



Somerset Council

Tenants' Strategic Group – 22nd January 2024

Engaged Tenant Group Update – January 2024

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 held their AGM on 11th January 2024, all other meeting dates for 2024 have been agreed.

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

The group also assessed an application for the Child Youth Initiative Fund: This was unanimously agreed to fund. They had further questions from a previous application which Angela Bolitho answered, however they agreed to put the application on hold and look at it again in March if funding is still available.

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. Viewing dates were put on hold until 2024, these will be planned for January 2024 upon Tony Knights return from leave.

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 groups last meeting was cancelled due to the weather, they have planned a meeting in January to look at some of the trees in the area that are causing issues due to size and location, the tree specialist (Dan Mancini) will be in attendance. The group are continuing to work well with Jack Mount and Stephen Boland, and photographs have been taken of some of the work already completed, which will be shared 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 other housing related issues. The group decided to put this on hold until the housing structure has been announced and will discuss in the next meeting in February 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 group has come to an end, 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. One graduate has commenced. There are 2 positions for Liaison officers and 1 Contract manager in the new structure.

Kitchens

Novus have now finished their contract. Three contractors now appointed for new framework. The pilot kitchens have been completed and are of a good standard.

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

Bathrooms

The tenders have been agreed and 3 contractors have been appointed. The intention is to have 3-4 pilot properties completed by the end of January.

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 have completed the pilot properties. We are happy with their quality of work, and they can proceed with the programme.

Fire Doors

CLC contract completed. A tender will go out end of Q1 2024, subject to budget.

Electrical testing

Progressing well, the intention was to be 100% compliant by December. MD are being held up with access to properties and therefore currently running at 94.2% compliant.

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

Further work 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. Input from Legal Services is required to agree the best pathway to approve and adopt the new tenancy agreement.

This piece of work is currently on hold due to shifting priorities and resource and will be revisited at a later time.

VOIDS CONTRACTOR PROCUREMENT

Purpose

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

Update

Wayne Hobson and Livi Mongare met with Barabara Bottomley, Ollie Warcup, David Carpenter and Michael O'Halloran and looked at proposed options. Another meeting is planned for February.

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 has taken place, and another meeting will take place in February. There will need to be a consultation regarding the specification of the communal cleaning service that is required.

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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