

15 December 2022

REPORT OF GENTOO

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The following report provides an update from Gentoo for the Washington Area Committee from September to December 2022.

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 Update on Neighbourhood Services

- 3.1 Following the recent coverage around the tragic impact mould and damp can have, we know that some of our tenants may be concerned about mould and damp in their home. To ensure we provide the necessary support, we have set up a dedicated phone line where tenants can report any concerns about mould or damp, and these will be addressed as soon as possible. A dedicated team has been set up to deal with any concerns. The health and safety of our tenants is our number one priority, and we believe everyone has the right to live safely and comfortably in their own home.
- 3.2 Estate walks with Local Councillors are going well and would like to thank all Councillors for your contribution at these walks, showing residents in our neighbourhoods the collaborative working that goes on in making the area's people are proud to live in.
- 3.3 At last committee Gentoo shared with you that we have entered into an agreement with other Housing providers called 'The Bread & Butter Thing'. The Bread-and-Butter Thing (TBBT) is a charity that makes life more affordable for people on a low income. Their mission is to create a fair solution for people in poverty and their long-term aim is to address the premiums that people in poverty pay for food, loans, energy and other everyday essentials, simply because of their personal circumstances. It works by collecting surplus food and staple goods that often end up going to waste from supermarkets, factories, and farms and distribute them at a discount price through community hubs, our first area in the City to be able to access this is Pennywell. On 9/11/22 the first session benefitted 75 families, the second session on 16/1/22 79 families and 1 single person attended and received their shopping at a substantially reduced rate.
- 3.4 Bonfire Night update, in the run up to the 5th November Gentoo deployed a number of teams to work out of hours across the City, they were actively picking up fly tipping and waste that could have been used potentially for bonfire. On the 5th November, working in partnership with the City Council, TWFRS teams and Gentoo the partners worked across the City dismantling bonfires and collecting waste items that could become part of a bonfire.

As a result of all of the partnership working, the actual number of bonfires was greatly reduced and demonstrated how working and a coordinated citywide approach, can play a massive part in keeping everyone safe.

Waste figures from Gentoo's waste partners Biffa and Suez has highlighted that during the lead up to bonfire night, working out of hours and on the 5th, Gentoo disposed of 23 tonnes of waste at the two transfer stations, that would have ended up on bonfires.

- 3.5 This year's Christmas campaign is underway and an opportunity for staff to nominate a family they are supporting to receive tickets for the pantomime (200 tickets available), Christmas gifts and Christmas dinners (160 or more).
- 3.6 Staff conference foodbank collection. Christmas during the cost-of-living crisis will be a difficult time for local families and communities. To offer a helping hand and support the stocks at the Foodbank, we are asking colleagues to bring along a small donation for Sunderland Foodbank to this year's staff conference on 9 December.

4. Investment & Renewal

- 4.1 Washington District Heating scheme is progressing, gas meters are being installed and old District heating being removed, residents are having new combi boilers fitted. This programme is due to complete in December 2023 and includes both tenants and owner occupiers.
- 4.2 Lambton Village Centre external decoration works are ongoing, weather dependant these works should be completed in December 2022.
- 4.3 The window renewal scheme is ongoing in Washington we have completed 1181 properties with 226 outstanding. We are currently working in Bamston, Concord, Donwell and Blackfell with Straightline and Sekura being our contractors for these works. The feedback is very positive from tenants who are benefitting from these upgrades and the target for completion is February 2023.
- 4.4 Decarbonisation works are nearing completion at Whinfell, the properties look great and our tenants will see a big difference in their homes due to the insulation works.
- 4.5 Ongoing internals works including new kitchens, bathrooms and rewiring is taking place in Biddick, Columbia and Springwell Village. Tenants who are included in these works are being contacted.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 Note the content of this report.

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