
MEMBER COMMITTEE UPDATE REPORT

1 COVID

- 1.1 SHG continues to respond to the challenges that Covid-19 presents and services are operating well, as previously reported to Board. The Government's National Roadmap, which SHG are following hit all its previous dates, with the latest relaxations taking place on the 17 May. The Reception Service at Cornerstone and Windmill Coffee Shop, both opened more fully during this time and are operating well.
- 1.2 Over the last couple of weeks, the infection rates in Stockport and Greater Manchester have increased significantly and the final date for the Roadmap on the 21 June has been delayed to the 19 July. The main impact this will have on SHG is limiting the number of colleagues who will be able to come into the office; currently the maximum number is 120.
- 1.3 On the 8 June, additional guidance was released for Greater Manchester, Lancashire County Council and six other areas, where the Delta variant has increased Covid infections. This provided additional guidance to minimise travel in and outside the area and to take regular testing. This has had a limited effect on SHG services, as all are operating in a Covid safe manner and Cornerstone remains a Covid Secure workplace. Currently, there is one colleague off sick with Covid, but there has been no-one off sick in the past six weeks.
- 1.4 SHG continue to work with the Council and Public Health colleagues to support the local messages for regular testing and vaccine take up. Both have been promoted on social media platforms and SHG have distributed leaflets in relevant neighbourhoods.

For more information please contact Sandra Coleing, Assistant Chief Executive, Sandra.coleing@stockorthomes.org, 07800 617688.

2 GENDER AND ETHNICITY PAY GAP

- 2.1 The Gender Pay Gap for Stockport homes at April 2020 was 9.4% (median). The ONS (Office of National Statistics) calculated that the National Gender Pay Gap at the same point was 15.5%.
- 2.2 This analysis has been carried out for the last 3 years and has deepened the understanding of the underlying causes for the gap. Societal trends relating

to gender are strongly influential and there are demonstrable gender influences on career choices. Stockport Homes as an organisation has a strong focus on delivering services that support customers to improve their lives and these roles are much more prevalent in the workforce than for many organisations. Such roles tend to be female dominated and nationally usually attract salaries of below average earnings – this is a big driver of the gender pay gap at Stockport Homes. Stockport Homes continues to work hard to explore potential initiatives and implement actions to help positively effect this trend. During 2020 SHG progressed actions such as embedding flexible working via the new “maximising our potential” approach, furthering progression pathways for women and recruiting more women into trade / technical roles.

- 2.3 For the first time an Ethnicity Pay Gap was also calculated in April 2020. This was also 9.4% (median). There is no mandatory requirement for organisations to publish their Ethnicity Pay Gap and so it is difficult to benchmark. Conducting this analysis, and committing to publish it, is in line with SHG’s approach to transparency and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in the workforce. An in depth action plan was developed following discussion with Leadership teams and includes actions to promote further ethnic diversity at management grades. The newly formed BAME colleague group have helped shape these actions and will support measurement of progress against them.
- 2.4 This year there was in depth analysis of new starter, leaver and progression / promotion and development activity data carried out for the workforce (2019/20 data). It demonstrated that for both BAME and gender there was no detrimental impact, or in fact there was a more favourable position for all factors analysed. This was positive in that it demonstrated that once in the workforce the chances for BAME colleagues and women to succeed is as good as for White British and male counterparts overall.

For more information please contact Taya Haynes, HR Business Partner, tanya.haynes@stockorthomes.org, 07800 617688.

3 HEALTH UPDATE

3.1 Talk, Listen, Change

- 3.1.1 At the end of the financial year the Talk, Listen, Change (TLC) counselling service commissioned by Stockport Homes had delivered 1,516 sessions of counselling to 253 different customers, with many customers offering positive feedback on the service they have received:

“I want to say thank you so much for the sessions, I really appreciated the professional support I was provided by the student counsellor. Absolutely fantastic cannot tell you how safe I felt in sessions. Good luck with your career absolute credit, thank you.”

“My sessions I would say have been really helpful, just to be able to talk to someone from the outside and speak about what's going on, which during the time we are living in with Covid has been needed.”

- 3.1.2 TLC have resumed some face to face delivery following the easing of lockdown restrictions, although currently in a reduced capacity. This will be increased over the coming months as restrictions ease further.

3.2 HOUSING OPTIONS FOR OLDER PEOPLE (HOOP)

- 3.2.1 SHG's dedicated Housing Options for Older People (HOOP) service has given bespoke advice and information about housing, care and wellbeing on 1,048 occasions to customers and internal and external colleagues to the end of March 2021. It has helped people either remain in their homes longer or move to more suitable accommodation.
- 3.2.2 Successes include providing advice and support to 118 customers on accessing 'extra care' housing to prevent the need for residential care; 77 customers received advice on benefits, money management and affordability; 36 related to adaptations and 38 other issues to support independent living (e.g. accessing care). The service supported 18 people out of hospital and stepdown into suitable accommodation, preventing on-going 'bed blocking'.

3.3 Independent Living Services

- 3.3.1 The Independent Living Team identified 435 customers who would benefit from an initial telephone-based Winter Welfare survey, followed up by delivery of a Winter Welfare pack containing information from a number of partner services. The packs were created, quarantined and sealed with a Covid-19 safe sticker before being delivered.
- 3.3.2 The visits generated 209 referrals including 10 referrals to the Assisted Gardening service, 28 referrals to Adult Social Care for assessments for Equipment & Adaptations, 16 referrals to Carecall and 43 referrals for benefit checks.

3.4 Child Safety Programme

- 3.4.1 There has been a slight reduction in the amount of safety equipment fitted this year than previous years due to fewer face to face visits conducted by agencies who refer to the programme. In 20/21, 38 households have been supported with a total spend of £4,231.71 with an average spend per household of £111.36. This has included 29 auto-close gates, 50 safety gates, 43 packs of cupboard locks and 19 blind cleats.

3.5 Youth

- 3.5.1 During the Covid 19 pandemic, the activities SHG delivers for young people have been redesigned and delivered differently. Over 3,000 craft and activity bags have been developed and given to local children in receipt of free school meals. The biggest project to date saw Foundations provide over 1,000 craft bags combined with recipes and ingredients for four family meals from Your Local Pantry (YLP) over the Easter holidays.
- 3.5.2 The Mental Toughness Programme has restarted in schools following the Easter holidays and is being well received. Additional schools will be supported in June following the Whit school holidays.
- 3.5.3 The youth diversionary work is continuing successfully in Edgeley and Brinnington with weekly detached sessions taking place. A free weekly football session at Gorsey Bank, Edgeley has recently started following requests from the young people.

For further information, please contact Anne-Marie Heil, Assistant Director – Access and Support by emailing anne-marie.heil@stockporthomes.org

4 EMPLOYMENT UPDATE

- 4.1 Kick Start placements are well established with 7 young people in post as part of the Government scheme. Based in multiple areas of the business the young people are making a positive contribution to their departments. Kick Starters feedback about the experience is also positive with Cam from the furniture team reflecting; “I feel like I have come out of my comfort zone and couldn’t be any happier.” Additional positions have been proposed and SHG hope to welcome an additional 3 posts over the coming months based within Foundations.
- 4.2 Four additional Kick Start posts have been created with partners B4Box and a recent event with the DWP specifically promoted these construction roles to young women. The SHG marketing team created specialist videos show casing young women who work as part of Three Sixty and B4Box to build enthusiasm for a career in construction. The face to face training session developed by the SHG Employment Team and B4Box shared the videos and included guest speakers. Local young women on Universal Credit were identified by the DWP to attend. It is hoped that half of the B4Box Kick Start construction placements could be offered to women.
- 4.3 Cornerstone is the base for the DWP Youth Hub with the return to face to face interventions young people are now making use of the venue. The SHG Employment Support Manager invited the Greater Manchester Hidden Talent Youth Panel to review the service and venue. The panel attended a session in May and were full of praise for the Cornerstone building lay out and style of engagement which they felt was young person appropriate and very welcoming.
- 4.4 Training provision has returned to a full face to face delivery schedule since May with 53 attendances to date. Online training session are still available

for those customers looking to take up training opportunities at their own convenience. In February the Employment Team brought together 18 partner agencies to deliver an innovative virtual Employment, Training and Wellbeing Fair for the benefit of customers in addition to sessions in April and May which have focused on employment support.

- 4.5 The Employment Team has worked hard to support customers into new sectors and roles as the economy started to reopen. In 2020/21 the Employment Team moved 216 individuals into employment which is a 40% increase on the previous year. Providing a significant and essential service to customers in the current complex employment landscape.

For further information contact Amanda Ward, Employment and Support Services Manager on amanda.ward@stockporthomes.org or 0161 4744148

5 UNIVERSAL CREDIT UPDATE

- 5.1 At the end of May 2021, the number of Stockport Homes' households claiming UC had increased to 3,792, which is 33 per cent of all households. There was an increase over the year of 862 and the average weekly increase in new claimants since April 2021 was 20 compared to an average of 25 per week during 2020-21.
- 5.2 Average arrears on UC claimant rent accounts¹ remain higher than arrears on non-UC accounts². 77 per cent of total arrears balances were on UC claimant accounts by the end of May and 51 per cent of all UC claimants were in arrears with their rent, compared to 21 per cent of non-UC claimants.
- 5.3 Monitoring of accounts over time, however, continues to demonstrate that average arrears reduce where households have been claiming UC for over three months. Over the last year average arrears on UC claimant accounts have reduced by £63 per case in arrears and there were 8% fewer UC claimant accounts in arrears at the end of May 2021 compared to 12 months ago. Overall arrears balances on UC claimant accounts were £13k lower than May 2020 despite the 862 increase in claimants over the year.
- 5.4 Where rent arrears represent eight weeks or more of outstanding rent, or where tenant vulnerability issues can be demonstrated, landlords can submit a request to the DWP for the housing element of a claim to be switched back to the landlord. This is known as an Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA). At the end of May 2021, APAs were in place on 1,146 accounts.
- 5.5 Specialist Money Advisors continue to provide intensive support to all new UC claimants during the first six weeks of their claims. Of the 862 new UC claimants since May 2021, 87 per cent engaged with the team and paid as requested after receiving their first payment.

For further information please contact Christian Hartley, Head of Customer Finance, 0161 474 2824 or christian.hartley@stockporthomes.org

¹ Average arrears UC claimants accounts £463

² Average arrears on non UC claimant accounts £162

6 REPAIR 1ST MERGER INTO THREE SIXTY

- 6.1 The Repair 1st merger into Three Sixty was brought to a positive conclusion in Q4 of 2020/21 following a successful consultation period with the unions which led to a collective agreement being reached. Detailed planning ensured that all systems were successfully switched over from day one. The detailed marketing plan, which ran alongside the transfer, ensured the right communications were released at the right time and to the right audience. The delivery of new uniforms and rebranding of all vans took place in April. Council agreement to the transfer of staff and pension liability concluded during the quarter and a contract was put in place between Stockport Homes Limited and Three Sixty SHG Ltd to cover the GMPF transfer and Three Sixty's admitted body status.
- 6.2 The fixed wire testing consultation period for the TUPE transfer of staff from the outgoing supplier successfully completed and a new team was recruited to deliver the programme from April 1st.

For further information, please contact Jason Tighe, Assistant Director – Commercial Services by emailing jason.tighe@stockporthomes.org

7 DFG TENDER

- 7.1 The Homes Improvement Agency team (HIA) has completed the Tender process for a framework for the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) works to private residents throughout Stockport.
- 7.2 The Framework has been developed to deliver adaptation projects and low value construction works to domestic properties through the directed funded grants DFG scheme.
- 7.3 SHG required a mechanism to call off a schedule of rates for the provision of disabled adaptation services. The works are intended to improve the facilities and access for people with disabilities such as sensory and mobility issues, which are widely available for both privately owned and rented properties throughout the Borough of Stockport.
- 7.4 Works include minor construction projects for properties and the installation of level access showers (to a maximum of £50,000) which have a recognised procurement processes such as a framework, mini competitions and in addition provide resident choice via quotations or tenders for larger extension projects (to a maximum of £100,000) for suitable qualified experienced contractors.
- 7.5 The four-year framework contract which is scheduled to commence in May 2021, will provide a compliant procurement process for SHG to order in works with contractors which are qualified and experienced to deliver these types of works. Three Sixty have been successful in securing a place on this framework amongst other contractors.

For further information, please contact Joe Keating, Head of Assets by emailing joe.keating@stockporthomes.org

8 DEVELOPMENT AND SALES

- 8.1 In April, a number of planning approvals were granted for schemes to be delivered through Viaduct as follows:
- London Road, Hazel Grove - 32 apartments for Social Rent
 - Edinburgh Close, Cheadle - 49 one and two bed apartments within an Extra Care setting
 - Andrew Street, Compstall - 32 houses and apartments for Shared Ownership & Social Rent.
- 8.2 A bid to the Homes England and MHCLG Rough Sleeper Accommodation Fund was submitted. The grant equates to £360,000 in capital grant in order to acquire and refurbish six, one bed apartments and £105,000 in revenue funding to cover the cost of a support worker.
- 8.3 Sales continue to progress well, with half of the 39 apartments at the Davenport Park development either sold or under offer. In addition, almost all properties released for sale so far at Hempshaw Lane and Melford Road are under offer.

For further information, please contact Chris Munby, Head of Development by emailing Chris.munby@stockporthomes.org

9 HOUSING MANAGEMENT

- 9.1 There has been a significant increase in fly tipping and irresponsible rubbish disposal since the start of the pandemic. This, as well as impacting on the appearance of neighbourhoods, takes a considerable amount of time and resources to tackle.
- 9.2 The Housing Management and Caretaking Teams are working collaboratively with customers and the Council to effectively respond to and resolve these issues.
- 9.3 One of the initiatives, a 'rubbish campaign' has been launched, that links in with the Council's 'We love Stockport - Love where you live' campaign. In addition, an article will feature in the next customer newsletter that is aimed at raising awareness of these issues encouraging reporting and increasing the sense of ownership and pride people have in the area where they live.
- 9.4 There are also a number of tools that are being used to address these issues, including installing CCTV in some problem locations, community clean ups with customers, recharging and serving community protection notices to those responsible and placing large, brightly coloured environmental waste signage on fly tipping that is awaiting removal to highlight the issue.

- 9.5 This continues to be an ongoing issue Borough wide, therefore the campaign will continue on an ongoing basis to ensure everyone recognises the environmental impact of fly tipping and rubbish dumping and that they dispose of their rubbish responsibly.

For further information, please contact Jane Allen, Assistant Director of Neighbourhoods by emailing jane.allen@stockporthomes.org

10 CUSTOMER SAFETY

- 10.1 The Customer Safety Team is responsible for the management of SHL's gas servicing regime and reactive heating maintenance service. The works are currently delivered by an external contractor, The Dodd Group, however the current contract ends on 31st August 2021 and this has therefore presented an opportunity to review service delivery.
- 10.2 Earlier this year the Customer Safety Team reviewed the contract specification and Three Sixty were asked to present a proposal on how they could take over deliver of the works. Following a rigorous financial and qualitative review of the proposal a business case was presented to SLT on 25th May and it was approved for the works to be insourced to Three Sixty from September 2021.
- 10.3 The insourcing of this work will offer a small saving to SHL along with retained profits within the group and Gift Aid contributions. Three Sixty's proposal also evidenced a commitment to ensuring the high levels of performance being achieved with the current contractor will be retained.
- 10.4 Works are now underway to transition the contract to Three Sixty. Alongside this the Customer Scrutiny Panel is going to be reviewing the current gas servicing access procedures and customer communications, ensuring the service continues to be delivered in line with customer needs, requirements and preferences.
- 10.5 For further information, please contact Kate Meredith, Head of Customer Safety by emailing kate.meredith@stockporthomes.org

11 BUILDING SAFETY

- 11.1 The Building Safety Team is working hard to engage with customers living in the blocks within the pilot scheme of Hanover, Pendlebury, Mottram, Millbrook, Ratcliffe and Lincoln Towers. Despite access being a challenge at times, the team are continuing to be resourceful in finding new and different ways of speaking to customers. Of those the team have spoken to, several so far have expressed an interest in being more involved with Building Safety and would be willing to be part of a high-rise living group or forum which is being planned in light of the new legislation.
- 11.2 Customers are presented with a questionnaire that covers a number of areas relating to both the customer, other occupants and the property itself and allows the team to assess any potential vulnerabilities there may be in each situation. This information is then being translated into a simple colour coded

chart for the fire brigade in order to identify those properties that may need some assistance in the event of the building being evacuated.

- 11.3 Sweep Up Pro is the new mobile device-based app that will be used by the Building Safety Team to document, record and set regular inspections of the key fire safety related assets within the high-rise buildings. The test version of the app is now being trialled and over the coming weeks the assets within Hanover Towers will be tagged with unique barcodes that can be scanned by the app to prompt the inspection for that particular asset.

For further information, please contact Tom Spencer, Head of Building Safety by emailing tome.spencer@stockporthomes.org

12 EWS1 FORM UPDATE

- 12.1 Following on from the Grenfell fire in 2017, SHG worked alongside installers and manufacturers to establish that the cladding systems fitted to the 22 tower blocks passed the relevant fire safety tests and were up to standard.
- 12.2 In December 2019 a new regulation was introduced to assess all wall systems and insulation. The External Wall Fire Review Report (EWS1) process, and resulting form, is a set way for building owners to confirm that an external wall system on high rise residential buildings has been assessed for safety by a suitable expert, in line with government guidance.
- 12.3 SHG have to date carried out EWS1 assessments on 11 tower blocks, with five classified as A1 with no remedial work required and six classified as B2, therefore requiring some remedial work. The B2 classification is a result of insulation which met all building control requirements when it was fitted in the early 2000s but does not meet current up to date requirements and some potential building defects which are being discussed with the contractor.
- 12.4 As a result of the B2 classification Investigation into the remedial work required are currently underway. In addition, discussions are taking place with the installers and suppliers of insulation to agree a remediation action plan. Officers at Stockport Council are also aware of the EWS1 results and remediation investigations currently taking place.
- 12.5 It should be stressed that even though six blocks do require some remediation work, the specialist EWS1 assessor has classed these blocks as a medium risk, which is the lowest possible risk rating for high rise blocks classified as B2.
- 12.6 The remaining 11 tower blocks within the portfolio will be EWS1 assessed throughout June and July, all the findings of the remediation action plan and the remaining EWS1 assessments will be discussed further with Board, the Council and residents.

For further information, please contact Steve Leonard, Assistant Director – Assets and Development by emailing steve.leonard@stockporthomes.org

13 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES – COMMUNITY CENTRE UPDATE

- 13.1 Since easing of national restrictions SHG Community Centres have welcomed back customer and community groups. First House in Brinnington, Bridgehall Community Centre, Arthur Greenwood in Woodley and Offerton Community Centre are classified as “We’re Good To Go”. This is the official UK mark to signal that a tourism and hospitality business has worked hard to follow Government and industry COVID-19 guidelines and has a process in place to maintain cleanliness and aid social distancing.
- 13.2 Whilst there are currently restrictions on the capacity of spaces, these will continue to be reviewed in line with government advice. A dedicated Facebook page and Instagram account have recently been set up to help publicise and promote the use of centres. Further information can be found at <https://stockporthomes.communitybookings.co.uk/>

For further information, please contact Martyn Preston, Community Building Team Leader by emailing martyn.preston@stockporthomes.org

14 AWARDS

- 14.1 In May, Stockport Homes Group were awarded the Bronze award in the UK Employee Experience awards for ‘Employee Experience in a Crisis - Staying Connected’ category. This award recognises organisations that have handled crisis management among employees with flair. Demonstrating the continued delivery of excellent services for customers with colleagues working collaboratively, guided by the mission ‘One Team – Transforming Lives’, keeping team members safe and maintaining SHG’s commitment to engagement.
- 14.2 Stockport Homes Group was named number 1 'Best Housing Organisation to work for' at Best Companies for the 2nd year running in May. Celebrating its 13th consecutive year in the prestigious list as a Best Company to Work For. During a year of uncertainty, the groups ‘World Class’ engagement has meant a continued dedication to the delivery of excellent services to customers.
- 14.3 Stockport Homes Group were not just recognised as a great employer within the Housing Sector but are in the top companies to work for, regionally and nationally, compared to all employers. This is the first year Stockport Homes have been listed against other large national companies but positioned in the top third of the list, this is a great advert for what we do and how we work.

For further information contact Verity Calderbank, Head of Marketing and Communications verity.calderbank@stockporthomes.org 0161 474 2863.