



Somerset Council

Tenants' Strategic Group –24th July 2023

Engaged Tenant Group Update -July 2023

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

Report Authors: Sharon Yarde

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

TAG have recently had a resignation from a long-standing member due to ill health and recruited a new member and one more member will be joining in August, this will take the Group to (9). They have agreed to move meetings to various meeting halls across the district and to meet with tenancy case managers, so that together they can identify possible uses of the Estate Improvement Fund to enhance our estates.

Leycroft Grove continues to be on the agenda and appears to be moving in the right direction now, hoping that work will commence shortly.

The group visited Trinity Road flats in connection with an application for funding, whilst visiting it was noted that the gardens had not been done in line with sheltered housing specification, this matter was raised with the Grounds Maintenance Team who have visited and carried out the necessary work.

In the last meeting two applications for funding from the Estate Improvement fund were considered by the group.

Agreed to fund a Patio at Trinity Road flats so that the residents can enjoy their garden. Also agreed funding for bench and outside tap at Lane Estate.

The group also assessed 2 applications for the Child Youth Initiative Fund:

Neroche Woodlanders and Escape, both applications were passed.

VOIDS

Purpose

To review the turnaround times for VOIDS, to understand the challenges and to ensure that our homes are meeting the lettable standard.

Update

This Group was set up on 6 September 2022 for six months, completion of the group has been delayed due to some of the void properties not being ready for inspection due to the extent of work needed to turn them around.

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This group has looked at 9 properties, including flats and houses that have been passed back to the council in varying states, from very good to appalling. The group has re-visited each property before being re-let to check against the lettable standard. To date all properties have met the standard and the group will provide a full report in the next TSG meeting.

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

Purpose

To work with the grounds maintenance team and Stephen Boland to ensure that the service provided complies with the Grounds Maintenance Schedule. To address the comments about grounds maintenance made in the last Tenant Satisfaction Measures and to make grounds improvements in our communities.

Update

Members met and looked around Lane Estate, photos were taken and then a meeting held with Darren Hill, Nick Watkins, Stephen Boland, Alan Carlton, John Beaman and Sharon Sloan. Pictures and areas were discussed, and a plan put in place to rectify the issues identified. The slope for disabled access has been cordoned off as it does not meet H&S legislation and is too steep, Ian Candlish is looking at how this can be rectified. The park has now been cut leaving longer grass in areas with trees and the tenants are happy with the 'new look.' A bench in the park was also replaced as it was dangerous. The group have now looked at Hope Corner Lane and have held a subsequent meeting to discuss the area with Jack Mount. This group have already made a difference to areas and are going to continue.

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.

Update

The group meets every 2 months to review the Damp & Mould Action Plan and to ensure that it is on track for delivery. In the last meeting the group helped create the questions that all visiting officers will ask tenants when they visit their homes as part

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of the Damp and Mould procedure. They are also looking into arranging a Damp and Mould event.

LOW CARBON/COMMS (Members from TAG and TSG and new tenant representatives)

Purpose

To help create the Low Carbon strategy and a communication strategy. Understand retrofit and how it is achieved.

Update

The Low Carbon strategy was taken to full council and agreed in December 2022. A draft of the Communication strategy was reviewed by the group on 24th May and their approval was given. This group is due to end in September 2023.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING

Purpose

To ensure that the Capital Programme is on track to deliver.

Update

At the time of writing this report Sam Rickward hadn't met with Nigel Loxton yet.

TENANCY AGREEMENT MEETING

Purpose

To look at the tenancy agreement in conjunction with Homes in Sedgemoor (HiS) and change where necessary.

Update

Paul Cram from Somerset Council and Craig Green from HiS are meeting with Simon Lewis and a core group of managers to 'walk through' their current Tenancy Agreement and suggest constructive changes.

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4. Risk Assessment (if appropriate)

A risk assessment is not required to accompany this report.

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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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