

15th December 2016

REPORT OF GENTOO

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The following report provides an update from Gentoo for the West Area of Sunderland from October 2016 to December 2016.

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 A full review of how we let our homes has taken place during 2016, including extensive consultation with customers, and our new online Allocations systems will go live early in 2017. The main features of the new Allocations system include the banding of applicants, affordability checks, limiting the number of bids customers can make during each weekly advertising cycle and removing Excellent Customer Status.
- 3.2 During 2015/16 our Money Matters Team referred over 2,000 of our customers to partner agencies to help them manage their money. As a result of this £519K worth of unclaimed benefits were identified and over £900K worth of debt was identified and consolidated. We also continue to track the impact of other Welfare Reform measures on our customers, including Universal Credit.

4. Community Partnership Coordinator Activity

- 4.1 We continue to develop partnerships with local groups Farrington Youth & Community Centre, SNCBC and Silksworth Banner Group. The main focus is upon promoting volunteering opportunities for local residents.

5. Investment and Renewal

- 5.1 New build activity continues on High Ford, where the Hillcrag development will see the building of 132 new homes, all for affordable rent. To date 27 new homes have been let. On Doxford Park the Thurcroft development will provide 155 new homes for sale.
- 5.2 There are a number of schemes on going to existing stock in the West Area, including heating & window replacement programmes and structural works to properties. We are currently undertaking a full stock condition survey of all of our homes which will be completed by March 2017. This will ensure that our long-term planning is accurate and that we focus our future investment on the right improvements at the right time to enhance our customers' quality of living.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 Note the content of this report.

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