

**8<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

**REPORT OF GENTOO**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The following report provides an update from Gentoo for the West Area of Sunderland from December 2016 to March 2017.

**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 fundamental service review of our Repairs & Maintenance service is on going and a number of changes to the service have recently been communicated to customers. These include the clarification of customers' rights and responsibilities, such as the replacement of toilet seats, lock changes and lost keys and the provision of flooring. Changes will continue to be communicated via a new Tenant's Handbook planned later this year and the updating of our website and social media channels.
- 3.2 Gentoo continues to track the actual and potential impacts of Welfare Reforms on our customers. These include the Local Housing Allowance Cap, changes to the Local Housing Allowance for supported housing and the removal of automatic Housing Benefit entitlement for 18 – 21 year olds. To date the actual impacts of changes already in place, such as the Bedroom Tax and the introduction of Universal Credit, have been far less than the potential maximum exposure for Gentoo and we are confident we have the appropriate support in place to assist our customers.

**4. Community Partnership Coordinator Activity**

- 4.1 A recent meeting of our Community Partnerships Operations Manager and the City Council's Area Coordinator has clarified joint concerns and how we can jointly support communities in the West Area. Each local Community Partnership Coordinator has now been tasked with local priorities and our Operations Manager will pick up any overarching issues citywide.

**5. Investment & Renewal**

- 5.1 New build activity is ongoing in High Ford where the Hillcrag development will provide 132 new homes, all for affordable rent. To date 32 new homes have been let. On Doxford Park the Thurcroft development is providing 155 new homes, all for sale.

5.2 We are continuing the stock condition survey of all of our homes and the results of this will inform future Investment Plan activity from 2017/18.

## **6. Recommendations**

6.1 Note the content of this report.

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