

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Head of Service – ALMO Client		
Directorate	Community Place and Economy		
Reporting to	Chris Hall – Executive Director		
Grade	5		
Evaluation ref:	RP318	Job Family ref:	
Role Purpose			
This role provides strategic leadership and oversight of the Council's relationship with its Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO), ensuring the effective delivery of high-quality housing services on behalf of Somerset Council. The post holder acts as the Council's Senior Housing Client Lead, ensuring regulatory compliance, strong governance, and alignment with council priorities, corporate strategies, and tenant expectations, while safeguarding the Council's statutory responsibilities and reputation. The role establishes and operates an intelligent client function to manage and assure a multi-million-pound contractual relationship, providing strategic challenge, performance oversight, and continuous improvement. Leading a small specialist team and drawing on wider corporate resources, the post holder ensures value for money, effective risk management, and robust engagement with tenants, elected members, the ALMO Board, and external regulators, including the Regulator of Social Housing.			
Accountabilities			
Act as the Council's senior advocate for tenants, ensuring tenant voices are meaningfully engaged, represented, and evidenced within strategic decision-making, service design, performance monitoring, and continuous improvement activity across all ALMO-managed services. Provide strategic leadership and oversight of the Council–ALMO relationship across all core housing functions, including responsive repairs, planned maintenance, building safety, capital investment, housing management, development programmes, and voids, ensuring services are delivered in line with contractual requirements, statutory obligations, and Council priorities. Lead and maintain the Council's intelligent client function, setting clear expectations, providing robust challenge, and holding the ALMO to account for service quality, performance, risk management, and outcomes for tenants. Lead, in conjunction with the Executive Director, the negotiation and periodic review of the ALMO management fee, ensuring affordability, transparency, value for money, and alignment with service expectations and available funding.			

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Establish, maintain, and assure comprehensive performance management, KPI, quality assurance, and reporting frameworks, ensuring performance information is timely, reliable, and used to drive improvement and inform strategic decision-making by senior officers and elected members.

Drive best practice in resident engagement, consultation, and co-production, ensuring the ALMO implements effective and inclusive approaches that meet regulatory expectations and reflect tenant and community priorities.

Lead and oversee service transformation and continuous improvement programmes within the ALMO relationship, drawing on data, benchmarking, research, and sector intelligence to improve outcomes, efficiency, resilience, and compliance.

Ensure full regulatory and statutory compliance across ALMO-managed services, including adherence to the Regulator of Social Housing's consumer standards, building safety requirements, and all relevant housing legislation, acting as the Council's responsible senior officer for assurance.

Act as the Council's principal point of contact with the Regulator of Social Housing, leading engagement, inspections, and assurance activity, and ensuring transparent, constructive, and responsive relationships are maintained.

Provide strategic oversight and assurance of rent and service charge setting processes, ensuring compliance with legislative and regulatory frameworks, affordability considerations, and alignment with the Council's financial and housing strategies.

Lead and control relevant Council commissioning and procurement activity linked to the ALMO relationship, ensuring transparent, compliant, and robust processes that secure value for money, quality, and long-term service sustainability.

Hold responsibility for financial and resource oversight related to the ALMO arrangement, ensuring effective budget management, financial sustainability, and robust challenge to ensure continuous improvement and efficient use of public funds.

Ensure the ALMO complies with all relevant Council corporate policies, frameworks, and governance requirements, providing assurance to senior leadership and members on compliance, risk, and delivery.

Represent the Council at senior internal and external forums, including member briefings, committees, tenant forums, partnerships, and the ALMO Board, providing authoritative advice, strategic leadership, and clear accountability.

Commission and manage independent assurance, audit, and specialist advice where required, using external expertise to strengthen governance, risk management, and performance oversight.

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Lead the development, review, and implementation of housing-related strategies, policies, and service delivery plans, ensuring they align with legal requirements, corporate priorities, and customer-focused outcomes across the housing system.

Provide leadership, direction and supervision to the specialist client-side team, ensuring capability, resilience and professional standards are maintained.

Knowledge / Experience / Skills

	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge		
Solid understanding of housing policy, consumer standards, homelessness, tenancy management, and building safety.	X	
Expertise in commissioning, procurement, and contract management for high-value public services.	X	
Knowledge and experience of appropriate housing assurance measures, processes, and controls	X	
Knowledge of Housing Revenue Accounting practice.	X	
Knowledge of corporate governance, assurance, and audit frameworks within large public sector or complex partnership environments.		X
Knowledge of the regulatory framework specific to ALMO or arm's length housing delivery models, including client-provider governance arrangements.		X
Experience		
Minimum 5 years' experience within a senior housing role.	X	
Experience customer engagement, championing their voice	X	
Experience of performance management, quality assurance, data analysis, and data-driven decision-making.	X	
Experience of transformation activity driving the most from our relationship with the ALMO on behalf of our housing tenants.	X	
Experience of commercial negotiations in high value contract arrangements with consideration of implications on tenants, council and ALMO service delivery.	X	

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Experience of housing development schemes and growth opportunities would be advantageous.	X	
Experience of leading or contributing to strategic service redesign or system-wide housing improvement programmes across multiple stakeholders.		X
Experience of working within or alongside an ALMO, registered provider, or large-scale housing partnership arrangement.		X
Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications		
Degree - level education in a relevant subject area	X	
Project/programme management skills; familiar with best practice methodologies (e.g., PRINCE2, Agile).	X	
Skills		
Ability to operate effectively within a politically led organisation, advising elected members and senior leaders on complex and sensitive issues.	X	
Strong leadership, strategic thinking, stakeholder engagement, and partnership-building capabilities.	X	
Excellent communication—written, oral, and presentation—to diverse audiences including tenants, executives, and council members.	X	
Financial acumen: ability to manage budgets, control costs, and drive value-for-money outcomes.	X	
Ability to operate effectively as an intelligent client, providing constructive challenge and maintaining productive, outcome-focused relationships with delivery partners.		X
Ability to interpret complex performance, risk, and assurance information and present it clearly to non-specialist audiences.		X
Working Conditions		
Primarily office based within the Somerset accommodation estate, with occasional site visits, estate walk arounds and tenant engagement sessions.		

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Dimensions of the role

The Arms Length Management Organisation, Homes In Somerset will manage all council housing stock owned by Somerset Council (c10,000 homes), the council can delegate the management activities but remains accountable to the Regulator of Social Housing for all elements of compliance, and oversight. The properties are owned by Somerset Council and the tenants are tenants of the Council.

The ALMO contract budget is £20m+ and the Capital Programme budget is £150m.

The postholder will line manage one member of staff but this may change once TUPE consultation is complete. The maximum number will not exceed 5.

Working Arrangements

Somerset Council's Dynamic Working Strategy will be applied to this position.

Corporate Accountabilities

- Provide clear leadership to deliver the Council's strategic priorities and meet the Council's financial targets, as a member of the Directorates Senior Leadership Team.
- Update and advise Elected Members in respect of operational and policy issues in relation to the high-quality housing services teams.
- Lead the high-quality housing services teams with a clear identity in terms of flexible and responsive ways of working, inclusive and diverse culture, and high level of employee engagement and wellbeing.
- Undertake representational and communication duties on behalf of the Council to promote and protect the Council's interests in matters concerning their specialist areas.
- Function as an ambassador for the Council promoting, both internally and externally, the Council's vision, strategic aims, and values.
- Value the diversity of Somerset's communities ensuring equality of access and treatment in service delivery and employment.
- Function as a role model for Somerset's vision and values. Promotes a culture of continuous improvement that encourages creativity and innovation to ensure services are efficient and develop the potential and flexibility across the Council and its workforce including the motivation and development of employees within the high-quality housing services service teams.
- Ensure that all service place a high value on customer responsiveness by demonstrating a commitment to meeting and involving the broadest range of direct and indirect service users, citizens, customer, and communities.

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Support the delivery of the Council's key strategic aims and objectives ensuring understanding and commitment from staff from across the high-quality housing services.

Keep abreast of specific statutory or regulatory duties contained within the role to ensure any challenges and opportunities in the delivery of services are responsive, compliant, and well communicated to customers, communities, and business as appropriate.

Support Corporate and Directorate specific transformational change programmes with the aim of maximising efficiency, modernising services, and achieving better outcomes and opportunities for service users and customers.

Ensure flexibility in reacting to the needs of the Council, its' customers and partners supporting a culture of continuous improvement.

Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, the Council's standards of conduct, organisational policy, and professional codes of conduct to uphold standards of best practise.

Accountable for compliance with all relevant health and safety legislation and Somerset Council H&S policies.

Date: 22/05/2026