



# Somerset Council

**Tenants' Strategic Group – 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

**Engaged Tenant Group Update – 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

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 group now have two new members but have had a resignation so are back to 8 members in total.

Applications for the Child Youth Initiative Fund continue to be received. In the last meeting the group agreed to fund two projects, Catalyst £2.5k and Sheba Soul £2510.00. A third application for Neroche Wanderers was declined because the maximum grant of £20k has been spent for the current financial year. This is the first year since covid that the group has managed to spend all of the grant.

Estate Improvement Fund Applications – Funding agreed for the purchase of a projector and 2 screens for Taunfield and Middleway meeting rooms so that they can be used to host meetings-total £1950.00.

Leycroft Grove continues to be on the agenda and Stephen has confirmed that on 20th January contractors will carry out schedule of works, after that it will be ready for fruit trees etc.

The chair of TAG has e-mailed Duncan Sharkey regarding different levels of ground maintenance for Highways and the former SWT council. He is awaiting a reply.

The AGM will be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2025.

## **SCRUTINY-TAG**

### **Purpose:**

The group decided to scrutinise contractor communication, their aim is to help shape the current policies and procedures for the benefit of both the tenant and the council.

### **Update**

The group will meet again on 29<sup>th</sup> January to put together their final report and recommendations. This report will be presented to TSG in March.

## **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**

Due to further changes in the TAG group: Brian Wyatt and Louise Heald will visit the VOIDS. This has been on hold due to time constraints but will restart in January.

### **SOCIAL FUNDING** (TAG, TSG & engaged tenant)

#### **Purpose**

To investigate, authorise and spend “social value” elements of procured contracts (up to 10% of the value of the contract). The group is made up of five tenants who will look at opportunities to spend this money.

#### **Update**

We currently have social value funds from the following contractors: Travis Perkins, Bell Group, Church Farm, DR Jones, EEM Midlands, SWPA.

So far, we have funded, Priorswood Primary School outdoor equipment, Wellsprings Primary School Diversity workshop, Oncology Milkshake maker, Oncology children’s Christmas party, Oncology weighing scales, Milverton Archives Laptop and printer.

Bell Group have agreed to provide 4 x deep cleans for oncology family properties prior to the child being discharged from hospital.

2 x individual room decoration for 2 separate properties.

The Group met on 15<sup>th</sup> November and are pursuing further ideas for funding. The group met on 10<sup>th</sup> January and an update of this meeting will be reported in the TSG March meeting.

### **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**

Grounds Maintenance are due to go out and about on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

### **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 18th October 2024. They scrutinised the number of open cases and monitored the progress of the Damp and Mould action plan. Bill Voyce (Maintenance Manager) introduced himself to the group and confirmed that he will endeavour to work on some of the outstanding action points. The group will meet on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2025 to review the new Damp & Mould policy, and an update of this meeting will be reported in the TSG March meeting.

## **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.

### **Resources**

We currently have 5 contract managers. We have 2 Liaison officers. The graduate post has been filled.

### **Kitchens**

The 2 contractors are Bell Group, and Church farm maintenance.

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

### **Bathrooms**

The 2 contractors are Church Farm Maintenance and DR Jones.

Over 212 bathrooms have been fitted since April 2024.

### **Roofing**

249 roofs have been completed this financial year.

### **Windows & Doors**

Nationwide now progressing well, this financial year target of 600 installations. 345 windows and 106 respectively have been fitted.

### **Heating**

The electric heating contract of approximately 100 installs will commence in early 2025, awaiting contract to be signed.

### **Fire Doors**

New contract procured. Tenders have been reviewed, evaluation taken place, successful contractors notified, surveys to commence in January 2025.

### **Electrical testing**

Progressing well, the intention is to try and be 100%, currently 96% compliant due to access issues. We have visited properties over the Xmas period to reduce the access numbers. 496 Consumer units have been installed since April 2024.

## **Communal Decorations**

Three contractors appointed, works to commence Jan 2025.

## **New Procurement**

Communal flooring being procured.

## **BUILDING SAFETY GROUP**

### **Purpose**

To look at the regulation regarding building safety and fire safety and find ways of ensuring that tenants feel safe in their homes by working closely with the compliance team.

### **Update**

The group met again on 14<sup>th</sup> November and enjoyed a presentation regarding the “BIG 6” from Mary Dosson. They commented on the EV charging policy and the Fire Safety leaflet. The group will meet again 5<sup>th</sup> February, and an update of this meeting will be reported in the TSG March meeting.

## **VOIDS CONTRACTOR PROCUREMENT**

### **Purpose**

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

### **Update**

Wayne Hobson and Louise Heald attended the contractor briefing in Wellington Depot and have now received the paperwork to complete the evaluation. Moderation days were held on 20<sup>th</sup> November and 17<sup>th</sup> December to decide on the successful contractors. The contracts will commence in April 2025.

Now that procurement has been completed, this group has come to an end.

## **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**

Stephen Boland attended the TAG meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> December and updated the group on the current situation. Evaluation day was 18<sup>th</sup> December and Luke Manning attended. A decision was made with regards to the successful contractors. The contracts will commence in April 2025.

Now that procurement has been completed, this group has come to an end.

**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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