



# Somerset Council

**Tenants' Strategic Group –25<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

**Engaged Tenant Group Update – March 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**

The potential TAG member decided that due to personal circumstances she was unable to join, therefore the group remains with eight 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 project which will mean over 50% of the budget has been allocated. 3 further CYIF applications were assessed in February, 2 were awarded and 1 was declined. £18,000 out of a budget of £20,000 has been allocated this financial year.

Leycroft Grove continues to be on the agenda and the group have met with Chris Baxter (Tenancy Case Manager) Dan Mancini (Tree specialist) and some residents on two occasions to discuss planting in the area. The Chair is meeting with Stephen Boland to look at progress each month.

### **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. This group is temporarily on hold because both Somerset Council Leads have been and are on long-term sickness.

### **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**

Hedgehog houses have been installed in Holway and Moorland Place. Wayne Hobson and Livi Mongare have arranged a meeting with Jack Ripley at Priorswood Primary School to discuss how they can use the small amount of funding from Travis Perkins (a social value contribution pot ). 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 has been on hold until the Housing Structure was announced and the Repairs Manager returned. The Group met on 8<sup>th</sup> March and said a fond farewell to Mike Parsons who is leaving at the end of March 2024.

### **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 3 contract managers and have 1 more to recruit. We have 1 Liaison officer and 2 further positions to be recruited. The graduate post has been filled.

#### **Kitchens**

Novus have now finished their contract. The 3 contractors are Bell Group, LCB Group, and Church farm maintenance. 100 kitchens have been completed and signed off since January 2024. Between 16 and 20 kitchens are being completed every week.

#### **Bathrooms**

The chosen contactors are: Church Farm Maintenance, LCB Group, and DR Jones  
Over 25 bathrooms have been fitted since January 2024.

#### **Roofing**

More than 400 roofs have been completed this financial year.

### **Windows & Doors**

Nationwide now progressing well, their intention is to complete 10 properties a week going forward. Over 240 properties have had windows fitted this financial year.

### **Heating**

Liberty have installed the pilot properties. 22 heating systems have been fitted to date.

### **Fire Doors**

CLC has come to an end of their contract. Currently in negotiations to secure a new contractor.

### **Electrical testing**

Progressing well, the intention is to try and be 100%, currently 95% compliant due to access issues.

### **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. This group has been temporarily been put on hold.

## **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. The

Page 5/

Repairs Manager has been unavailable and therefore, this work has been temporarily suspended.

## **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 group are currently looking at preparing for a tenant consultation before they can go ahead with securing a budget and procurement. The group have met twice since the last TSG meeting and work is progressing well.

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

A risk assessment is not required to accompany this report.

Page 6/

#### **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