

**26<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

**REPORT OF GENTOO**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The following report provides an update from Gentoo for the Coalfield Area Committee from April to end May 2019.

**2 Background**

- 2.1 Area Committee agreed that regular updates from Gentoo would be presented to each Committee meeting to enable members to be up-to-date on current Gentoo developments, projects and priorities.

**3. Neighbourhood Services Update**

- 3.1 The roll out of Universal Credit (UC) for all working age applicants in Sunderland has continued since July 2018. There are now just over 3776 Gentoo customers in receipt of UC, which is 13% of all customers, and approximately 80 customers per week are migrating over to UC.

Within the Coalfield area we now have 640 customers in receipt of UC, of which 378 (59%) are in arrears, with an average arrears increase of £161.96 since the start date of the UC claim.

- 3.2 Anti-social behaviour during the period has been reported predominantly in the Newbottle, Penshaw, Hetton Road and Easington Lane areas. At the present time motorbike and quad bike disorder is a recurring theme across the area and we are working with the police and SCC to try and identify these perpetrators which is key if we are to take any action. We have also received a number of allegations of drug dealing across the area which again are being investigated by appropriate agencies i.e. Police, Gentoo, SCC ASB Team.
- 3.4 Fly tipping still remains an issue across the Coalfield Area and we are working closely with SCC Environmental Health Team in this regard to identify the “hotspot” areas. We have also worked with residents in some regularly tipped areas and have put up notices at these locations advising tippers of penalties for fly tipping in an effort to dissuade them as SCC and/or Gentoo will take action against tippers if they are identified.

**4. Investment & Renewal**

- 4.1 As previously reported, Investment plan works in the Coalfields area are underway and will be continuing throughout 2019.
- 4.2 A public consultation event for a scheme of 45 affordable rent units at our Avenue Vivian site was held mid May and well received by those attending. A

planning application was subsequently made on 29<sup>th</sup> May for a slightly reduced 44unit scheme comprising a mix of 2 bed bungalows, 2 bed houses & 3 bed houses. Planning determination is targeted for Sept 2019 with a start on site for early 2020. The current scheme is built around the 3 owner occupiers remaining on site, however negotiations are ongoing to see if the remaining properties can be acquired to improve the aesthetics of the scheme further.

- 4.3 Construction is still underway at the Broomhill site named “Bramblewood”. 128 new homes (2/3/4 bedroomed properties) are being built 115 for sale and 20 for rent. Of the 20 properties for rent from the first phase of this development 4 are awaiting sign up, 3 pending (awaiting viewings) and 13 are now occupied.

## **5. Community Partnership Coordinator Activity**

- 5.1 We continue to work with local groups in the area. Supporting our two registered resident’s groups in Moorsley and Cherrytree Gardens.
- 5.2 Over the last two months our CPC has supported Hetton New Dawn and Opel Club (ELCAP) arranging Genfactor acts to perform at some of their lunch clubs.
- 5.3 CPC still supports Space4 with regular attendance, advised on an Aspire grant which was then awarded by our customers to help purchase a chair more suited to older people and some craft tables.
- 5.4 CPC is acting Vice Chair for the 3 Together Big Local and regularly meets Chair and support worker to help progress the current 3 year spending plan. She recently attended workshops with the relevant steering groups developing the Health & Wellbeing and Community Engagement agendas.
- 5.5 CPC attended meetings of Friends of Herrington Country park regarding an event in the park for local residents. An aspire grant was also awarded in May to help with this event.
- 5.6 Gentoo Community Rooms – Churchill Gardens - a new coffee morning and social events were arranged by and CPC in Gentoo’s Churchill Gardens Community Room. Due to its success further social activities will be done in next few months with 2 new groups using the facility.  
Brancepeth Avenue – an after-school club is using the rooms until a more suitable venue is sourced after the closure of the YMCA.
- 5.7 CPC attended 2 x Hetton Railway Bicentenary meetings on behalf of Gentoo.
- 5.8 CPC attended a meeting recently regarding environmental improvements in Easington Lane. This was followed by a Rate Your Estate walkabout by our Houghton Community Engagement Forum where it received a score of 88 %. This is a good score but there were still some points for improvement and we hope to work further together on this agenda.

- 5.9 CPC had recent discussion with Sylvia at SHARP about how we can help support them with community activities.
- 5.10 And finally - our CPC Ann is the lead within the CPC Team for our Genfactor competition, seeing the final night at Rainton Meadows Arena on 24<sup>th</sup> April being the most successful yet with well over 800 residents attending.

## **6. Recommendations**

- 6.1 Note the content of this report.

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