



Somerset Council

Tenants' Strategic Group –20th May 2024

Engaged Tenant Group Update – May 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

A new application to join the group was received and in the last meeting, it was unanimously agreed. The group currently has nine members, which only allows for one more space.

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 of £600 for the gardening competition that is going to held in the summer.

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. The roads are in the process of being completed.

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. The group have recently visited four properties of various conditions, the group will return to these properties before the new tenants move in to ensure that meet the lettable standard. A folder has been created with pictures and a spreadsheet to record any useful information.

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

Wayne Hobson and Livi Mongare have attended 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 application has been sent to Travis Perkins and then the equipment will be purchased. Wayne and Livi have subsequently visited two further schools, Wellsprings and Holway, we are awaiting their applications. There will be a new group formed to support with the distribution of these funds in the future.

The group are working well with Jack Mount and Stephen Boland, the group are taking photos of the positive changes as they get completed and these can be shared in the next TSG meeting.

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 met again on the 19th of April 2024. They scrutinised the number of open cases and monitored the progress of the Damp and Mould action plan. They have asked Barbara Bottomley to look into the clearing of guttering and drainage issues as this can be a trigger for Damp & Mould. It has been agreed that an article about flushing wet wipes and blocking drains will be added to the tenant's newsletter. The group are investigating whether the use of "kitchen" and "bathroom paint" instead of general emulsion would be beneficial.

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 2 more to recruit. We have 1 Liaison officer and 1 further position to be recruited. The graduate post has been filled.

Kitchens

Novus have now finished their contract. The 2 contractors are Bell Group, and Church farm maintenance because the LCB Group has been removed from contract.

Page 4/

210 kitchens have been completed and signed off since January 2024. Between 12-16 kitchens are being completed every week.

Bathrooms

The chosen contactors are Church Farm Maintenance and DR Jones, the LCB Group has been removed from contract,

Over 60 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

Page 5/

be refined to allow us to issue a new joint tenancy agreement. This group has 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 Repairs Manager had been unavailable and therefore, this work has been temporarily suspended. A meeting further meeting is planned for the end of May.

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 have undertaken a tenant consultation before they can go ahead with securing a budget and procurement. The group met on 2nd May and the next stages is to put a contract together ready for procurement.

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.

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