



Somerset Council

Tenants' Strategic Group –25th September 2023

Engaged Tenant Group Update - September 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 another resignation from a long-standing member who has completed 30 years and feels it is now time for someone else to have the opportunity. We are hoping that one more member will be joining in October this will take the Group to (9). They have met at Taunfield meeting hall and had three applications for the Estate Improvement Fund to enhance our estates, with two Estate Officers attending these meetings to secure the funding.

Leycroft Grove continues to be on the agenda and appears to be moving in the right direction now, work has started, drainage put in and some pathways. The Chair is meeting with Stephen Boland to look at progress each month.

In the last meeting two applications for funding from the Estate Improvement fund was 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 one application for the Child Youth Initiative Fund: They had further questions which have now been answered.

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 has reached completion and conclusion report is agenda item 5, to be discussed in this 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

The group met at Duke Street and Wellesley Street, Jack Mount from Grounds maintenance also attended so that decisions and discussion could be made during the meeting. The original engaged tenants in this group have resigned and therefore, Wayne Hobson and Brian Wyatt have taken up the roles in this group. Pictures and areas were discussed, and Stephen Boland spent time updating the new members. There have been some improvements planned for both areas; to enhance the approach to the flats and to plant more plants on the verge in Wellesley Street, the group are waiting for quotes from Jack Mount before proceeding. Two bug hotels have been installed behind the school for the school children to observe.

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 decided that it wanted to attend 3 activity days over the summer holidays to draw attention to Damp & Mould and provide a service where tenants could speak to surveyors and log any Damp and Mould that they had. These activity days were held at Halcon, Priorswood and Wellington, a surveyor, scheduler, tenant rep and engagement officer attended each event. A colouring competition for the children was held which was very popular with over 20 entries at the Wellington event alone. Leaflets regarding Damp & Mould were distributed and we had several queries, 6 referral and 1 thank you for the work already carried out.

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 October 2023.

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

Three contract managers have been appointed, with the first one commencing Monday 21st August. The following two will commence Monday 4th September.

We have one more liaison officer to appoint.

Kitchens

Novus contract expires beginning of October, with their last openings 1st week of September. The tender process has now been completed for the next four years. Tenders currently being evaluated with the intention to appoint three contractors to commence pilots during November. The objective is to complete 400 kitchens this financial year.

Bathrooms

Novus contract expires beginning of October, with their last openings 1st week of September. The tender process is currently ongoing. Tenders are due to be submitted 29th August with the intention to appoint three contractors to commence

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pilots during December. The objective is to complete 200 bathrooms this financial year.

Roofing

Contract progressing well, annual target 400 roofs.

Windows & Doors

Nationwide are the contractor , first installs due to commence 28th August.

Heating

Liberty have been appointed , first four pilots due to commence beginning of September.

Fire Doors

CLC are the current contractor . Their contract expires March 2024.

Electrical testing

Testing programme ongoing MD are the contractor. Access is proving to be difficult.

TENANCY AGREEMENT MEETING

Purpose

To look at the tenancy agreement in conjunction with Homes in Sedgemoor (HiS) and change where necessary. Sam Rickward from Somerset Council and Craig Green from HiS meet with Simon Lewis and a core group of managers to 'walk through' their current Tenancy Agreement and suggest constructive changes.

Update

A cross working group from Somerset Council Housing and Homes in Sedgemoor has met twice to review the Tenancy agreement and identify areas where this should be refined to allow us to issue a new joint tenancy agreement. We have had tenant input from a member of TSG for both of these meetings. Further work now needs to take place to propose a suitable set of words and then to consult tenants more widely on the proposed updates and to consider and take account of any feedback. We will be seeking input from Legal Services to agree the best pathway to approve and adopt the new tenancy agreement.

VOIDS CONTRACTOR PROCUREMENT

Purpose

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

Update

Wayne Hobson and Livi Mongare met with the procurement consultant and undertook a survey to establish the needs of the tenant. This is now complete.

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

At the time of writing this report, the group had not had their first meeting.

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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