



Somerset Council

Tenants' Strategic Group –27th November 2023

Engaged Tenant Group Update – November 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 had another member voted onto the Group and a further new person that would like to be voted on at the next meeting this takes the group to nine members. Applications for the Estate Improvement Fund to enhance our estates, are still coming to the group and they have agreed to fund a further two projects which will mean over 50% of the budget has been allocated.

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.

The group also assessed two applications for the Child Youth Initiative Fund: They had further questions which have now been answered and the group have agreed funding for this application, however declined the other application.

SPARKLE funding has been agreed to purchase Christmas presents for children who would otherwise not have one.

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

This will be conducted by four members of the TAG group: Brian Wyatt, Sally Mitchell, Catherine Jarvis and Christine Smith. Meeting with Ollie Warcup and Tony Knight has been completed and void viewing dates booked.

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 have met again at Holway and Moorland Place further enhancements were agreed and the need to fund hedgehog houses as the work agreed may disturb resident hedgehogs. This group also went through their action tracker to keep on top of outstanding items. The group are working well with Jack Mount and Stephen Boland, and we will be taking photographs of the changes as they happen which we will be able to share in the spring.

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 would like to organise some evening events in community halls for tenants to be able to come and discuss damp and mould and anything else that can be taken away and looked at after. The group decided to put this on hold until the housing structure has been announced and will discuss in the next meeting January 2024.

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 was key in putting these 2 strategies together.

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

All 3 new appointments for contracts managers now in post. Currently interviewing for Resident Liaison Officer. We have completed interviews for two graduates and will hopefully be able to appoint soon.

Kitchens

Novus have now finished their contract, there will be snags to complete. 3 contractors now appointed for new framework. We have prestart meetings with a view to mobilise asap. The intention is to get 3-4 kitchens completed by each as pilot properties before Christmas.

The 3 contractors are Bell Group. LCB Group, and Church farm maintenance.

Bathrooms

The tenders have been agreed and 3 contractors have been chosen. The intention to have 3-4 pilot properties completed by Xmas.

Roofing

Progressing well, DR Jones have currently added another team to speed up progress.

Windows & Doors

Nationwide now progressing well, their intention is to complete 10 properties a week going forward. This maybe a big ask, as some of this relies on Assets giving them the information required.

Heating

Liberty are now installing the pilot properties. When we are happy with their quality they can proceed with the programme.

Fire Doors

CLC will be coming to an end of their contract in December.

Electrical testing

Progressing well, the intention is to try and be 100% compliant by December.

Procurement

Pending Tenders, Fire doors, Electric heating, communal flooring, Planned decorations.

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

Update

Wayne Hobson and Livi Mongare are meeting with Barabara Bottomley, Ollie Warcup, David Carpenter and Michael O'Halloran to look at proposed options.

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

Livi Mongare and Luke Manning are involved in this project, the first meeting is scheduled for 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.

Name of Contact Officers: Sharon Yarde

Telephone number: 07818529194

Email address: sharon.yarde@somersetcouncil.gov.uk