

**29 September 2022**

**REPORT OF GENTOO**

**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The following report provides an update from Gentoo for the North Area Committee from July to September 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 On Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> August the Neighbourhood staff from the Havelock Office and Athenaeum office moved into City Hall. Please be reassured that our service offer to tenants has not changed and Neighbourhood Coordinators will still be on the estates daily and tenants can request home appointments if required.
- 3.2 You should all have had emails from the Neighbourhood Coordinators with their contact information and invitations to their next quarterly multi agency Estate Inspections and would really welcome your input and attendance on these. Any future staff changes that effect your wards we will update following the change.
- 3.3 At last committee we shared with you that further work was required in allocating our properties more efficiently and I am pleased to confirm that steady progress has been made with this and our void property numbers continue to decrease on a weekly basis.
- 3.4 Peabody Report, following the publication of the death of a Peabody Housing association tenant whose body lay undiscovered for such a long period of time, Gentoo undertook a piece of work to look into the 'lessons learned' from Peabody's failures to identify concerns for this tenant earlier. Due to our processes in relation to gas safety, income collection and property inspections we are confident that such a landlord failure would not happen in one of our tenancies.
- 3.5 We have placed further staffing resource into the local teams to support our tenants who maybe struggling with the cost of living. The staff are primarily supporting customers with budgeting those on Universal Credit / low incomes and referring tenants on to a number of support agencies such as the Green Doctors, they are energy efficiency experts who identify waste that costs people money, in turn making homes cheaper to heat and reducing the amount of electricity or gas that tenants use. They also look at support from Northumbria Water for their water bills, and benefit maximisation.
- 3.6 We continue to work with the SARA project within the overall aim of supporting the residents within Southwick and Carley Hill.

**4. Investment & Renewal**

- 4.1 North area has been selected as the starting point for the fencing renewal programme following the damage caused by the storms earlier this year. The works have commenced in Redhouse and are expected to be complete within 4-6 months.
- 4.2 Leeway Green, Carley Hill renewal scheme commenced on site in April 2022 is progressing to contact specification and the scheme will see 24 new affordable rental properties, this being 6 x 2 bedroom bungalows, 16 x 2 bedroom houses and 2 x 3 bedroom houses. At present we have 8 tenants already moved in.
- 4.3 Cross Tree Park – Downhill (Keighley Ave) is currently on site and will see 41 units is progressing to contact specification. The scheme will consist of 10 shared ownership properties and 31 affordable rental properties. The property breakdown will be 8 x 2 bedroom bungalows, 15 x 2 bedroom 4 person houses, 8 x 3 bedroom 5 person houses and 10 x 3 bedroom 6 person houses.

## **5. Recommendations**

- 5.1 Note the content of this report.

### **Contact Officer**

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