



Proud to be part of SHG

# Delivery Plan Outcomes 2022/2023



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# Contents

# Introduction

This is the second outcomes report for the Delivery Plan covering the five-year period from 2021 to 2026. The Delivery Plan builds on achievements, responding to changes and challenges faced by SHG and ensures the business is ready to maximise opportunities for growth. The Delivery Plan focuses on the needs and priorities of customers and ensures accountability through the delivery of excellent customer service, an enhanced digital offer, and a rigorous approach to building safety.

At the heart of the Delivery Plan is a foundation of partnership working, with Stockport Council and others, supporting the delivery of ambitious aims for the local area. Building and providing good quality homes is vital to the role of SHG but the impact of Stockport Homes goes much wider than that, with support for local communities to enable them to thrive and address the financial pressures facing many customers currently.

A long-term Management Agreement governs the relationship between the Council and Stockport Homes. This is based on five-yearly Delivery Plans, a range of strategic liaison meetings where the two organisations discuss shared objectives and informal meetings where senior officers discuss shared priorities. There are positive relationships with Elected Members and a cross-party Member Committee meets regularly to discuss performance, financial updates, and the latest service developments / challenges facing customers. The Delivery Plan is approved by both SHG Board and the Council.

## The Group Structure



SHG consists of four companies:

- The parent company, Stockport Homes Limited, manages housing and a range of other neighbourhood and support services on behalf of Stockport Council.
- The development company, Viaduct Partnerships, builds new homes with the Council through the 'Viaduct Housing Partnership'.
- Three Sixty delivers large scale repairs, maintenance and capital works to the Council's stock and engages in commercial works to earn income; and
- The charitable company, Skylight<sup>1</sup>, where several operational services that link to the aims of the charity are located, including Motiv8, Your Local Pantries and the Furniture Recycling Service. It bids for external grant funding and seeks new opportunities as well as making use of Gift Aid contributions from other companies in the group.

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1 Formerly known as Foundations Stockport (renamed to SKYlight in August 2022)

The group structure is embedded, enabling ambitious growth plans to be realised. It enables SHG to look to the future with confidence, to create innovative solutions that support communities, build on successful workstreams and enables stronger collaboration to deliver improved outcomes for customers.

## **The Housing Sector**

The publication of the Social Housing Regulation Bill has created a renewed focus on the voice of customers and additional regulatory obligations, and Stockport Homes, with Stockport Council, is working to ensure it is fully prepared for new and emerging regulatory requirements. It has a track record of delivering services that go beyond the minimum requirements for the sector and it will continue to strive for best in sector service delivery.

There have been challenges within the sector to navigate and reflect on. The Grenfell fire and the tragic death of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale have led to an increased focus on customer service, which is welcomed. There is a greater priority on building safety and compliance to ensure customers' homes are safe places to live. An increased scrutiny around the handling of damp, mould and condensation cases has led to changes being made to policies, working practices and engagement with customers who report such issues. The macroeconomic environment has created difficulties for customers in terms of the cost-of-living crisis and rising inflation levels. This led the government to cap rents for 2023-24, which, whilst positive for customers in the short-term, has had a consequential impact on SHG's long-term financial plans and the ability of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to fund improvements.

There is an increase in the number of Regulatory Notices being issued by the Regulator. Currently, the Regulator's approach is reactive, and it responds to issues of actual or potential harm, however, the new Social Housing Regulation Bill will, when it receives Royal Assent and becomes an Act, bring about changes to regulation and a proactive consumer regulation regime. This will hopefully drive up standards in the sector and ensure customer service is a key focus for all providers within the sector.

The Housing Ombudsman Service has an increasing role within the sector as it places a spotlight on both providers who are failing their customers and thematic areas where the sector needs to improve. It does this through publishing reports into providers handling of customer complaints as well as "Spotlight Reports" on key areas such as noise complaints and damp, mould and condensation.

SHG's focus remains on delivering excellent services to customers in a way that suits them and considers their individual needs. Customer voice has been at the heart of SHG's approach historically and will continue to be moving forward.

The way services are delivered is changing as modern technology provides new opportunities. The new digital landscape offers potential to maximise efficiencies and provide more streamlined services for customers. The digital agenda will challenge the way that services are designed, but customers, people and partnership working will remain at the heart of service-design and decision-making. The launch of a new housing management system (CX) in 2023 will enhance the approach to customer service across the business. It will ensure modern technology and a focus on the robustness and accuracy of data across the business leads to delivery of excellent face-to-face or online services.

## **SHG Mission and Aims**

SHG's Mission and Aims provide the strategic narrative to everything the company does. During 2022, the Aims were updated, and work is ongoing to embed these within the business.

Since the agreement to the Objective wording, SHG has approved a new Business Plan and the One Stockport initiative has led to a new Borough and Council Plan. Some minor changes have



been made, which will be subject to a more detailed review later in 2023 when the mid-term review of the Delivery Plan takes place.

### ***SHG's Mission:***

- One Team - Transforming Lives

### ***SHG's Aims:***

- Deliver excellent customer service, driven by customer feedback and experience
- Provide safe, sustainable homes in neighbourhoods where communities can thrive
- Contribute to making Stockport fairer by reducing inequality, poverty and supporting customers in all aspects of their lives
- Maximise the impact of resources through growth, efficiency, and business transformation
- Work collaboratively, influencing locally, regionally, and nationally to achieve more
- Be an inclusive great place to work, where our values shine through everyone and everything we do

### ***SHG's Values:***

SHG's ASPIRE Values underpin this Mission and Aims. These are:

- Ambition – we have the ambition and courage to challenge, translating this into commercial success and brilliant customer outcomes
- Social responsibility – we always try to do the right thing; using our role as a service provider, employer, and buyer to generate trust, build our communities and empower our people
- Passion – we have a passion for what we do; with positive, motivated, and enthusiastic staff who enjoy their work
- Innovation – we are innovative in everything we do; with the agility, creativity and edge to keep defying expectations and delivering fresh and exciting things
- Respect – we treat each other with respect; supporting and inspiring one another and collaborating across teams and partnerships
- Excellence – we continually improve how we work; challenging the status quo, learning from what goes well and always being professional

### **One Stockport Borough Plan (2021– 2030)**

The Delivery Plan supports the One Stockport Borough Plan which was launched in March 2021 and sets out a vision for Stockport for 2030.

The One Stockport Borough Plan is a shared plan, developed in partnership with organisations across Stockport, and shaped by the voices of the communities and residents across the Borough.

It is shaped around three core pillars to create One Stockport for everyone – One Heart, One Home, One Future. These are underpinned by nine shared priorities and partnership delivery plans to ensure we deliver. These are:

- One Heart - At the heart of Stockport are its people and the communities in which they live

- Caring and growing Stockport
- Healthy and happy Stockport
- Strong and supportive Stockport
- One Home - Stockport is a great place to live, where no one is left behind
  - Fair and inclusive Stockport
  - Flourishing and creative Stockport
  - Climate friendly Stockport
- One Future - Growing, creating, and delivering a thriving future for Stockport
  - An enterprising and thriving Stockport
  - A skilled and confident Stockport
  - A radically different Stockport

### **The Council Plan**

Looking forward, in 2023-24 SHG will continue to deliver the ambitious priorities within the Delivery Plan. This will be done in line with a new 2023-24 Council Plan, which is entitled “Ambitious Stockport, creating opportunities for everyone”.

The new Council Plan is framed around the delivery of efficient and effective services as the fundamental priority

The plan also set around four big ambitions, which are:

- Investment, regeneration and creating jobs
- Education, work, and skills
- Wellbeing in neighbourhoods
- Delivering for those who need it most

In addition, there are two cross cutting themes, which the Delivery Plan supports. These are:

- Fair and Inclusive Stockport
- Climate Action

### **One Stockport Housing Plan**

The Council recognises that housing is an integral theme to many of the One Stockport Borough Plan themes, with “One Home” being one of the three pillars. Ambitions around housing are intertwined with those around climate, the economy, health and care, ageing well and young people.

The One Stockport Housing Plan is centred on four themes. These are:

- Delivering new homes
- Fair and inclusive homes
- Safe, healthy and climate friendly homes
- Flourishing neighbourhoods

SHG works in partnership with Stockport Council to ensure alignment of aims and objectives and that Stockport Homes’ work make a significant contribution to Council ambitions.

### **Delivering The Aims**

This report details how Stockport Homes has delivered its Aims during the past 12 months, outlining the key achievements of 2022-23 and those contributions made to the wider council ambitions for the Borough. It recognises that, although this has been a successful year, there have been many challenges to navigate and this report outlines those and what SHG has learnt along the way. On this basis, each section ends with an indication of plans for 2023-24.

# Aim One

**Ensure customer feedback is at the heart of how we deliver exceptional services to our customers**



## **Objective 1: Be recognised for exceptional customer service and access**

SHG has a Customer Access Strategy in place which embodies SHG's commitment to strive for excellence in customer experience. During 2022-23, a Customer Experience Team was formed to further enhance this ambition and continually work to ensure customers are at the heart of service delivery decisions. The Customer Experience Team helps colleagues to improve areas of customer service and to drive forward a new customer culture across the organisation. They have started work on producing a new Customer Charter.

Stockport Homes provides a wide range of contact options for customers, ensuring flexibility and high levels of customer service when contact is made with Stockport Homes. It has included the expansion of the Customer Service Centre to services provided by the Customer Safety Team and the Customer Feedback Team. The approach ensures that customers only need to use one telephone number to access key services. Online contact options have been expanded to include a webchat facility that enables self-service or the ability to webchat with a member of the customer service team. The Customer Service Centre is "omni-channel", which means that customers can contact Stockport Homes via a channel that suits their needs, and that staff can process contact through a range of channels including calls, emails, and webchats to provide a seamless service to customers.

SHG are proud to have held the Cabinet Office's prestigious Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Standard for the last 12 years. The standard recognises that services are efficient, effective, and customer focused.

SHG have consistently high levels of customer satisfaction and rank in the top performers across all services. At the end of 2022-23, 96.61% of ASB complainants were satisfied with how SHG handled their case and 99.13% of customers were satisfied with their repair.

The focus on damp, mould and condensation (DMC) cases has been an example of this, with SHG reviewing and adapting its approach and policies to ensure excellent service delivery and a follow-up on casework to ensure nothing is left unresolved.

The recent focus on damp, mould and condensation cases has substantially increased demand on repairs service. With more cases being reported, both by staff and customers, there has been an increase in demand for technical inspections, repair works and follow-up visits. SHG's repairs service (Three Sixty) have been working with customers to prioritise outstanding repairs and additional resources have been employed to reduce the backlog. This will continue to be a key focus for SHG, with teams working collaboratively to ensure issues are dealt with in a timely manner.

SHG is managing a backlog of repairs which, in some cases, has had a negative impact on customer experience. Many of these repairs couldn't be completed during Covid and it has been difficult to get back on top of work in progress. This has been exacerbated by other issues, including managing supply chain challenges, and obtaining the correct materials for jobs, which has negatively impacted on timescales to complete repairs. SHG and Three Sixty continue to work



with customers to ensure urgent and emergency repairs are completed and that other routine repairs can be scheduled in at a time that is convenient for the customer.

SHG have continued work to create a shift change in customer service and the availability of customer data to staff across the organisation linked to the new CX housing management system. Integration of data across different systems will support the creation of a 360-degree view of customers and properties and improve customer experience.

At the 2023 Northern Housing Awards, SHG was crowned 'Landlord of the Year' with the judging panel recognising SHG's commitment to pushing boundaries beyond the expected capabilities of a traditional landlord. The Judges said:

*"The breadth and depth of the activities of SHG really do set it aside. What makes it really special though is the sense of purpose, the golden thread that runs through the company and all it does. The workforce is well trained and supported then trusted to deliver. Massively impressive"*

### **What will be delivered in 2023-24:**

- A Customer Charter will be developed in consultation with customers and stakeholders
- A programme of Customer Service Training for all frontline staff will commence
- A new and separate team will be put in place to specifically reduce the backlog of outstanding repairs for customers.
- A review of priorities will be undertaken to ensure that the more critical repairs are targeted first.
- The introduction of the additional team will ensure that the existing team will be able to maintain their focus on the day-to-day repairs to ensure that these do not miss targets.
- Continuation of the DMC Project Board and SHG focus on managing casework

### **Objective 2: Maximise our customer digital offer**

Stockport Homes are on a long-term journey to improve digital access, and user experience with online services for customers who choose to access services in that manner.

A range of key services are now available online, some offering enhanced facilities such as online reporting and noise recording for Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) via an App and the virtual viewing of properties where this will aid sales or lettings. A chatbot has also been introduced across the suite of SHG websites, creating a modern, digital channel for customer to reach SHG's services, which is available 24/7.

Significant investment into launching six new websites across SHG has been made, all promoting the current digital offerings and self-service in the most accessible ways. The improvements in website design came because of consultation with over 1,500 customers. The websites have a future development plan to ensure that SHG continue to maintain high levels of customer engagement through this channel, and that the use of emerging technologies is maximised.

SHG won the prestigious 'Best Digital Experience' Award, at the National Housing Digital Innovation Awards, held in Birmingham in February 2023. The award recognises the involvement of customers into the development of SHG's new suite of websites.

A transformational project which SHG is delivering is 'Project Phoenix' which is part of the overall digital journey to make best use of available technology and modernise processes and service delivery. During 2022-23, the focus has been on process re-engineering to ensure there is transformation of operation and efficiencies generated as part of this significant capital investment of a new housing management system (Civica CX).

SHG have progressed with the rollout of Civica CX across all core SHG business areas. Delays

have been experienced along the way and difficult decisions have had to be made about project finance and timescales. 2023-24 will see the culmination of all of this hard work as Phase 1 will go live in June 2023, with Phase 2 following in April 2024.

As part of the implementation of the new Housing Management system (Civica CX), a short video has been developed around the Homechoice service explaining the registration process and working to manage customer expectations regarding the availability of social housing within Stockport. This video was developed with the assistance of SHG's Customer Scrutiny Panel who felt a real need to give clear and open information to customers regarding the availability of social housing.

Furthermore, to support more customers to access services online, the Tenancy Ready Service has created several short videos, which are available through the Stockport Homes website, and focus on the key elements linked to taking on a tenancy. For example, budgeting, furniture requirement, setting up utility accounts. There is also a short video within the Anti-Social Behaviour section detailing how customers can access and download the new reporting App making it easier for customers to report incidents as they occur. Additional videos on key themes across the organisation are being developed. This ensures that key information is available to customers 24/7 and via digital channels for them to access from home.

All services that have high volume customer use will have a strongly promoted digital option available 24/7 as part of a suite of optimised customer journey contact offers to promote channel-shift where this suits customers' needs and skills. Digital service offers will be carefully designed to increase ease and return visits, as well as have streamlined back-office functionality. The customer relationship management (CRM) system linked to the One Number Contact Centre offer now includes webchat, chat-bots, automated customer contacts and surveys and more advanced telephony, amongst a variety of developments. Alongside this, customer engagement continues to increase across a range of social media channels which are managed 24/7 to ensure continuity of service, even out of hours for customers. A parallel commitment to providing support and access options for customers who are not online will ensure high quality services for all.

Digital assets will be developed further, for example installations in customers' homes, which automatically detect and report repairs and technology to measure energy consumption. This will be underpinned by a larger project, in which areas for major investment will be identified.

A number of automation solutions technologies have been created which have enabled SHG to remove several high-volume, low-value tasks from a number of teams. There is a pipeline of future digital innovation work which will see more use made of modern technology to improve the customer experience.

SHG have explored options for improved and affordable ways for customers to get connected and gain digital skills, taking advantage of continual technical developments and partnership working opportunities. External funding bids have been submitted to enhance support available to customers, including Digital Champions and work around older people.

SHG have used insight gained as part of GM Digital taskforce pilot research to increase access to affordable connectivity, devices, and skills amongst Stockport Homes' customers. This insight has clearly highlighted older people and those with a disability as being least likely to use online services. It is important that SHG continues to work to ensure these groups can access information and services in a range of formats, and to encourage take up of digital support where possible. Work is underway to establish a working relationship with an internet service provider from the pilot around affordable connectivity.

#### **What will be delivered in 2023-24:**

- Implement Phase 1 of the new housing management system<sup>2</sup> (CX)

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<sup>2</sup> Phase 1 includes the core system, rents, allocations, customer feedback, tenancy management and independent living

- Improve the customer digital offer through delivery of actions within the Customer Access Strategy and the Digital Transformation Strategy (which will be updated during 2023)
- Digitally enable our assets by introducing technology which is appropriate and good value for money
- Minimise manual processes and reduce paper usage by further delivering digital pipeline projects
- Continue to create an excellent digital offer that customers choose to use, increasing digital interactions whilst not compromising SHG's principles of inclusivity and accessibility
- Continue to use insight gained as part of GM Digital taskforce pilot research to increase access to affordable connectivity, devices, and skills amongst Stockport Homes' customers

# Aim Two

## Build and manage safe homes and communities for now and the future



### **Objective 3: Have a robust and accountable approach to customer safety**

Stockport Homes Group (SHG) has a duty of care and a legal responsibility to ensure that all buildings and properties under its control are maintained so that they remain safe places for customers to live.

The six core areas of compliance that SHG have an obligation to manage are: Asbestos, Electric, Fire, Gas, Legionella and Lift Safety.

For 2022-23, communal electrical testing, legionella, gas, and fire safety have all maintained 100% compliance by the end of each month. SHG have robust data reconciliation and verification processes ensuring the data is accurate with monthly validation conducted internally.

Stockport Homes has responded to the requirements of any new regulations and guidance and adapted service delivery and internal policies to ensure compliance. Most notably these include the Building Safety Act, the Fire Safety Act and the Social Housing Regulation Bill.

The Building Safety Team leads on compliance with the Building Safety Act. It includes development of an approved Building Safety Case for all in scope buildings. A cyclical regime of Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) continues to be delivered to all buildings covered under the Fire Safety Order and in line with the Fire Safety Act and ensuring that the outcomes of FRAs and measures in place to mitigate the risks are effectively communicated with customers.

Stockport Homes is committed to ensuring that the customer voice is a key focus of Building Safety. Customers have co-designed the Building Safety booklet that has been delivered to every high-rise property. They have also designed the structure and terms of reference for the Building Safety Residents' Panel (BSRP). The panel meets six times a year and look building safety performance data and discuss any themes around customer drop ins. The panel can raise any serious concerns about safety directly to SHG Board.

At the 2023 Northern Housing Awards, SHG won the 'Best Approach to Building Safety' award which is testament to the focus and commitment SHG has to Building Safety. The award recognised SHG's joined up approach between the Building Safety Team and the Customer Engagement Team in order to ensure tenant feedback is at the heart of the work they do and keeping customers safe at home being the number one priority.

SHG has insourced the delivery of some services from Stockport Council including responsive security services and fire system and CCTV maintenance. Employees have transferred into Three Sixty and systems have been aligned.

Work is well underway to prepare for the new obligations contained within the Social Housing Regulation Bill. SHG has agreed new liaison arrangements with Stockport Council including the appointment of an Accountable Person (Building Safety Act) and a Nominated Person (Health and Safety) for its housing stock, which is a legal requirement<sup>3</sup>.

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3 This role will be fulfilled by Mark Glynn, Director of Place Management at Stockport Council

## **What will be delivered in 2023-24:**

- Continue to ensure damp, mould and condensation is treated effectively and customers are supported throughout, ensuring the approach to these issues is a core area of our approach to compliance / health and safety
- Monitor and implement any changes to the Decent Homes Standard or the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) to ensure the homes that SHG owns and manages meet the requirements
- Complete work planned to ensure compliance with the requirements around Smoke and Carbon Monoxide as per Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022
- Ensure SHG is compliant with all safety requirements in the new Consumer Standards which will be launched by the Regulator of Social Housing
- Ensure all relevant buildings are registered with the Building Safety Regulator and all documentation remains up to date
- Establish an Assurance Committee between Stockport Council and Stockport Homes to give fulfil the duties of the Nominated and Accountable Person.

## **Objective 4: Deliver a modern cutting-edge housing management service**

Delivering effective housing management services is a core function of SHG and is in line with the Council ambition to support wellbeing in neighbourhoods. This ensures tenancies are being well-managed and that communities can flourish.

The housing management service has been reviewing its approach to service delivery to take account of agile ways of working, feedback from customers and the opportunities for change that are identified as services continue to grow and evolve.

SHG recognise the importance of having well trained and customer focused officers providing a responsive frontline service to customers in the neighbourhoods that SHG manage. Officers deal with all aspects of tenancy and estate management, they will continue to have thousands of face-to-face contacts with customers each year both in their homes or as part of arranged Estate Walkabouts.

Officers have continued to ensure all neighbourhoods and blocks are places where residents are proud to live undertaking routine inspections to check areas are free from hazards and fly tipping. In 2022/23, 3,805 sites were inspected with 98% of them being graded as at least good. Using CCTV technology (both fixed and mobile devices), 74 recharges were raised in 2023/23 against those found to be responsible for fly tipping in communal areas. Officers continue to work proactively with residents and partners to tackle issues of fly tipping and will continue to deliver customer estate clean ups to encourage responsible waste management and recycling

Housing Management lies at the heart of our core business and with excellent partnerships both internally and externally Housing Officers work collaboratively to offer support to both individuals and families. This involves making referrals to external agencies as appropriate and attending multi agency meetings to resolve complex situations. Officers oversee all ASB cases which need an early intervention, and this equated to over 400 in 2022/23. We know that early intervention by housing management teams in all aspects of tenancy breaches decreases the probability of escalation into more serious issues.

Officers are often the first ones on the scene after emergency services, dealing with complex and challenging situations including fires, floods, suspicious deaths, domestic incidents, suicides. Officers will continue to work with compassion to do what is required to support those effected and ensure that customers are supported to stay in their homes.

Due to the cost-of-living crisis, more and more customers are approaching Stockport Homes to



'Right Size' their property to better suit their needs. For many of these customers who want / need to move, a Mutual Exchange is the best option for them due to the lack of available affordable housing within the Borough.

Stockport Homes continues to promote the Mutual Exchange Service through the Customer Newsletter and the use of social media. This has proven successful for the service with more customers choosing to follow the Mutual Exchange Facebook page, advertise their homes, and then self-managing any interest from other applicants. The approach empowers customers to be in control and then actively pursue any exchanges they may be interested in. Officers can then offer more support to customers who are not as active on social media and need assistance in identifying matches. Neighbourhood Housing Officers are all well practiced in the Mutual Exchange process and will discuss this as a viable way of moving if customers approach them linked to rehousing.

In addition to Mutual Exchange, for 23/24 there is a Right Sizing Officer who is primarily focused on supporting current tenants who live in large family homes when they now require a smaller property. Many tenants register to move but do not progress their application for a variety of reasons. By supporting these customers through the whole process with a dedicated Officer, it is aimed to free up additional family homes which can help meet the growing demand on the Homechoice register as well as supporting tenants to live in homes which meet their changing needs.

Stockport Homes continues to use Customer Tenancy Visits to ensure that as their landlord, the organisation is both accessible and proactive in engaging with customers finding 'our silence'<sup>4</sup>, as has been recently highlighted in the Housing Ombudsman Damp and Mould spotlight report. In December 2022, a specific question was added to the visit questionnaire regarding damp, mould and condensation. As a result of this Jan – March 2023 nearly half of all repairs raised about damp, mould and condensation have been reported by Housing Officers after a tenancy visit. In 2022/23, 3,649 contacts with customers were completed. We know contacts have really mattered to customers as over 49% of visits raised an issue such as needing support from both SHG and other statutory agencies. Over 15% of customers visited identified themselves as having a vulnerability.

Stockport Homes reviewed the Current Tenancy Visits Policy and Procedure and will continue to focus on seeing as many customers as possible through a targeted approach. Closely linked to this is the commitment to neighbourhood inspections and the approach to the different types of homes that are managed. Neighbourhood inspections are planned throughout the year, invites sent to partners and customers and there is a collaborative approach to resolve issues as they arise. Support from teams at the Council and statutory agencies such as the Police is vital to identify and implement solutions.

SHG have continued to ensure that the Tenancy Ready Service supports ongoing projects including Stockport Without Abuse and Care Leavers. Face to face sessions have been delivered by the service engaging with a wide range of customers to ensure that they are better prepared for taking on the responsibilities of a new home. This includes making sure customers are referred to Money Advice and Energy Advice where relevant. The aim of this service is to target those customers who may have not managed a home before, held a tenancy and need that extra support to sustain their tenancy,

SHG's Customer Scrutiny Panel (CSP) undertook a review of Homechoice. SHG accepted all the findings from CSP review and planned for how these will be implemented as part of the new Housing Management system (CX), which goes live in June 2023.

A number of the actions were completed as soon as the CSP Action Plan was created, for example, updating a page on the SHG website so customers were clear that help was available face to face within Cornerstone and also providing a digital version of the weekly bidding list on the

4 'Our silence' is term used by the Ombudsman asking landlords how they were going to find customers who don't contact them

website and social media pages. Other actions delivered included videos for customers on how to register and providing advice on availability of social housing within Stockport and ensuring that the application process rendered successfully on any devices. CSP were kept fully updated and involved, signing off some reviewed letters and the script for the overarching Homechoice video.

#### **What will be delivered in 2023-24:**

- Successfully implement the Right Sizing service, supporting a minimum of ten customers to Right Size in year one, bringing those additional 3 or 4 bedroom homes back to the social housing market for families to be allocated.
- Continue to grow the Mutual Exchange service, achieving a higher number of mutual exchanges than the 124 completed in 2022 – 23, making Mutual Exchange the most viable way for tenants to move to a home that meets their needs.
- Deliver alongside SMBC and partners on the Neighbourhoods Prevention and Place Agenda on our larger estates such as Brinnington, Bridgehall and Offerton
- Represent SHG and deliver housing management services via the Stockport Council 'One Team' Family Hubs which are being developed to support the Council ambition of wellbeing in neighbourhoods
- Continue to use Current Tenant Visits to identify the most vulnerable customers and ensure they are signposted to support both internally and external relevant agencies
- Embed the learning Housing Management teams have completed with regard to their role in SHG commitment to tackling damp, mould and condensation

#### **Objective 5: Be a neighbourhood leader for Community Safety with our partners in Stockport**

Stockport Homes is a key member of the One Safer Stockport Partnership (OSSP) and is recognised nationally within the Community Safety Sector as a leader in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB). Stockport Homes has played a significant part in delivering Community Safety services in Stockport in partnership with the Council, Greater Manchester Police and other stakeholders, and is committed to continuing to support the Council delivering its key priorities in this area.

The ASB Service has evolved significantly and is not just tackling incidents of ASB, which is often associated with youths or loud music for example, but work is now undertaken to tackle wider issues including organised crime, cuckooing and exploitation, county lines, hate crime, domestic abuse and other criminal activity. This supports the Council's ambition around wellbeing in neighbourhoods.

The service plays a critical role in keeping neighbourhoods safe and delivers a CCTV service as well as selling services commercially to other organisations within Stockport and beyond. To reflect the diverse remit of the service, it is being renamed the "Safer Neighbourhoods Service".

SHG delivers a tenure-neutral service dealing with cases in its own neighbourhoods and within the private sector. The number of new cases received by the Safer Neighbourhoods Service has increased significantly with 53% more cases being dealt with in 2022/23 compared to 2019/20. In 2022/23, noise remained the largest type of ASB complaint with verbal harassment coming second. Performance outcomes are in the upper quartile when compared with other housing providers national averages.

Stockport Homes remains committed to using its full range of non-legal and legal tools to address ASB, taking action that is incremental in nature, giving opportunity for changes in behaviour and with an overall aim of sustaining tenancies.

**A range of initiatives to enhance the safety of neighbourhoods were delivered in 2022/23. These included:**

- Target hardening work for 227 customers experiencing ASB and utilising mediation as a way of resolving ASB issues. Stockport Homes secured 36 injunctions and undertakings to address 'hotspot' issues with two prison committals being secured because of these being breached.
- The team operates a bespoke "Lend-A-Cam" facility, which loans CCTV systems to customers experiencing ASB. Delivering a wide-ranging CCTV service is essential to ensuring that customers remain confident that ASB can be tackled effectively and reduces the onus on victims to provide direct evidence by providing high quality CCTV images for use in its place.
- A new Neighbourhood Resolution Officer has been introduced who will deal with all noise reports in the first instance with a view to resolving noise issues through early intervention and support. In cases where the noise continues and can be classified as deliberate and intentionally causing harm, then the matter will be passed over to a Safer Neighbourhoods Officer for a robust enforcement approach to resolving the issue. The new Good Neighbourhood Management policy was finalised and formally launched in April 2023.
- There has been a review of the Lettable Standard to ensure that carpets are not removed unless they are in a poor state of repair, hard flooring is removed when customers have reported noise linked to the property, properties have adequate insulation from transference noise and anti-vibration mats are fitted into the washing machine space as standard. Further work is to be undertaken to explore the feasibility of implementing recommendations made by the Ombudsman linked to allocations of properties. This includes giving consideration as to the suitability of allocating properties above ground floor to housing applications from families or households with multiple occupants where previous reports of noise nuisance (whether upheld or not) have been made.
- Stockport Homes supports the Council's policy to reduce homelessness and therefore only uses eviction as an absolute last resort. In 2022/23, ten Notices of Seeking Possession (NSP) were served upon several persistent nuisance tenants. On receipt of the notice, most tenants modified their behaviour meaning eviction was no longer necessary, however two tenants still failed to comply with the notice and were subsequently evicted.
- SHG has worked with partners, such as the Council's Targeted Youth Service and RTime, to deliver regular Youth Diversionary action in areas identified as hotspots, to reduce ASB amongst young people. Throughout 2022-23, SHG have delivered three evening sessions a week in priority youth ASB hot spot areas. These were identified from crime statistics through our partnerships with the Police. There have been 2,968 instances of engagement by young people during 2022-23. SHG have worked with Life Leisure and the Council's Targeted Youth Justice Team to secure external funding from the National Lottery of £253,000, over three years, to continue the detached work through the Youth Justice Team. Through Safer Streets funding, SHG has recruited a temporary Complainant Support Specialist to support the most vulnerable victims of ASB in cases. The Specialist took up post in November 2022 and as at the of 2022/23 has supported 30 vulnerable complainants in existing cases. Support provided includes 1-2-1 emotional support, referrals to other services including counselling, money advice, GPs and arranging target hardening so that customer feel safe and supported till the case reaches a conclusion.
- SHG has delivered a tenure-neutral project in partnership with the Council and GMP, to tackle cuckooing in the Borough identifying those at risk of being cuckooed and putting adequate safeguard in place to prevent cuckooing occurring. Since January 2022, when a specialist post was created, 103 cases of exploitation have been referred to the Officer. Of the 103 cases dealt with so far, 53 have been positively resolved with the victim no longer experiencing exploitation. The multiple interventions in cases are wide ranging but in the

main involve implementing effective wrap around support and target hardening measures, meaning victims can remain in their homes and are not forced to flee and present as homeless. The cost benefit savings attributed with this work for void costs alone equate to £219,222 after the cost of the exploitation role has been deducted.

- Stockport Homes has signed up to the Domestic Abuse Housing Accreditation (DAHA) with a full inspection due to 2023/24. A separate domestic abuse team has been formed bringing together prevention and homelessness services, with a full training programme for all staff being delivered in conjunction with the Council.

SHG has been the first organisation in the country to undertake the “RESOLVE Standard for ASB”. The Standard allows landlords to demonstrate to customers, the Regulator and partners how it is responding ASB and how effective it is being. The process is designed to offer an independent assessment and provides a robust and critical challenge to ensure continual improvement. SHG has been assessed as an exemplar organisation in its approach to ASB and making communities safer and one which exceeds the RESOLVE Standard principles and underlying commitments. SHG’s Safer Neighbourhoods Service is seen within the sector as a trailblazer, delivering best practice, at the forefront of innovation, working closely with residents and key stakeholders to support communities to become more resilient and to feel safer.

SHG has delivered refresher training to all ASB staff on legal tools and powers and how best to apply them in different cases. As a result, SHG has increased the use of Community Protection Warnings and Notices as the first stage of legal action to try and resolve problems swiftly. The use of such Warnings and Notices continued to increase in 2022/23 with 108 being served. This consists of 85 CPWs, with 23 not being complied with and requiring the full CPN. This demonstrates that the CPW is effective is resolving 79 per cent of cases when it is used.

SHG has worked with partners, in particular GMP, to identify the swiftest way to take effective and proportionate enforcement action against prolific perpetrators identifying whether criminal or civil action is the most appropriate. SHG attends ward level meetings and the Youth ASB Panel with partner agencies to problem solve issues and agree the most appropriate course of action. As a result, SHG used a range of enforcement powers including injunctions and possession proceedings to tackle the most prolific offenders and reduce the levels of ASB being perpetrated by individuals.

SHG continues to work closely with Operation Challenger in tackling organised crime and has undertaken training with GMP on new ways to effectively share intelligence with the Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB) using a standard form which is shared securely. The increased awareness of what constitutes good intelligence has seen a rise in the number of reports being submitted and has resulted in successful outcomes including warrants under the Misuse of Drugs Act and disruption of other criminal activity.

SHG has worked with the Council to consider alternative methods of delivery of ASB services. Whilst the statutory function for noise nuisance cannot be fully delegated to SHG as an agency, proposals on how SHG could further support the Council in the delivery of its community safety responsibilities have been put forward for consideration by the Council. A review of community safety delivery is ongoing and SHG continues to be open to do more on behalf of the Council to increase capacity in both teams to relieve service demands on the Council and provide a more consistent service to the residents of Stockport.

Another aspect of ensuring community safety is the work SHG undertakes around CCTV monitoring, having insourced public space cameras into the service from April 2022.

As well as providing targeted CCTV in cases of ASB, Stockport Homes operates its own extensive CCTV network across its Neighbourhoods, with more than 1,500 cameras in operation and keeping people safe. These cameras are monitored by SHG’s 24 hour Control Room, who also support Neighbourhood and ASB colleagues in taking enforcement action, by providing between



35-40 CCTV requests every week to support casework.

The Control Room team monitor all fire, sprinkler, lift & intruder alarms across SHG homes, community spaces and in Civic Buildings, co-ordinating an emergency response when needed and ensuring resident safety is paramount.

As well as providing internal services on behalf of SHG, the Control Room are a delivery partner of Stockport Council and the team delivers Public Space CCTV Monitoring, first-response during a civil contingency event and they operate the Out-of-Hours Contact Centre. In 2022/23 the team monitored more than 5,000 incidents and directly supported more than 320 arrests by providing real-time intelligence to GMP.

#### **What will be delivered in 2023-24:**

- Explore the benefits and feasibility of providing a more specialist ASB out of hours service in the evenings and at weekend, such as security patrols in hotspot areas
- Upgrade all “Lend-a-cam” CCTV systems to ensure the systems are fit for purpose and meet the increasing needs of the service
- Procure new noise monitoring systems that are fit for purpose, demonstrate value for money and continue to meet the increasing demands of the service
- Work with the Council and partner agencies to ensure that SHG continues to make a valuable contribution to tackling crime and ASB across the Borough and uses its tools and powers as a landlord to tackle the most prolific perpetrators.
- Work with the Council and partner agencies to ensure the successful implementation of any legislative changes as a result of the Government ASB Action Plan

#### **Objective 6: Deliver an excellent, customer driven greenspace service**

Stockport Homes has a range of contracts in place to deliver an effective greenspace service for customers across the Borough. This includes the management and maintenance of green open spaces, grassed areas, play areas and trees.

SHG offers a range of services and provide support to vulnerable people, through initiatives such as the Assisted Gardening Scheme and private garden maintenance options.

A review of the Greenspace Strategy and Action has been completed. Customers continue to support the ongoing review of the quality and management of greenspace services as a part of the Green Inspector programmes. In addition to customer feedback and engagement in activities across neighbourhoods, from site inspections, community events and estate walkabouts.

SHG has continued to work in collaboration with Stockport Council supporting Climate Action Now (CAN) and City of Trees to deliver a programme of tree planting. As part of a review of Tree Policy, and work with Stockport Council arborist team, tree surveys continue to be completed and tree maintenance works implemented. This includes work to undertake tree surveys across all SHG properties and analysis of the impact of ash die back across tree stock.

A review of the greenspace services has been completed during 2022-23, as a result the substantive contract for grounds maintenance will be reprocured before January 2024 and a review of options to establish an in-house local greenspace / environmental maintenance service.

#### **What will be delivered in 2023-24:**

- Launch SHG Greenspace Strategy and Action Plan
- Re-procure the grounds maintenance contract



- Complete a review of tree maintenance and management services
- Review options to set up an in-house greenspace and environmental services team
- Continue to work with the Council to improve greenspace in the Borough

## **Objective 7: Deliver a range of focused and effective services to support people to 'age well'**

### **Carecall**

Carecall provides a 24-hour telemonitoring and falls response service to people living in Stockport and it supports more than 4,600 vulnerable people as part of the Live Well at Home initiative. The use of technology to enable better living is a key objective of Stockport's Ageing Well Strategy and the service is an integral delivery partner for that part of the Strategy. Carecall has committed to delivering a range of actions which will support Stockport's ageing population to live well at home and remain independent for as long as possible.

The service continued to develop its Universal Offer, which was launched in partnership with Stockport Council in 2020, to improve access to Telecare and make the offer fair and equitable for all.

A total of 998 new service users accessed support from Carecall in 2022/23 and in approx. 7% of cases these service users were referred under a dedicated 'fast-track' scheme which supports the Integrated Transfer Team at Stepping Hill and the Discharge to Assess team within Social Care to release patient's home with the appropriate care and support in place. In all instances, the Telecare system is set up within 24 hours of the initial contact and this enables a quick and effective discharge to take place.

In 2022/23, the team handled nearly 167,000 emergency alarm calls and attended 5,336 emergency home visits. By providing this level of support to customers in their home, Carecall supports the objective to minimise reliance on other clinical services and reduces demand on the Ambulance Service.

The service attended 99.5% of its emergency home visits in under 45-mins which can drastically improve health outcomes for customers, who may otherwise be stuck on the floor for long periods of time whilst awaiting an Ambulance.

A new website was launched in 2023 and made accessing the service easier for customers looking for an online offer, by developing an e-commerce platform within the new site.

Carecall has recently supported a GM falls pilot, organised by the Urgent Primary Care Alliance, which saw the team attend to non-injured fallers on behalf of the Ambulance Service. Although it was quite a short pilot initially, the results have been positive and further discussion is underway across GM about a delivery model for community-based falls, to reduce long-lies on the floor and to relieve pressure on Ambulance Services.

### **Key highlights from 2022-23 include:**

- Made significant progress with its Digital Enabled Living programme, specifically the Analogue-to-Digital project. The current platform has been upgraded to support VOIP digital technologies in the interim and a direct award is in progress to procure a market-leading alarm-receiving platform and CRM system, which will further improve the services offered to customers
- Achieved 5% growth of the Universal Offer customer base, ensuring more vulnerable people are supported to live well at home.
- Acted as strategic partner to Stockport Council in ensuring the Assistive Technology offer meets the Health and Social Care needs of the Borough.

- Achieved 98.68% Customer Satisfaction overall and achieved a net promoter score of 9.23 out of 10.

## **Supporting Older People**

Stockport Homes manages eight sheltered housing schemes, one 'extra-care' scheme and approximately 600 bungalows and flats designed for those aged around 55+. These support safe and independent living within active communities, with but the service having a wider remit in promoting social and health activities among isolated older people living in all tenures and all parts of the Borough.

SHG continues to address increasing need and growing diversity of aspirations among older people through exploring options for the re-modelling and re-development of existing specialist accommodation schemes and the provision of additional extra-care facilities. Work has started on-site for SHG's first new build mixed-tenure extra-care scheme at Edinburgh Close, Cheadle. This supports the Council's ambition to reduce reliance among older people on statutory services and create informal self-sufficient networks.

Stockport Homes developed its Ageing Well Strategy and Action Plan for 2021-24 to align with the Council's Living Well programmes, incorporating the development of new initiatives such as the Ageing in Place Pathfinder programme (AIPP) and supporting social care by facilitating step-up, step-down provision.

SHG continues to play a key role in the services provided as part of the newly commissioned Help at Home and Community Support partnerships, working with older people, people with disabilities and carers to support wellbeing and independence. Stockport Homes will ensure this work is aligned with The Prevention Alliance (TPA) to provide accessible support and collaborative service delivery that breaks down traditional boundaries and ways of working for the duration of the contract.

SKylight has undertaken extensive work with the GM Ageing Hub to identify potential opportunities to work together and secure external funding. This has resulted in £40k of funding being secured for SKylight from the Dunhill Foundation to work alongside the GM Ageing Hub and Manchester University on a two-year research project around age friendly housing and supporting ageing in place.

A successful bid was also submitted to the Worwin Foundation for £2.5m across GM for the delivery of an Ageing in Place Pathfinder programme (AIPP) with SKylight receiving £200k over three years. The AIPP is a GM wide project comprising of nine projects testing new ways of creating neighbourhoods that support older people to age well, reduce loneliness and improve quality of life with older people placed at the heart of decision-making.

Both projects involve multiple partners and customer led, and will focus on the Brinnington area where there is a high concentration of older people but limited specialist accommodation and where life expectancy and healthy life expectancy is much lower than the Borough average. Due to the complementary nature of both projects staff will joint work where possible to maximise resources and ensure activities are aligned and complementary.

## **Equipment and Adaptations**

Stockport Homes' adaptations service continues to support people to live independently in their homes for longer. Working in partnership with the Council and a range of specialist contractors, it provides equipment and adaptations for both Council owned and private sector properties. Where this is not viable, Stockport Homes supports customers to move to accommodation that better suits their needs.

Demand for Disabled Facilities' Grants (DFG's) in the private sector is increasing in line with the

changing demographics of an ageing population, however, funding is limited. Stockport Homes will continue to look at ways to control expenditure over the life of the Delivery Plan by creatively exploring alternatives, particularly in cases where partially adapted homes can be further modified to meet more severe needs.

Stockport Homes continues to consider the provision of suitable accommodation for full time wheelchair users at the early stages of any proposal for new build accommodation.

### **Supporting People with Learning Disabilities**

Building on the success of a new build scheme of 11 self-contained flats for adults with learning disabilities and autism, Stockport Homes will continue to work with the Council to explore further opportunities for additional provision of supported housing schemes to support adults with learning disabilities and autism to live as independently as possible.

### **Housing Support Services**

Stockport Homes has a range of cross-tenure services which support and empower vulnerable households to live independently and sustain tenancies. It helps new tenants set up home and supports others who struggle to cope, even if they have lived independently for a while. This work often involves interventions from a wide range of partner agencies. The services continue to deliver positive outcomes, with a particular emphasis on supporting the council through the provision of preventative services such as Housing First, the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme and the provision of an in-house specialist housing safeguarding lead for children and families.

### **What will be delivered in 2023-24:**

- Significant investment will be made in Digital Technologies to support the migration of customers from Analogue to Digital, which will enable the service to maximise on opportunities to keep people safe at home
- Continue to grow the Universal Offer customer base and open dedicated referral routes for Health, Social Care and Third Sector partners.
- Support Stockport in its ambition to develop a 'Digital Health Hub' whereby Community Responders from Carecall will support patients to access video consultations which can help to avoid a hospital admission. Where required the team will also set up and monitor Tele-healthcare devices, which can support people living with chronic and long-term health conditions to stay at home and be monitored in a virtual ward)
- Continue the development of a new-build Extra Care scheme at Edinburgh Close, Cheadle
- Deliver the Ageing in Place Pathfinder and Dunhill Project in Brinnington and evaluate the outcomes

### **Objective 8: Maximise our Development Programme across all types and tenures in line with our and the Council's Strategy**

Delivering new affordable homes to meet the current and future housing needs of the Borough remains a key objective for Stockport Homes. SHG's Development Strategy aims to build 200 new properties per year. The new build market is challenging at the current time with both materials and labour increasing in price, supply chain issues relating to the availability of certain materials and some contractors entering into administration.

SHG has felt the impact of this with Mulbury Homes leaving a part-built site at Melford Road, Hazel

Grove and Lane End Developments entering into administration whilst on-site at the Hempshaw Lane development. This has had a negative impact on the customer experience at these sites as completions have been delayed, although the service has continued to do all it can address these issues and kept customers informed throughout the process.

Three Sixty have taken over Phase 1 of the Melford Road development to enable those properties to be brought to practical completion and sold to customers awaiting their new homes.

During 2022/23, SHG completed the development of 82 new homes. Ten of these properties were for affordable rent, 59 for shared ownership and 13 for social rent.

During the year, capital grant payments were drawn down from Homes England to the value of £2.987m and revenue grant payments to the value of £34,723 to support the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme.

#### **The range of properties completed during 2022/23 included:**

- 69 new homes for affordable rent, outright sale and shared ownership at Hempshaw Lane, Offerton.
- Seven apartments for rent to care leavers in Cheadle Heath.
- Two new homes as part of the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme.
- Four former Council properties bought back, refurbished and added to the social housing stock.

#### **A planning application has been submitted for 24 apartments at Higher Hillgate and SHG have secured £3.4mn in Brownfield grant to support stalled construction sites including:**

- Edinburgh Close, Cheadle
- St. Thomas' Gardens, Shaw Heath
- Andrew Street, Compstall
- London Road, Hazel Grove

#### **What will be delivered in 2023-24:**

- Completion of 130 new homes as a minimum.
- Acquisition and refurbishment of 22 properties as part of the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) which aims to provide housing for refugees as part of certain Afghan and Ukrainian support schemes.
- Achieve a start on site for a number of new schemes including Edinburgh Close, St. Thomas' Gardens and London Road.
- Decide how to deliver later phases of Melford Road and secure a completion contract for the now stalled Hempshaw Lane development.

#### **Objective 9: Continue to improve the look and feel of our buildings and neighbourhoods**

During 2022/23, SHG developed and obtained Board approval of a new five-year Asset Management Strategy, linked to the new 30-year Business Plan. This included the development and approval of a new five-year Capital Programme (at address level) which will ensure continued investment into the properties managed by SHG.

The 2022/23 Capital Investment Programme delivered a range of internal and external works to the housing portfolio and the external environment. The programmes of work were identified and

delivered by the Asset Team to meet the long-term objectives of the Asset Management Strategy and provide high quality, sustainable homes for customers.

**Key points from the programme include:**

- Customer satisfaction achieved a year-end cumulative figure of 97.88%
- HRA expenditure of £13.564mn against a budget of £15.588mn with monies carried forward to 2023-24. The majority of the under spend related to work deferred into the next financial year to take advantage of available external funding available from April 2024.
- SHG owned stock expenditure of £74k against a budget of £201k
- Significant social value achieved through the delivery of the programme throughout the year

**The 2022/23 Capital Programme continued the main themes which have been the focus for the past few years:**

- Customer Safety & Building Safety (Compliance)
- Estate Regeneration
- Energy Efficiency/Carbon reduction and reducing Fuel Poverty

SHG have continued to adopt a 'Big Impact' approach. This strategy was endorsed by the Board and is based on the development of programmes which create efficiencies in delivery, by combining workstreams, providing a larger impact on customers' homes and neighbourhoods.

In line with the 'Big Impact' approach and in order to achieve value for money and maximise impact, where applicable; works are undertaken on a large scheme basis to avoid a 'pepper pot' approach of repairing singular properties, particularly for external works which helps create efficiencies in delivery and cost savings.

'Big Impact' works have focused primarily on stock in the Romiley, Marple and Heaton Moor areas. The work in Heaton Moor consisted of new replacement roofs, roofline and primary and secondary wall finishes, windows, and doors and were carried out by Three Sixty.

SHG continued to focus on programmes of work that improve fire safety within blocks. These are procured in consultation with the Building Safety Team, prior to their implementation. Sprinkler commissioning continued throughout the early part of 2022/23. All 22 high-rise blocks have now been commissioned.

**What will be delivered in 2023-24:**

- Deliver the 2023-26 Asset Management Strategy including the agreed capital programme for 2023-24
- Ensure compliance with new Consumer Standards relating to quality of homes and neighbourhoods

**Objective 10: Continue the journey to Carbon Zero and play a leading role in supporting the Council and GM in achieving their environmental ambitions**

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) have set an ambitious target for the city region to be carbon neutral by 2038. Officers have worked closely with carbon consultants (Anthesis) to create a roadmap journey to carbon neutrality by 2038.

Stockport Homes has a five-year Climate Change Strategy in place which sets out a number of



aims and objectives for 2021-26. The Strategy includes continued investment in energy efficiency and low carbon technologies (within budget resources) within the housing portfolio identified as part of the Anthesis analysis project as well as strategic alignment with the wider Greater Manchester, Stockport Council targets and other Stockport Homes strategies.

Within the new Asset Management Strategy, there is a funding gap in terms of Net Zero Carbon projects to 2038. The primary area of investment to achieve a Net Zero Carbon housing portfolio is the installation of Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) along with Solar Photovoltaic (PV) systems. Between 2023 and 2028 the HRA has an available budget of £46.9m to renew the relevant heating systems with gas boilers up to 2038. An additional budget over this period of £131.1m would be required to change from the intended gas boiler system to that of ASHP and PV. Additional support / government grant would be required to fund a Net Zero Carbon housing portfolio as it stands.

SHG is committed to ensuring homes are energy efficient and utilise monies within the Capital Programme to deliver works to improve the efficiency of homes. The investment in energy efficient measures has enabled 97.5% of all SHG managed properties to have an Energy Performance Certificate rating of C or above, against an internal target of 92.5% and against a national average of EPC rating D.

There are currently 27 electric vehicle charging points across SHG managed sites. This gives customers the facility to own and charge an electric vehicle. SHG have been exploring options to increase the number of electric vehicles within its fleet and how best to install charging points to support their use.

An in-depth survey has been completed to identify operatives that could have home charge points installed to allow a transition over to an electric vehicle. Part of this survey was to identify operatives who could also downsize vehicles to allow a safer and more practical transition over to electric.

For the Three Sixty van fleet, it was identified that 36% could make the transition over to electric. Unfortunately, 13% of the vehicles cannot be currently switched due to their type, use and weight. The remaining operatives currently do not have the facility to allow charge points to be installed at their homes and the mileage undertaken would require operatives to charge for long periods throughout the working day leading to a significant decrease in productivity.

SHG will continue to review the commercial electric vehicle market, along with improving technologies and where possible look to change over ICE (internal combustion engines) vehicles for electric. Proposals are in place to enable monitoring and management of vehicle idling, along with other telematic matrices to reduce carbon output from fleet vehicles.

SHG promotes low-emission car choices to eligible employees. Currently, 66% of such vehicles are hybrid or electric with 34% being full electric. The current average car CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is 54g/km. The current employee contribution system is being reviewed and will likely move to a banded CO<sub>2</sub> system that will incentivise drivers to select low / zero emission cars. This contribution system would also put a CO<sub>2</sub> cap on company car vehicles removing higher emission cars from being available to colleagues. This will contribute to the delivery of SHG's ambitions in relation to reducing its impact on the environment.

#### **What will be delivered in 2023-24:**

- Continue to explore how the funding gap within the Asset Management Strategy will be met
- Deliver the related works within the new Asset Management Strategy (which superseded targets set in the Climate Change Strategy)
- Ensure all roofing programmes include Solar PV where currently not fitted
- Bid for circa £500k funding as part of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SDHF) and circa £2.1mn funding as part of the Heat Network Efficiency Scheme (HNES). These

funding streams will help support investment in Air Source Heat Pumps, Solar PV and upgrades to heat networks

### **Objective 11: Create and deliver the regeneration plan for Lancashire Hill**

Lancashire Hill currently consists of 487 flats (including one, two and three bedroom options) across two high rise tower blocks and four medium rise blocks. A cross directorate project team has been established to initially gather information on both the physical and socio-economic issues facing the estate before developing a range of options to consider in consultation with the Council and customers. In accordance with the latest Asset Management Strategy, physical works are not forecast to start at Lancashire Hill until 2028, however work is well underway to develop viable proposals.

In advance of the regeneration of the estate commencing, SHG have purchased the adjacent 'Nip in Pub' site which already had planning permission in place for new build apartments. Options for this site are being considered in conjunction with the regeneration plans for Lancashire Hill as it creates opportunities to broaden the scope of the plans and bring much need new affordable homes to the area and significantly improve the look and feel of the estate.

Officers will continue to explore options available in conjunction with residents, the Council and safety authorities to develop a regeneration plan which will be delivered over several years to leave a sustainable, safe legacy for current and future residents.

#### **What will be delivered in 2023-24:**

- Continue the process of developing the Lancashire Hill regeneration plan in partnership with customers and key stakeholders

# Aim Three

Work with our partners across Stockport to ensure opportunities for everyone are available



## **Objective 12: Deliver all services that reduce poverty and inequalities through Skylight<sup>5</sup> and maximise our contribution to this area of work**

Through delivering the aims of its Charitable Community Benefit Society subsidiary, Skylight, SHG is working to reduce inequalities in the Borough. The charitable arm of SHG was set up in December 2018, with a broad range of aims including a specific commitment to relieve poverty.

A key aim of Skylight is to access external funding, unavailable to Stockport Homes as a public sector body. The charitable arm also enables SHG to ensure the sustainability of added value services by having the flexibility to offer a range of different terms and conditions to staff which will enable SHG to compete for tendering and grant opportunities.

Work has been ongoing to manage memberships of the Your Local Pantry Scheme, particularly amongst vulnerable groups such as care leavers and those leaving temporary accommodation to ensure they can be accommodated during a period of increasing demand and challenges with food supply to the Pantries. Referrals for several free weeks' membership continue to be accepted from care leavers and the Stockport Council Support Fund to ensure those in greatest need can access affordable food. Officers continue to work closely with the Council and the Stockport's Food Network to ensure a co-ordinated and aligned food offer is delivered in the Borough.

Skylight has continued to work with and promote the positive work of Stockport Credit Union to support customers to be able to access sustainable forms of finance. The Credit Union operate from a community building which is managed by SHG.

SHG delivers a range of services within SKylight including tackling food and fuel poverty, providing a range of support including energy advice, food pantries and a furniture recycling service. Often, these initiatives involve working with other partners to deliver added value services which help sustain customers in their homes.

Larger premises were secured for the furniture service in July 2022. This has enabled a showroom to be created, and a wider range of donations to be accepted. Sales income has increased and will continue to do so as customers are able to make appointments to view and purchase additional items at low cost. This is an important service that enables furniture to be recycled and reused to enable tenants to create homes that lead to sustainable, comfortable tenancies. By having a showroom, customers can view the range of furniture on offer and select what most meets their family's needs.

SHG also completed the re-procurement of the free counselling service and launched the new service to customers, which was awarded to Beacon Counselling. The new contract started in September 2022, offering additional services to support more complex cases.

## **What will be delivered in 2023-24:**

5 Formerly known as Foundations Stockport (renamed in August 2022)

- Continue to deliver the Skylight Business Plan
- Continue to support the most vulnerable customers with a range of services that reduce poverty and inequalities
- Work with partners across the Borough, including Sector 3, to deliver more for Stockport residents
- Continue to work with the Council to address the impact of the cost-of-living crisis
- SHG will continue to use the Council's Household Support Grant effectively to reduce financial pressures on as many vulnerable households as possible.
- SHG will increase tenancy sustainment by meeting targets in the furniture business plan for the number of households accessing furnished tenancies and affordable recycled furniture
- SHG will review the pantry model to ensure long term sustainability given ongoing challenges with food supply and high demand

### **Objective 13: Maximise our contribution to supporting people into employment in the Borough**

Stockport Homes continues to engage and work closely with local employers, delivering sector-based services that increase employment opportunities for customers and provide employers with a trained and skilled cohort of staff. The Kickstart scheme, for example, offered six-month placements and wraparound employment support for young people aged between 18 and 24 years old who were in receipt of Universal Credit. Stockport Homes supported B4Box and the Council to deliver the scheme by providing employment support to young people on the placements. In total, 44 roles were created across Stockport Homes Group, B4Box and the Council for young people, with the Employment Support Team delivering the employability support for all placements.

The Employment Support Team continue to deliver the 'Steps to Work' programme funded by the Council to support vulnerable young people identified as Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), Care Leavers or SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) into employment.

During 2022/23, the Motiv8 service, which works with those most removed from the labour market, received a total of 172 new referrals across Stockport and Rochdale<sup>6</sup>. A total of 295 people were successfully supported with 179 achieving a programme result. The programme stopped taking referrals in October 2022 in line with the funding ending and the planned conclusion of the delivery in March 2023.

### **Participants in the programme achieved 1,879 individual outcomes relating to:**

- Health & Wellbeing (including access to primary health services, reduction in substance misuse and reduction in alcohol misuse)
- Finance and Employability (including creation of CVs, opening bank accounts, provision of money advice and addressing debts)
- Self-confidence and Self-development (including accessing social activities and informal networks of support, participating in volunteering and participating in parental courses).

During this period, 47 participants moved into educational and training provision in a range of areas including Maths & English, IT, Construction and Social Care. 105 participants commenced job searching and an additional 27 participants secured employment in a range of sectors

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<sup>6</sup> Stockport Homes were responsible for delivery in both Stockport and Rochdale under this GM project

including Delivery Driving, Cleaning, Retail and Warehousing. In addition, nine participants undertook volunteering activities.

Funding for the Motiv8 service ended on 31 March 2023, with almost 6,000 people supported across GM over the life of the programme and 2,171 participants moving into employment, education, training or job searching. Skylight was a huge part of the success of the programme, supporting nearly 1,200 of those people, of which 539 progressed into employment, education, training or job searching and over 6,000 individual outcomes were achieved in areas such as Health and Wellbeing, Finance and Employability and Self-Confidence and Self-Development.

Given the cessation of the Motiv8 funding, SHG have continued to explore potential funding opportunities for employment services. The Employment & Skills element of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) was originally due to be released in 2024, however, this has been brought forward and SHG Officers are liaising with Council colleagues, Motiv8 partners and other GM Housing Providers to assess the opportunities available.

In addition, SHG have funded two positions within Skylight for 12 months, which will aid in a subsequent bid for UKSPF by continuing the positive work established as part of the Motiv8 contract, supporting those with complex needs to move towards education, training and employment.

Funding of £500k has also been secured from DWP to deliver a smaller Motiv8 service across GM for a year. This funding will enable provision, delivered by a range of partners, for those with complex needs to continue, albeit on a smaller scale, whilst opportunities are explored with other partners through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

Additional reemployment opportunities have been generated within the Borough through the delivery of nine sector-based training and recruitment sessions with organisations including Sky, Vodafone, McDonalds and CareCall which saw 63 customers complete training and 30 customers secure employment. A sector-based partnership with Marks and Spencer (M&S) recruiting for the new Food Hall in Stockport was the most successful of these events during 2022-23, which saw 91 people attend the assessment centre, 28 receive the full SHG training, 25 went through to the taster day at M&S and 13 customers started a two-week work placement in April 2023.

#### **What will be delivered in 2023-24:**

- Work with Stockport Council and partners to explore further potential opportunities under the Levelling Up Agenda and UK Shared Prosperity Fund
- Identify and explore other funding opportunities to enhance SHG's Employment and Skills offer
- Work with employers to deliver bespoke sector-based events which appeal to customers and provide sustainable job opportunities

#### **Objective 14: Ensure joined up services to people who are homeless and prevent future cases**

Homelessness has been a strong focus of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and of Andy Burnham, the Greater Manchester (GM) Mayor. A GM wide Homelessness Prevention Strategy was developed during 2021, which builds on the strong collaborative work that took place during the Covid crisis on accommodating several hundred rough sleepers in emergency accommodation across the city region and implementing cross-Borough initiatives such as the Housing First Scheme and Ethical Lettings Agency.

SHG delivers homelessness services on behalf of the Council and ensures this is done in line with the Borough's Homelessness Strategy, which is jointly agreed. The primary reason for homelessness in Stockport is the lack of affordable housing. In addition, the ongoing freeze of



Local Housing Allowance, the cost-of-living crisis, reduction in other statutory / non-statutory services and increased demand for housing have all added to the pressures faced by the homelessness service.

**The Council's 2021-2024 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has five key themes:**

- Expanding the supply of affordable housing
- Improving services that prevent and relieve homelessness
- Ensuring better health outcomes for homeless people
- Addressing the needs of people with complex and multi needs
- Seeking to effectively end rough sleeping in the Borough

There are a range of actions being delivered as part of these five themes which will enable SHG to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping where possible.

There have been significant challenges to homeless services during 2022/23 due to increased demand and added pressures during the winter months from freezing temperatures, leading to cold weather protocols being enacted.

SHG supports homeless people to access and engage with relevant services and to move into temporary accommodation. Some of the homeless people in Stockport are known to the service and are entrenched in rough sleeping or have been previously excluded from services due to their complex needs and challenging behaviours which makes these cases more difficult to manage.

**Working closely with the Housing Strategy Team at the Council and partners at a Greater Manchester and local level, developments during 2022/23 include:**

- A successful bid for £130,000 from DLUHC to improve access to the private rented sector for offenders
- Supporting Afghan and Ukrainian households arriving in the UK and minimising resultant homelessness
- Development of new hospital discharge role with Pennine Care avoiding homelessness from Stepping Hill mental health wards
- Achieving a 75% rate of prevention for people threatened with homelessness through development of mediation and domestic abuse services.

The delivery of the objectives has been dependent upon effective and seamless joint working with the Council, across services ranging from Adult Social Care to Housing Standards, as well as working collaboratively to maximise opportunities available at a local and national level, where local authority support is required. Funding is essential in allowing Stockport Homes to continue to deliver an excellent service, for example the extension of Housing First and Rough Sleeping Accommodation Initiative programmes until 2025.

**What will be delivered in 2023-24:**

- Full Health Audit of homeless community in the Borough with Public Health, with dedicated staff member working to improve access to primary health care as well as managing hospital discharges
- Winding down of Afghan bridging hotel and transfer of Ukrainian households into

mainstream accommodation

- Review of Homelessness Strategy with key partners and adoption of revised version up until 2026
- Leased accommodation scheme for homeless households through Three Sixty Living with £309,000 grant from GMCA

### **Objective 15: Continue to work with partners and stakeholders within Stockport and Greater Manchester to achieve more**

Working with the Council, health partners and the Third Sector continues to be a priority for Stockport Homes, seizing opportunities where collaboration benefits all involved.

This report outlines the positive collaboration with the Council and outcomes achieved. Most objectives mention the work Stockport Homes undertakes with Stockport Council, which creates synergies that benefit customers and residents of the Borough.

As highlighted in Objective 12, SKylight is Stockport Homes Group charitable subsidiary and works with other charities and community groups within Stockport to achieve positive outcomes for customers. This includes working closely with Sector 3, the charity infrastructure support network for charitable organisations in Stockport, to offer a comprehensive and aligned offer of support to other charities and civil society groups in the Borough including a series of events with funders to support opportunities for additional investment.

During 2022/23, there were significant changes in the Greater Manchester health infrastructure. The GM Health and Social Care Partnership was replaced with the GM NHS and the new Integrated Care Partnership was formed, with a Stockport Board created in 2022. Stockport Homes' Chief Executive was invited to join this Board and has been using this opportunity to collaborate further with health services within Stockport, to join up strategies and priorities.

Stockport Homes is part of the Greater Manchester Housing Provider (GMHP) Group, which is a collaboration of 24 housing providers who have most of their homes within Greater Manchester. Stockport Homes plays an active role with the Chief Executive being the theme lead for HR and OD, a member of the Implementation Group and Assistant Chief Executive being the Chair of the Delivery Group, which works with the Chief Executive to deliver the Tripartite Agreement.

GMHP established an independent company named Athena in 2012, to support its anti-poverty work. By having a separate company, Athena can bid for contracts that organisations on their own would be unable to access. SHG's Assistant Chief Executive is the Vice Chair of Athena continued to deliver the Motiv8 Programme before it ended in March 2023.

**GMHP works closely with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and the Greater Manchester (GM) NHS. This comes together into a 'Tri-partite Agreement' that was approved in 2020, where common goals and ambitions have been formally adopted. Some recent successes include:**

- Delivery of a successful Housing First programme, which works with rough sleepers and people who are homeless. This programme provides access to a permanent home and intensive wraparound support in the first instance based on the principle that housing is the priority requirement that must be met, which then provides a stable base from which recovery and progress can be made by a person. See Objective 14 for more detail.
- Pledge to minimise evictions across all 24 members of the partnership, with Stockport Homes leading on delivering two best practice workshops on proactively addressing anti-social behaviour and rent arrears.
- Working collectively across GM as part of 'Let Us', the Greater Manchester Ethical Lettings

Agency to improve access to, quality and affordability of accommodation within the Private Rented Sector. See Objective 8 for more detail.

- Key partner in the GMCA social housing digital pilot, partnership with five housing providers, five local authorities and five internet service providers to explore new ways of reducing digital exclusion through affordable connectivity

A wide range of funding sources were identified and explored to find a way to continue delivering the Motiv8 programme across GM, however these were not sufficient. SKYlight is funding two positions for a year which will continue the work of Motiv8 by supporting those with complex needs to move towards education, training and employment. In addition, funding of £500k has been secured from DWP to deliver a smaller Motiv8 service across GM for a year. This funding will enable provision for those with complex needs to continue, albeit on a smaller scale, whilst opportunities are explored with other partners through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

Stockport Homes along with Age UK Stockport, Jigsaw Support, Nacro and Talk, Listen, Change (TLC) have worked together as The Prevention Alliance since 2015 delivering an early help and prevention offer to vulnerable people in Stockport.

**The Alliance was re-commissioned by Stockport Council in 2022 to deliver a new early help and prevention offer over the next five years that consists of:**

- Stockport Support Hub provides a single point of access for adults and families looking for support in Stockport, providing information, advice and guidance and linking people into a range of local commissioned and community support offers
- Your Support provide short-term support and a dedicated Key Worker for those who are vulnerable, feeling overwhelmed and want to make changes to their lives. Your Support work alongside adults and their families to guide them whilst they make changes to improve their confidence, independence, and wellbeing. Your Support also provide accessible weekly sessions for the Deaf Community, supported by a BSL interpreter

**What will be delivered in 2023-24:**

- SHG will continue to use the Council's Household Support Grant effectively to reduce financial pressures on as many vulnerable households as possible.
- Continue to work with the Council to identify areas of common interest, joint working and further collaboration
- Continue to work with Stockport Council and the new Integrated Health Board to improve the health and wellbeing of Stockport Homes customers
- Continue to work with GMHP, delivering the ambitions and commitments in the Tripartite Agreement
- Continue to work with Sector 3, to maximise opportunities for Stockport's charitable sector and secure additional investment in the Borough

**Objective 16: Be an operational delivery preferred partner for Stockport Council where strategically and financially sensible to do so**

Stockport Homes has a strong and positive relationship with Stockport Council. It is a delivery partner that is valued and trusted. Productive and ongoing formal and informal liaison arrangements exist and through this discussion where it is in the Council's best interest, additional services can be transferred to SHG.

**On 1 April 2022, the TUPE transfer of staff from Totally Local Company to Stockport Homes and Three Sixty was completed. Stockport Homes now has a new state of the art CCTV control room that delivers the following services:**

- Public Space Surveillance (CCTV)
- Police Radios / liaison with Greater Manchester Police
- Alarm Monitoring (Fire, Intruder & Lift alarms)
- 'Out of hours' call handling for Stockport Council (including Civil Emergencies & Business Continuity (Triaging, Escalation and Keyholding)).

**Three Sixty have further expanded their portfolio of commercial offerings to now include the following services:**

- Mobile Security Patrol Visits
- Static Guarding
- Intruder Alarm Maintenance
- CCTV Maintenance
- Key Holding
- Opening and closing premises
- Door Access systems maintenance
- Fire Alarm Maintenance
- Emergency Lighting Maintenance.

Objective 5 above, outlines the positive outcomes of this transfer and the service will continue to work with the Council to improve, innovate and evolve the service so Stockport continues to be safe and secure.

Stockport Homes will continue to work with the Council to maximise efficiencies by removing duplication and pooling resources in future service delivery. As part of ongoing liaison arrangements, areas of further collaboration will be explored.

**What will be delivered in 2023-24:**

- Implement the new Council liaison arrangements to ensure any opportunities are explored.

**Objective 17: Contribute to improved safeguarding in the Borough**

Stockport Homes continues to support multi-agency safeguarding work in the Borough and contribute to the improved safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It remains an active member of a range of sub-groups delivering the priorities of both the Children's and Adults Safeguarding Boards.

Stockport Homes has developed a comprehensive network of over 50 Safeguarding Champions across the organisation who provide advice, support and guidance to staff dealing with safeguarding issues and a core training team of nine colleagues to deliver the Safeguarding training programme which is mandatory for all staff.

This approach continues to be refined and developed in consultation with other agencies to ensure staff are well trained and supported to identify and respond to Safeguarding issues and that it continues to deliver integrated approaches to protecting vulnerable young people and adults.

SHG's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure has been fully reviewed and updated in consultation with colleagues within SHG and Children's and Adults Social Care.

Stockport Homes continues to fund a dedicated role within the Council's Multi-Agency Safeguarding and Support Hub (MASSH) to support families with complex needs and give housing advice and guidance to colleagues from other professions, ensuring that the role is flexible and responsive to changes in demand and / or legislative requirements.

**Stockport Homes provides a wide range of services that support vulnerable families and adults, minimising Safeguarding risks alongside helping people to realise their potential and achieve positive outcomes including:**

- A comprehensive Homeless service including an extensive Housing Options service, outreach support for Rough Sleepers and the provision of Temporary Accommodation
- Cross-tenure Independent Living and Tenancy Ready services which support vulnerable households to set up home and sustain their tenancies successfully
- Offering a successful mutual exchange service as a way for households to meet their housing need given the large demand but low supply of social housing available through the waiting list
- Provision of a wide range of sheltered and supported accommodation offering high quality accommodation alongside support to maintain independent living
- Customer Skills and Employment Support Services including a range of contracts which support those most excluded from the labour market
- Delivery of The Prevention Alliance (TPA) which supports vulnerable adults in the Borough and prevents, reduces and delays demand for statutory services
- A wide range of social investment projects including the Your Local Pantry service, Furniture Recycling Scheme and Furnished Tenancies.

**What will be delivered in 2023-24:**

- Utilise Civica CX to more effectively document and appropriately share Safeguarding information



# Aim Four

## Grow our business to be able to invest in essential and transformational services for customers



### **Objective 18: Be efficient financially, including to continue to grow commercially and digitally, in order to deliver more to customers**

A robust annual budget setting process is underpinned by effective monitoring, whilst individual cost benefit analysis and business plans are developed for new income generating opportunities. SHG is proactive in optimising the use of financial resources, including utilising its robust cash flow forecasting to identify available cash reserves and cash flows for reinvestment into income generating, or cost saving, activities; utilising the Group structure to deliver effective and efficient services.

The operating environment for SHG has seen significant cost increases in recent years. This has included increasing costs for materials and labour for construction works, pay award agreements above budgeted position and increasing energy costs. SHG have managed these cost pressures to deliver positive financial outturns at year-end.

Stockport Homes aims to deliver the best possible outcomes from the resources available. One of the ways it does this is by maintaining a focus on value for money, ensuring that the rent customers pay, and all other income, is spent in the best way to deliver SHG's strategic aims, and support financial efficiency. The Value for Money Strategy 2021-24 is delivering against its three aims that seek to continue the development of a value for money culture, optimise resources to achieve value for money, and measure the delivery of value for money.

### **During the year several actions have been undertaken, including:**

- A cross-directorate project group reviewing SHG's approach to value for money
- A greater understand of the value for money metrics and how SHG's output compares to other housing providers
- Ensuring the new Business Plan 2023-26 incorporates value for money and efficiencies as a key priority – focussing on growing what SHG does well
- Relooking at how to collate information about efficiencies and the delivery of service reviews within SHG
- Reviewing the approach to maximising social value from contracts to more closely link service requirements with social value criteria
- Completing an internal audit of how value for money is evidenced in procurement activity.
- Reviewing the Benefit Maximisation Framework so that efficiencies can be reported alongside the wider benefits of programmes and projects

SHG have ensured that social value remains a key deliverable in procurement projects and made use of the GMHP Social Value toolkit is in use for relevant procurement exercises.

A review of social value procurement documentation will continue into 2023-24, reflecting an objective of the Greater Manchester Housing Providers' Social Value Group to agree a common set of social value tender documentation. This will also tie in with the Procurement Bill completing its passage through Parliament and leading to new legislation for public sector procurement.

In terms of digital growth, Stockport Homes has developed an ambitious Digital Transformation Strategy that is a key component of SHG's vision to continue to be a modern and efficient organisation. Key objectives include improving access to services to customers, maximising the use of data, digitally enabling assets, minimising manual processes, and creating a 'digital first' culture. See Objective 2 for more details.

### **Successes from 2022-23 include:**

- Introducing several automation solutions technologies which have enabled SHG to remove a number of high-volume, low-value tasks from a number of teams. This has been achieved by utilising technologies such as power apps and robotic process automation
- Continued to support our paperless environment ambitions through the implementation of electronic signatures and SharePoint. All colleagues now have access and are using SharePoint whilst key users have been given access and training to manage team e-signature workspaces.

Major long-term projects include the re-procurement of a new housing management system (CX); the continued roll out of Office 365 and its further development to maximise its potential along with SharePoint; and advanced document management systems which will support improved data management and security, efficiency and reduce waste.

Multiple back-office processes have been reviewed to make them more streamlined, using more efficient processes, digital authorisations or signatures where required, electronic 'flow' over the use of paper and other labour-intensive processes. Digital documents will ultimately replace the mailroom function.

In terms of commercial growth, SHG have successfully insourced the Security Services contract from the Council to SHG (CCTV monitoring) and Three Sixty (security and facilities services). The new offering is allowing SHG to the potential to cross-sell and package several services to current and new customers. SHG are currently implementing a Schools Service package which aims to deliver excellent services, maximise the revenue and partnership potential as well as ensuring a strong community offering that reduces inequality across the borough.

HOME Marketing (SHG's branded marketing offer to third parties) has grown and now has 12 clients across a number of sectors. This generates £100k net income per annum.

### **What will be delivered in 2023-24:**

- Deliver the 2023-26 SHG Business Plan and develop an outcomes report for the first year of this Plan
- Establish the vision for continued Digital Transformation over the next strategy period ensuring significant customer, colleague and organisational benefits (developing this alongside new Data and Technology Strategies to ensure a joined-up approach to being more efficiency and transformative)
- Continue to explore opportunities for service growth that add commercial and social value to SHG and its partners
- Deliver the objectives of the approved budget to maintain a robust financial position, and taking advantage of opportunities to strengthen this further

- Update the Contract Procedure Rules once the Procurement Act is in place and ensure value for money and social value are key considerations in procurement work undertaken
- Launch and implement the Benefits Maximisation Framework

### **Objective 19: Develop and grow SHG's property management offer for privately owned properties across Stockport to improve quality and accessibility**

Stockport Homes and Three Sixty Living supports Stockport Council's regeneration plans for Stockport Town Centre and the development of new privately rented accommodation. Competing with online and high street lettings and property management agents, Three Sixty Living offers a full property management service from lettings, repairs, rent and service charge collection through to grounds maintenance and concierge services, offering bespoke packages to meet the needs of the customer, whether it be a landlord with a small property portfolio or a large-scale developer. Developing the Three Sixty Living brand is key to Stockport Homes' success in this area, to build a strong reputation for offering a competitive customer driven service with proven results. To support this, a full marketing campaign for Three Sixty Living has been developed which utilises the partnership with Three Sixty and the other services available through Three Sixty Living as part of the Stockport Homes Group.

SHG have continued to grow the Three Sixty Living portfolio of private sector properties under its management. Three Sixty Living secured 34 new management agreements in 2022-23. This area of the business will continue to be a challenge moving forward as landlords chose to sell their properties or self-manage them. Opportunities remain for investors and Three Sixty Living continue to work with individual small portfolio landlords as well as those with a large stock base growing its portfolio in and around Stockport and Greater Manchester.

Stockport Homes, through Three Sixty Living, continue to work as part of Let Us, the Greater Manchester Ethical Lettings Agency, with a joint aim of improving the private rented sector across GM. As well as working with small current and new landlords across GM to secure affordable and quality private rented accommodation, work continues to lease properties through Resonance, an investment partner, bringing high specification and local housing allowance rent level single person and family accommodation to Stockport and surrounding areas. Work to secure more leased properties and additional investors continues.

In 2023/24 the property sales business within Three Sixty Living has been moved to the Sales Team in a move to centralise all sales activity within the Development Team and build on the successful sales brand that Viaduct has created across the Borough.

### **What will be delivered in 2023-24:**

- Growing the leasing offer with Resonance (a partner in the Let Us scheme) and other suitable investment partners is a key aim for 2023/24 working to jointly identify suitable properties which will meet local housing need.
- Securing additional landlords to the Three Sixty Living service and retaining current landlords or working to support landlords who need to sell through the use of the Viaduct estate agency service.
- Identifying any block management opportunities as a growth area within GM

# Aim Five

## Take responsibility for driving change locally, regionally and nationally to improve standards in social housing



**Objective 20: To ensure Stockport Homes is prepared for new and emerging regulatory requirements, and other changes to be brought about via the Social Housing Regulation Bill, by delivering services that go beyond the minimum requirements set for the sector as a whole**

The Social Housing Regulation Bill<sup>7</sup> will bring about changes to Consumer Regulation with a more proactive approach to regulation. Stockport Homes has been monitoring the proposals and preparing for the reforms which will see a shift away from reactive regulation of the Consumer Standards to a regime of inspection every four years to proactively ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.

It is expected that new Consumer Standards will be consulted on over Summer 2023 and that the new framework will be in place from 1 April 2024. This new regime will see housing providers with stock of over 1,000 units (“Large Providers”) and all Local Authorities that own housing stock having a proactive inspection of the Consumer Standards, once every four years. It is currently unknown how the Regulator will select the Local Authorities it will inspect under Consumer Regulation and where Stockport fits into those plans. Work will continue throughout 2023-24 to ensure SHG’s services meet the updated requirements and that there is a strong evidence-base in place.

RSH has also introduced Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) which SHG is collecting for all stock from 1 April 2023 and will be required to report to the Regulator from 1 April 2024. These surveys contain perception-based questions and are being undertaken with customers via Current Tenant Visits completed predominately by Neighbourhood Housing Officers.

In terms of economic regulation, which RSH assesses via In-Depth Assessments (IDAs). Stockport Homes is a “Small Provider” as it owns less than 1,000 units in its own right and currently subject to a reduced economic regulatory requirement. Should SHG own more than 1,000 units in the future, it will become a “Large Provider” and be subject to more rigorous, proactive oversight by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH).

**In anticipation of the impending regulatory changes, SHG has undertaken the following to ensure it is fully prepared for the changes:**

- Completed a data maturity review and developed an action plan to support improvements in data quality, ownership, and culture across the business. This focus on data will ensure SHG are prepared for proactive regulation and provision of business information to support the IDA inspection process
- Created a corporate project focussing on the Consumer Regulation changes
- Updated the Board Succession Plan to ensure effective recruitment and induction of Board

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<sup>7</sup> Due to receive Royal Assent during Summer 2023 and become the Social Housing Regulation Act

## Members and their understanding of regulatory requirements

- Monitored announcements by Government and the Regulator of Social Housing to ensure Stockport Homes has been able to maintain a strong position with regards to forthcoming Consumer Standards requirements

In addition to changes to Consumer Regulation, the Social Housing (Regulation) Bill will bring about other requirements within the social housing sector.

The core objectives of the Bill were to facilitate the new, proactive consumer regulation regime and changes to how the consumer and economic regimes are enforced, as outlined above. Since the Bill entered Parliament, a number of amendments have been made, notably around the introduction of “Awaab’s Law” following the tragic death of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale.

SHG has been closely following the progress of the Bill and the emerging amendments. To ensure SHG is in the best possible position to deliver against the new requirements of the Social Housing Regulation Bill, a range of additional actions have been delivered. This has included reviewing the Customer Feedback Policy, gaining the RESOLVE accreditation for Anti-Social Behaviour service and implementing changes to ensure the new Shared Ownership model can be followed within SHG. A damp, mould and condensation Project Board has also been established to ensure effective oversight of this area of the business.

SHG has been keeping abreast of the announcements around professionalisation. Work has started on the required skillsets in relation to the requirements around Building Safety and skills and competence. The professionalisation agenda will build on that further and require certain staff / leaders in the organisation to hold specific qualifications. As more information is made available, SHG will ensure there is an understanding of requirements and a plan in place.

## **What will be delivered in 2023-24:**

- The Consumer Regulation Project will ensure SHG is prepared for proactive regulation of new Consumer Standards by April 2024
- A detailed action plan for the Consumer Regulation Project will be developed to ensure delivery objectives are achieved and SHG is prepared for proactive inspection
- Respond to Government consultation about new Consumer Standards and ensure SHG can meet all of the requirements through an evidence-based approach
- SHG will ensure Board Members are equipped for the changes and understand the impact on SHG and their role
- SHG will ensure senior leaders work with the Council to ensure preparedness for the new regulatory requirements from April 2024
- Undertake an evidence based assessment of service delivery against the updated Consumer Standards
- SHG will continue to monitor the stock ownership levels within SHL and whether it is likely these will surpass 1,000 units and lead to SHL becoming a “Large Provider” and subject to additional regulatory requirements
- Create action plans for new requirements arising from the Social Housing Regulation Bill that aren’t captured in the Consumer Regulation Project
- Ensure SHG has an agreed plan in place to meet requirements of professionalisation
- Ensure there are plans in place to meet any revised Decent Homes / HHSRS / Awaab’s Law requirements and that customers are aware of any new requirements



## **Objective 21: Continue to be an excellent performer and strive to be the best in the sector**

Stockport Homes continues to be a top performer within the sector. SHG is amongst the best in the sector on building safety, with 100 per cent valid gas safety certificates and 100 per cent electrical certificates, which is in line or above the best performer quartile of 100% and 99.8% respectively. Stockport Homes is amongst the best in the sector on its customer satisfaction results, being in the top quartile for satisfaction with the service provided, and satisfaction with repairs. Rent collection stands at 100.48% for 2022-23 with void relet time of 16.4% and void rent loss being 1.95%. SHG uses HouseMark benchmarking to compare outcomes to other housing organisations and outperforms peers in many areas.

The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) has launched a new Tenant Satisfaction Measures Standard into its regulatory regime. From April 2023, SHG started collecting data, to be reported from April 2024. SHG have reviewed reporting arrangements in relation to the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) to ensure the Board and Stockport Council have appropriate oversight. The Corporate Performance Report now contains both the Corporate Performance Indicators and the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, which gives the Senior Leadership Team, and the Board oversight of business-critical performance information in a timely manner.

The Tenant Satisfaction Measure Standard is a critical step for the Regulator in creating a new system for assessing how well social housing providers are doing at providing good quality homes and services. It is anticipated that the Regulator will use them to inform decisions around their consumer regulation proactive inspection regime and are likely to use TSM's to assess potential risk and thus where to target their resources.

SHG have been active participants in Greater Manchester Housing Providers (GMHP) meetings regarding Performance and Data, collaborating with colleagues across the GM region to learn and continually improve performance.

### **What will be delivered in 2023-24:**

- Tenant Satisfaction Measures will be collated and monitored throughout 2023-24 and reported to SLT, Board and Stockport Council (via Member Committee)
- Submit TSM results to the Regulator in 2024 as required
- Introduction of new customer feedback software which integrates with core housing management system (CX) to ensure all responses collected from customers are visible organisation wide, supporting the 360-degree view of customer experience.
- Continued focus on the use of Power BI to promote a self-serve approach to business intelligence and performance data by enabling Managers to view performance data in real time, using modern visualisation technology.

# Aim Six

## Support and invest in our colleagues as a great place to work



### **Objective 22: Be an employer of choice and a top performing organisation**

Stockport Homes strives to be an excellent employer, through supporting and developing its staff to deliver the best possible service for customers. For the last 15 years, Stockport Homes have been recognised by Best Companies as a great place to work, resulting in world class levels of engagement since 2018. It is an Investors in People (IIP) organisation at platinum level, which has been maintained through implementing and sharing best practice for people management and development. In addition, Stockport Homes are advocates to help support others achieve membership status of the GM 'Good Employment Charter' which is recognition of how Stockport Homes supports colleagues through learning, development, health, and wellbeing.

The People and Organisational Development Strategy 2022-2025 aims to "Strengthen Belonging and Nurture Growth". It ensures that the focus remains around employees and the ASPIRE values, with a plan to support growth, diversification, sustainability and adopting new ways of working

Stockport Homes has a 'One Team' culture linked to the mission and #BeYou, which is the vision for an inclusive workplace. SHG encourages engagement and feedback from employees and groups such as Empower (ethnic minority staff), Proud (LGBTQ+) and Enable (disability), which are used as a platform to ensure employees' voices are heard and reflected within changes made in the organisation. This is in addition to other regular consultation channels such as Colleague Voice (employee consultation group) and recognised Trade Unions.

### **During the first year of the People and Organisational Development Strategy 2022-25, the following results have been achieved:**

- Retention of Best Companies 3-star accreditation and Number One Housing provider, illustrating world class levels of engagement
- Recognised nationally via a "Special Recognition" award for Giving Something Back at the Best Companies Awards
- Retention of Investors in People Platinum following an outstanding review in February 2023
- Completion of a successful pilot of SHG's flexible working model called "Maximising our Potential" (MOP) which has now been fully implemented into the organisation, where working arrangements permit.
- An increase in SHG's position in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (WEI) to 7th overall compared to 23rd in 2021/22, and first in all housing organisations
- Timely pay reviews have been conducted / implemented across all companies within SHG. All roles (approx. 400) were pay benchmarked to check market positioning.
- Continued use of the Group Structure and different T&Cs to successfully fill vacancies across all companies to support the growth and sustainability of SHG
- Reviewed pension contributions in SKylight for staff members in the SHPS pension scheme

to ensure they are market competitive and aligned to the SHG Pension Strategy

- Successfully held SHG's first "Summer Social", #SHGFEST. This was a family event raising money for Once Upon a Smile, SHG's Charity of Choice
- Since 2022, raised a total of £24,922.71 + £1,712.00 Gift Aid to date (£26,634.71 overall)
- The successful delivery of two separate Colleague Festivals for Stockport Homes and Three Sixty with the theme of #TogetherWeCan

Following on from the changes to the Social Housing Regulation Bill and more recently through the introduction of Awaab's Law<sup>8</sup> the sector will see the introduction of Professionalisation requirements. SHG are currently working in partnership with the GM Learning and Development Group to review the current level of training, development and appropriate qualifications that will be required for colleagues in various roles including those leading housing organisations.

Although some of the detail has not yet been agreed by the Government, work will be undertaken to identify specific colleagues this will affect and the current qualifications they hold. In 2020, a skills matrix was created for frontline teams. This includes qualifications as well as the behavioural skills front line colleagues need to support customers in uncertain times. This includes development around resilience, empathy and dealing with trauma.

SHG has big plans around digital transformation and must understand the current and future skills required to achieve this. A Digital Skills Project will focus on identifying any skills gaps and working with colleagues to improve digital capability.

Ensuring pay and benefits for employees of SHG is a key aspect of the Reward and Recognition (R&R) Strategy. It is important that the Subsidiary Terms and Conditions are pitched correctly and SHG does this by undertaking annual pay reviews and benchmarking. Horizon scanning and ensuring SHG is kept abreast of best practice in the compensation and benefits field externally is also part of work around ensuring R&R is maximised for SHG.

Initial Job Families mapping has been carried out and will be further developed to ensure Managers engage with this information and use it to inform decision making where it will add value to support transformation and growth. This might be as part of service reviews or considering future direction of services and structures, which will ensure SHG is delivering services effectively and efficiently and maximising Value for Money at all times.

SHG is proud to be an inclusive workplace and has an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy in place to ensure there is a continual focus on inclusivity and best practice. SHG has signed up to the Race at Work Charter and voluntarily carries out the Ethnicity Pay Gap. SHG is part of the GMHP Boost Programme and maximises the impact of the Change Champion programme by identifying and implementing changes to make SHG a more inclusive place to work. It is important that SHG's workforce continues to reflect and represent the communities that SHG serves.

#### **What will be delivered in 2023-24:**

- Embed the Leadership Framework and focus on building management capacity and capability via workshops in July 2023 and a relaunch of people management skills training
- Launch and embed a new Values Conversation Framework (SHG's approach to staff appraisal and annual review of objectives / achievements)

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<sup>8</sup> Requires social landlords investigate the causes of damp and mould within 14 days of complaints being made and provide tenants with a report on the findings Give social landlords 7 days to begin work to repair a property if a medical professional believes there is a risk to a tenant's health

- Review the Recruitment and Selection Policy to ensure the SHG approach fits with the external landscape and marketplace which has changed considerably over the last two years
- Review the recruitment partnership with Networx
- Review pay and reward schemes in the Subsidiary companies
- Complete the Race at Work Charter survey tool (with Empower Group)
- Further work will be undertaken to maximise the effectiveness of the Guaranteed Interview Scheme (for ethnic minority applicants).
- Deliver more work in conjunction with Harry's Pledge to support employees who are carers
- Review if Best Companies continues to meet SHG's needs and review other engagement surveys including the 'Great Place to Work' and the newly formed 'The Times Best Place to Work'

# Conclusion

Stockport Homes has continued to deliver excellent services and supported a range of customers during the second year of this five-year Delivery Plan. This is against a backdrop of macroeconomic difficulties and increasing scrutiny on the housing sector from a range of stakeholders, including customers and the media.

Much work has been done to review SHG's policies to ensure they are fair and fit for purpose. This has been particularly evident around damp, mould, and condensation cases.

SHG continues to learn both when things go wrong and from what is working well in the sector and in other housing organisations. The commitment to hearing the customer voices spans the organisation, from Board level to front-line service delivery.

Stockport Homes engages with customers in a range of ways, taking opportunities to improve by constantly being open to challenge, listening to customers, stakeholders and staff and reviewing services. Significant progress has been made in the digital technology and process in place to enable more efficient service delivery to customers.

During 2022-23, the business grew and delivered significant efficiencies at a time when the sector was changing, coming under increased scrutiny, there being a more challenging operating environment and increased customer expectations.

SHG continues to work innovatively with the Council to meet housing need and enhance inclusive growth in the Borough. It supports the Council's priorities in an ever-changing environment; constantly seeking opportunities to invest in and transform the lives of people in Stockport. None of this would be possible without a strong and effective partnership with the Council which remains a priority for Stockport Homes, now and in the future.

Stockport Homes and its subsidiaries continue to deliver against Council and customer priorities including promoting Stockport and contributing to the "One Stockport" approach, which is in line with SHG's mission of "One Team, Transforming Lives". The continued investment in the Borough means it really is a great place to live, work and socialise.





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