somerset
Council



Frequently Asked Questions

Question	Response
What is an Options Appraisal and why is Somerset Council undertaking one?	Somerset Council owns in excess of 10,000 homes, but currently operates via two models of housing management, with circa 6,000 homes managed in-house by Somerset Council and circa 4,000 homes managed by Homes in Somerset. The Options Appraisal is being carried out by an independent consultant to understand how the housing management services can be best aligned, offering consistency and best value for money to customers.
What is the difference between the two housing models: an in-house service and an arms-length management organisation (ALMO)?	An arms-length management organisation (ALMO) is a not-for-profit body, wholly owned by its parent council, created to manage council-owned housing and deliver housing-related services adhering to a Management Agreement. An ALMO also has its own management team and is governed by a Board. Whereas an in-house housing model means services are directly managed within the council and is overseen by council committees. Somerset Council owns in excess of 10,000 homes and operates via these two models of housing management after bringing together the services of the former Sedgemoor and Somerset West and Taunton Councils, the only two district councils which owned housing stock in Somerset. Of the 10,000 homes, Somerset Council currently manages circa 6,000 in-house and Homes in Somerset manages circa 4,000. Homes in Somerset is an ALMO which

	<p>looks after houses and garages across the county on behalf of Somerset Council. It does not own any properties.</p>
<p>How long will the Options Appraisal take and what is the current situation?</p>	<p>The review has now been completed and we thank everyone who has taken part and shared their views. Savills, the independent consultants have now analysed all the data collated and have put forward their recommendation.</p> <p>The recommendation by Savills, independent consultants, to Somerset Council is for Homes in Somerset to be the single housing management service provider. This recommendation is subject to formal decision by Somerset Council and consultation with tenants and leaseholders in accordance with section 105 of the Housing Act 1985.</p> <p>A final decision is expected in April 2026.</p> <p>If anyone is concerned about the Options Appraisal, or has any questions, they can contact their service provider at any time. Somerset Council tenants should contact their assigned housing officer or use the Contact my housing team form online.</p> <p>Leaseholders should contact Claire Thackray at claire.thackray@somerset.gov.uk or Stephanie Clark at stephanie.clark@somerset.gov.uk</p> <p>Alternatively, visit https://www.somerset.gov.uk/housing-support/council-and-social-housing/ for more information.</p> <p>Homes in Somerset customers can call 0800 585 360, email customer.services@homesinsomerset.org or visit www.homesinsomerset.org for more information.</p>
<p>Is the Options Appraisal being carried out as part of a cost-saving exercise?</p>	<p>No, the Options Appraisal is not being carried out as part of a cost-saving exercise. The decision to align the housing management services has been made to ensure Somerset Council and Homes in Somerset provide the best value for money, with customers receiving the same, consistent services across the county. Any efficiencies made as a result of this process would go directly back into the Housing Revenue Account, to be used to invest back into the housing management services.</p>

Will my landlord change?	No. Somerset Council will remain the legal landlord of your property no matter which management model is selected. The Options Appraisal is being carried out to understand how the housing management services can be best aligned, offering consistency and best value for money to customers. No houses will be sold as a result of the Options Appraisal.
Will my house be sold?	No. The Options Appraisal is being carried out to understand how the housing management services can be best aligned, offering consistency and best value for money for customers. No houses will be sold as a result of the Options Appraisal.
What happens to my tenancy?	Your legal rights as a tenant will remain unchanged and you will remain a tenant of Somerset Council. Your home remains secure so long as you comply with the terms and conditions of your tenancy agreement.
Will my rent or service charge costs be increased?	The Options Appraisal will not trigger rent or service charge increases. There will be no change to your rent or services charges beyond the normal annual review and increase.
Who do I pay my rent to?	You will continue to pay your rent to Somerset Council, in the same way as you currently do.
Which number do I ring to report a repair?	During the Options Appraisal process, you can continue to raise a repair or contact your housing service provider in the same way as you currently do. If your home is managed by Somerset Council, continue to call 0300 123 2224 or visit Repair problem - report - Self Service . If your home is managed by Homes in Somerset, continue to call 0800 585 360 or email customer.services@homesinsomerset.org . This could change following the outcome of the Options Appraisal, however all customer will be contacted directly of there is any change to their housing management service.

<p>What does the Options Appraisal mean for me as a commercial leaseholder?</p>	<p>Your rights as a leaseholder and the terms of any leasehold agreement we have with you for commercial premises will not be affected. Somerset Council will continue to be responsible for your building during the Options Appraisal process and any repairs and maintenance we are currently liable for will continue to be carried out in the same way. The Options Appraisal will not trigger any changes to your rent or service charge payments, beyond the normal annual review and increase.</p>
<p>How will you make sure that the outcome isn't seen as a takeover by one organisation?</p>	<p>At this point, the recommendation is that Homes in Somerset will become the single service delivery provider for tenants and leaseholders. Both Somerset Council and Homes in Somerset are committed to ensuring that the preferred service delivery model will continue to deliver the best practices of both operations. It is crucial that the culture built is one of positivity and acknowledges the experience and differences of the two models whilst moving to a single approach.</p>
<p>How would the recommended service provider (Homes in Somerset) adapt to managing the service delivery of more homes?</p>	<p>If the recommendation is approved, Homes in Somerset will grow in scale to accommodate the additional properties and the employees transferring in. Governance arrangements including Board and Sub-committee membership will also be reviewed.</p>
<p>Was the response to the engagement skewed by geographical area, therefore influencing the recommendation put forward?</p>	<p>The engagement process was focused on priorities for a future service and not on geographical area, therefore the results cannot be skewed in this way.</p>
<p>What did tenants share they were happy with about the two current service models? If the recommendation is approved, how will Homes in Somerset ensure all tenants continue to</p>	<p>The report from Savills sets out the engagement process and tenant responses. These will be made available in full in the new year. However, if the recommendations are approved, Homes in Somerset will ensure all tenants receive the great service that they</p>

be satisfied with the service they receive?	expect.
What data supported that Homes in Somerset is the stronger model?	Savills utilised the Tenant Satisfaction Measures and the costs of operating the models as part of their appraisal. The reports will be released publicly along with the committee reports to Members in early 2026. Many of these performance measures are already available through the performance reports provided to the Scrutiny and Executive committees of Somerset Council.
When will the final decision be taken?	Savills' recommendation that Homes in Somerset becomes the single housing management service provider will be considered at the meeting of Somerset Council's Executive Committee on March 11, 2026. The decision made by the Executive Committee will be subject to the conducting of consultation with our secure tenants and leaseholders in accordance with section 105 of the Housing Act 1985. A final decision is expected in April 2026. If this recommendation is approved following the consultation, the changes are planned to take effect from September 2026.
Is this now decided or is there a possibility that things will change between now and 1 April?	The decision has not been made yet, but it is unlikely that anything significant will change in the recommendations between now and the Executive meeting in March.
What is the plan B if councillors don't support this?	It would be unusual for members not to support the recommendations. In this instance there are clear opportunities for service improvements and financial benefits which further make this unlikely, but not impossible. If Members do not wish to support the recommendations at this time, we would need to understand their concerns and seek to resolve these. If no decision is reached, the two current models would continue to operate.
Will there be a review of the model and how it is performing after a period of time?	There is no set formal review process of the arrangements, however the performance of Homes in Somerset is regularly reviewed by Somerset Council and will continue to be monitored and reviewed at every stage.