



# Somerset Council

**Tenants' Strategic Group –23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024**

**Engaged Tenant Group Update – September 2024**

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Member for Communities.

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## **1. Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report**

To inform the Tenants Strategic Group of the work being carried out by the tenant engagement groups within Somerset Council.

## **2. Recommendations**

For the group to acknowledge for reference

## **3. Update from our Engagement Groups**

### **TENANTS' ACTION GROUP (TAG)**

#### **Purpose**

To encourage a strong partnership between Council staff, the Tenants' Strategic Group, Councillors (particularly the Portfolio Holder and Shadow Portfolio Holder),

and Tenant Representatives To support the Council to engage and empower tenants and to represent the interests of tenants of the Council. To focus on community and neighbourhood issues and give the Council feedback on how it can improve its services. Consult with housing services and make recommendations for improvement. Provide feedback to the Tenants' Strategic Board on issues arising from meetings and to allocate funds to appropriate community projects.

### **Update**

The group have had two new potential members that came to see what they are doing and hear about all the projects they are working on.

Applications for the Child Youth Initiative Fund continue to be received. In the last meeting the group agreed to fund two projects, £3k to St Gregory playing field and £2990 For Wellington Counselling CIC.

Estate Improvement Fund Applications have been received from Georgina Farebrother to have a fence around a bin store and a barrier to prevent cars coming into Willie Gill Court, this was approved for funding.

Leycroft Grove continues to be on the agenda and the Chair has met with Jack Mount and Stephen Boland to discuss fruit trees and possibly benches to be placed there, Jack will come back with a quote as all the ground needs to be rotavated and re seeded. The Chair is meeting with Stephen Boland to look at progress each month. The roads are complete.

### **VOIDS**

#### **Purpose**

To review the turnaround times for VOIDS, to understand the challenges and to ensure that our homes are meeting the lettable standard. To also understand if leaving well visits are being conducted where properties are left in an appalling condition and the costs involved in getting these properties back to the lettable standard.

#### **Update**

Due to changes in the TAG group: Brian Wyatt, Lou Heald, Catherine Jarvis and Christine Smith are continuing to visit the VOIDS.

They have seen the work required to get to the lettable standard. They have understood that at times it is about safety as well as the lettable standard, where additional work has been needed in a garden to prevent accidents.

### **SOCIAL FUNDING**

We have set up a cost centre for the Social Funding Monies and now have a procedure in place to spend this funding. We have a mixed group of five tenants

from TSG, TAG and an engaged tenant to look at opportunities to spend this and will have some further stories at your next meeting. We had a very successful meeting with the Bell Group and they are supporting the group to spend their element of funding.

## **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE**

### **Purpose**

To work with the grounds maintenance team and Stephen Boland to ensure that the comments about grounds maintenance made in the last Tenant Satisfaction Measures and to make grounds improvements in our communities.

### **Update**

Grounds Maintenance have been back out and about in Duke Street, Inner and Outer Circle and Moorland Place.

## **DAMP AND MOULD** (Members from both TAG and TSG)

### **Purpose**

To monitor the implementation of the Damp and Mould Action Plan. To ensure that it is delivered as promised within a reasonable time scale. The group meets every 2 months.

### **Update**

The group met again on the 16th August 2024. They scrutinised the number of open cases and monitored the progress of the Damp and Mould action plan. They reviewed the Damp & Mould Audit. Ian Candlish attended this meeting to discuss the findings and action plan.

## **CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING**

### **Purpose**

To ensure that the Capital Programme is on track to deliver. Sam Rickward is the elected Capital Programme Monitor who meets with Nigel Loxton.

### **Update**

### **Resources**

We currently have 5 contract managers. We have 1 Liaison officer and 1 further position to be recruited (Interviews have taken place and position has been offered). The graduate post has been filled.

### **Kitchens**

The 2 contractors are Bell Group, and Church farm maintenance because the LCB Group has been removed from contract.

356 kitchens have been completed and signed off since January 2024. Between 12-16 kitchens are being completed every week.

### **Bathrooms**

The chosen contactors are Church Farm Maintenance and DR Jones, the LCB Group has been removed from contract,

Over 153 bathrooms have been fitted since January 2024.

### **Roofing**

116 roofs have been completed this financial year.

### **Windows & Doors**

Nationwide now progressing well, this financial year target of 600 installations. 98 windows and 24 respectively have been fitted.

### **Heating**

New contract to be procured

### **Fire Doors**

New contract to be procured

### **Electrical testing**

Progressing well, the intention is to try and be 100%, currently 96% compliant due to access issues.

### **Procurement**

Pending Tenders, Fire doors Issued awaiting replies, Electric heating will be a direct award to MD Group, communal flooring, Planned decorations.

## **BUILDING SAFETY GROUP**

### **Purpose**

To look at the regulation regarding building safety and fire safety and find ways of ensuring that tenants feel safe in their homes by working closely with the compliance team.

### **Update**

A training session with 2 workshops was held on 12<sup>th</sup> September, it was arranged by The Housing Performance Team and the key speaker was from TPAS. It was an informative session and afterwards the group had their first meeting and agreed the Terms of Reference (ToR). Next meeting to be held in October.

## **VOIDS CONTRACTOR PROCUREMENT**

### **Purpose**

To involve tenants in the procurement of a new contractor for our void properties.

### **Update**

Wayne Hobson, met with Ian Candlish, Ollie Warcup, David Carpenter and Michael O'Halloran to look at the process for procurement. Michael went through a presentation to explain what is needed and timescales. This should be live in April 2025, the group will be at a meeting with the proposed contractors in Wellington Depot on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September to talk about the 'tenants experience' The plan is to have three contractors to complete the work required.

## **COMMUNAL CLEANING PROCUREMENT GROUP**

### **Purpose**

To involve a couple of tenants in the procurement of a new contractor for a new cleaning contract in communal areas.

### **Update**

The consultation feedback is currently being put together in readiness for a proposal report that will come to TSG in November.

#### **4. Risk Assessment (if appropriate)**

A risk assessment is not required to accompany this report.

#### **5. Are there any Finance / Resource, Legal implications directly to do with this report?**

There are no financial implications directly to do with the recommendations in this report.

**6: Are there any Equality and Diversity Implications?**

There are no equality implications directly to do with this report.

**7. Are there any Data Protection Implications?**

There are no equality implications directly to do with this report.

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