

WEST AREA COMMITTEE

13 March 2024

REPORT OF GENTOO

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The following report provides an update from Gentoo for the West Area Committee for the period December 2023 to March 2024.

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 **Visit from the Police and Crime Commissioner:** In January we welcomed Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner, Kim McGuinness, to Aberdeen Tower to discuss anti-social behaviour (ASB) and how best to tackle it with involved residents. During the informative session, Kim discussed the force's approach to tackling anti-social behaviour across Wearside whilst giving our customers the opportunity to voice any concerns in their area and share how ASB has had an impact on their lives.

- 3.2 **Corporate Charity:** In December staff were able to vote for who they would like support via Gentoo's corporate charity in 2024. Love Amelia was the chosen children's charity who provide support to families experiencing poverty and hardship right across the Northeast.

They accept donations of great condition, pre-loved baby items and gift them to families who need them most. They support children from birth to 16years old to ensure no child goes without. Many of our families have benefitted from this charity and therefore we will be fundraising throughout the year to support they great work that they do.

- 3.3 **Update on Tenancy Sustainment Fund:** You may recall in Septembers committee, Gentoo updated members that Gentoo Board approved several measures to support tenancy sustainability. These measures included interventions such as, providing carpets for new customers who have been housed with us on a priority basis and below the age of 25. Supporting this group of customers to have their water rates paid if they are really struggling financially (for a limited period). We also identified measures such as the provision of Ring Doorbells for victims of domestic abuse or antisocial behaviour, and a small budget to support these customers with house removals for those who need to move in an emergency and can't afford to pay for it.

At the time of writing this report the current spend is circ £500,000, note this figure also includes an additional member of staff in Money Matters and two Pre-Tenancy Support Coordinators who support the SCC team to pick up those customers who need support to sustain a new tenancy.

- 3.4 **Estate Walks:** next round of estate walks will be being arranged for April 2024, if there were any area's you would like to focus on then please email your Neighbourhood Coordinator and they can ensure that specific area is covered prior to the invites going out to you all. A great example of how these walks can benefit our communities was a suggestion from those who attended the Springwell walk last month, an A frame to limit motorcycle access into the Barnes Park extension via Saltburn Road was discussed at the walk and a purchase order to instal this has been issued.
- 3.5 **Springwell Secret Garden:** consultation continues with the residents surrounding this plot of land who have extended their gardens. Residents still have not appointed a legal representative to act on their collective behalf and one resident is unwilling to go forward with any changes in legal ownership. This means that we are unable to proceed with gifting the land (some of which has already been grabbed) and further consultation will be required. We hope to arrange this during March 2024.
- 3.6 **Site Garages:** we will no longer be proceeding with the Site Garages Demolition project and no provision has been made to complete these works in future years. Whilst this may be disappointing news, the decision was made to help protect investment into our customers' homes. The £700k required to deliver the demolition works to garages (which do not belong to Gentoo) would mean 70 of our customers would not benefit from a new roof or a new kitchen and internal rewire. Just to note, the Silksworth site garage owners have all be contacted with this update, comms to other area's had not began.

4. **Property, Investment and Renewal**

- 4.1 **Damp & Mould:** Update from Steve Lowther (Head of Property) regarding damp and mould, see presentation attached.
- 4.2 **Pennywell Regen:** The scheme is progressing well and is ahead of programme with 802 main dwellings completed and 748 boundary walls. We have some ongoing issues to resolve with party walls and neighbouring private residents preventing work to the Gentoo property, we have asked an independent 3rd party surveyor to support all parties.

5. **Recommendations**

- 5.1 Note the content of this report.

Contact Officer

Vicky Gamblin, Head of Neighbourhoods.
Tel: 0191 525 5004
Email: vicky.gamblin@gentoo.com