

28 September 2021

REPORT OF GENTOO

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The following report provides an update from Gentoo for the Washington Area Committee to September 2021

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 Gentoo are in the process of pulling together a media campaign aimed to support tenants on Universal Credit who will be impacted financially when the £20 uplift comes to an end in September 2021. The Money Matters Team will be leading on this project and supporting tenants with budgeting advice, debt management advice, utility suppliers, benefit checks etc.
- 3.2 Gentoo are supporting the Afghan Resettlement Scheme in the City and have offered properties to support rehousing the refugees.
- 3.3 Gentoo, in partnership with Newcastle Furniture Service (NFS), are offering new and existing tenants a furnished tenancy package, to allow tenants to live comfortably with new furniture and appliances at an affordable weekly cost. If customers are in receipt of benefits, the furniture may be covered by the Housing Element of Universal Credit or Housing Benefit.
- 3.4 Gentoo's 'Poverty Action Group', a new initiative aimed at addressing poverty in the City, is looking at a collaborative approach at times of need such as Christmas, Easter, summer holidays etc. Organisations such as Sunderland Council, Foundation of Light, Sunderland Foodbank and members of the voluntary sector will be involved in this new group.

4. Investment & Renewal

- 4.1 We recently informed all affected customers in Fatfield that we were unable to deliver the proposed district heating replacement scheme in its' proposed form due to a significant increase in costs following detailed surveys. We are still intending to replace district heating schemes on a value for money basis in Fatfield, Oxclose and Albany in the next 18 months.
- 4.2 Future reports will present a detailed breakdown of planned and ongoing investment activity in the Washington area.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 Note the content of this report.

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