

EAST AREA COMMITTEE

11 December 2023

REPORT OF GENTOO

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 The following report provides an update from Gentoo for the East Area Committee for the period September to December 2023.

2 Background

2.1 Area Committee agreed that regular updates from Gentoo would be provided to each Committee meeting to enable members to be up to date on current Gentoo developments, projects, and priorities and to ensure members are fully aware of their opportunities to work collaboratively with Gentoo.

3 Update on Neighbourhood Services

3.1 **Allocations**, Gentoo is the largest social landlord within the City and responsible for the management of almost 30,000 properties. We work closely with Sunderland City Council, who have statutory (or legal) duties for housing in Sunderland, for example, the responsibility for the prevention of homelessness and assistance for those who are homeless. We recognise that the way homes are allocated is a matter of real importance to people. The demand for social housing in Sunderland far outstrips supply and therefore we seek to allocate homes in a way which primarily houses people with the greatest need.

Gentoo operates a banding system for letting their empty homes, Customers will be placed in a band, which is appropriate to their current circumstances.

Band 1+ Applicants living in renewal area

Band 1 Statutory or Urgent Social Housing Need - applicants who have an immediate need to move, some examples include homeless applicants, applicants with severe mobility issues, Gentoo customers who are experiencing severe harassment and assessed as being at risk if not rehoused (included victims of domestic abuse).

Band 2 High Housing need - applicants who have a priority housing need, some examples include applicants at risk of homelessness, applicants needing to move on from supported accommodation, Gentoo customers who are under or over occupying their current home, Gentoo customers who have children in flats, Gentoo customers who need to move for financial hardship, or applicants who have a mobility or disability and rehousing would support them.

Band 3 General Need - Open to all applicants

Our register on 31 October 2023 shows the current banding position of applicants:

There are 30,519 live applicants registered for housing on our allocations register. Of these 148 applicants are Band 1 (urgent housing need), 304 applicants are Band 2 (high housing need), and 30,067 applicants are in Band 3 (general needs).

We have allocated 1203 new homes since April 2023, 493 were applicants with a priority need.

- 3.2 **Estate walks**, invites will be sent during December for the quarterly estate walks that are due to take place in January 2024, these are a great opportunity to identify estate improvements, gather feedback from partners, and for the residents in the area to see collaborative working across the agencies.
- 3.3 **Bonfire Night**, over the weekend of 5 November 2023, our Grounds Maintenance Team worked in partnership with Sunderland City Council to help keep our communities safe by patrolling the city to identify any illegal bonfires. The team successfully removed **15 tonnes of rubbish** that was destined for a bonfire.
- 3.4 **Gentoo Christmas Campaign** 🎄🎁, to help support customers and families who may struggle over the festive period, we've launched our annual Christmas campaign with three themes that include, a Christmas dinner (delivered on 22 December), a Christmas gift from a secret Santa or a Theatre visit to see the pantomime (Saturday 9 December).
- 3.5 **Benedict Court** – an event was held with customers included entertainment and a buffet following the issues that customers had experienced following the issues with their lift.

4. **Investment & Renewal (yearly plan attached)**

Roof Repairs (Australia Tower)

Following observations from the contractor once the scaffold was erected, the original area of roof to be replaced has been extended. Work is underway to recover, install new purlins and roof cladding.

Unfortunately, due to the removal of the existing area of roof to be recovered and severe recent adverse weather, heavy rain, high winds, the tower including some of the top floor flats have suffered from water penetration. Customers have been kept informed and an agreement that any damaged areas will be redecorated once the roof is recovered. Hodgson & Sayers (Principal Contractor) tell us that the roof works will be completed by the Christmas shut down 22.12.23, and scaffold will to start to be dismantled from the 03.01.24. (Obviously this is subject to working within the H&S guidelines for any adverse weather we may have).

Hedworth Tower – Modernisation work to the internal and communal areas are continuing and at present are in line with the contract specification.

High Rise Residential Properties – Contined works on the structural surveys as part of the Building Safety Act.

5. **Recommendations**

- 5.1 Note the content of this report.

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