



Report to:	STOCKPORT HOMES MEMBER COMMITTEE <i>12 February 2024</i>
Report of:	DIRECTOR OF HOUSING PLUS
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Type of Report	<i>Consultation</i>
Title of Report:	SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES STRATEGY
Purpose of Report:	To outline SHG's approach to investing money, time and skills in local communities to deliver on its mission to be 'one team, transforming lives'
Recommendation(s):	That Members Committee consider the Strategy and Action Plan and provide feedback
Confidentiality	Non Confidential
Resource Implications	Most of the actions within the Strategy can be delivered within existing resources. External funding will be sought through community or charity partners and applications made to external funders through SKylight to maximise the resource available where appropriate.
Impact on Risk Appetite and Risk Register	<p>SHG prides itself to striving to deliver excellent services to customers and would not seek to take risks where customer experience could be negatively affected. Providing a range of support services as identified in this Strategy will help mitigate this risk.</p> <p>SHG has established a strong reputation and does not wish to negatively affect this. By working collaboratively with partners, in particular the Third Sector, SHG will seek to influence positive change.</p>

	Risk Number	Risk Description	Risk Mitigation
	5	SHG does not deliver excellent customer services in the way that customers require them and does not maintain a strong, positive reputation where stakeholders have trust and confidence in SHG.	By focussing services on those households in greatest need, collaborating with partners wherever possible and regularly reviewing supply and demand, the strategy will deliver positive outcomes for customers.
	7	Positive, strategic relationships are not maintained with Stockport Council (at both officer and political level) and other key local partners / third sector organisations across Greater Manchester (GM).	Regular dialogue with Council colleagues and wider partners, offers of support and joint working will ensure SHG is aware of potential threats to working relations and can act to mitigate these.
Customer Voice	<p>Customers have been consulted on the various service areas included within the Strategy.</p> <p>The implications for customers are significant in a positive way, as by reducing inequalities, customers should have increased quality of life and prospects.</p>		

<p>Equality, Diversity & Inclusion implications</p>	<p>An EIA assessment has been undertaken. This highlighted the difference between digital inclusion and digital literacy, which particularly impacts on ethnic minority households. Around health and wellbeing, the needs of the growing refugee population in Stockport may well include facilitating access to counselling in other languages as well as close work with households from those communities to identify and meet other needs. The need to consider equality, diversity and inclusion within social value was also highlighted. Changes have been made to the Strategy in line with these findings.</p>
<p>Regulatory compliance</p>	<p>The proposed 'Transparency, Accountability and Influence' standard within the new consumer regulations states that '<i>registered providers must take action to deliver fair access to, and equitable outcomes of, housing and landlord services for all tenants</i>', which is covered by the focus on the most disadvantaged groups within this Strategy.</p> <p><i>'Registered providers must co-operate with relevant partners to promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where they provide social housing'</i> is also relevant, as it links to the aims of the strategy around employment and cost of living support.</p>
<p>Comments of the Stockport Homes Monitoring Group at the meeting held 30 January 2024:</p>	<p>The customers felt that ensuring that information is delivered to customers who are not online is vital, as not all customers choose to, or are able to be online. They added that SHG needs to ensure that the data they hold about customers, relating to their ability to get online, should be regularly reviewed in order to be accurate.</p> <p>The cost of broadband was highlighted as a potential barrier to some customers getting online.</p> <p>The customers highlighted how impressed they were with the breadth of support services SHG offer to help customers, regardless of their circumstances.</p>

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 SHG has social objectives far wider than ‘just’ being a social housing provider. Its mission is to be ‘One team, transforming lives’. This Supporting Communities Strategy sets out how SHG invests money, time and skills in local communities to deliver on that mission. It also measures the economic, environmental and social benefits created for individuals and neighbourhoods when delivering services or projects.
- 1.2 This Strategy originates from close work undertaken with, and in support of, partners and the Council in particular, and builds on the achievements of the Social Investment Strategy 2020-23. That strategy focused on contributing to a key Council objective of reducing inequalities in the Borough through a range of initiatives to invest in social infrastructure and to facilitate easier access to quality employment opportunities. To better reflect the content and focus of the work in this Strategy, the name has been changed to the ‘Supporting Communities Strategy’.
- 1.3 Key successes from 2020 – 2023 are evident across all streams of social investment work, with highlights including:
- During 2022/23 Motiv8 (employment support) received a total of 172 new referrals from a range of partner agencies across Stockport and Rochdale. 295 people were successfully supported with 179 achieving defined outcomes as prescribed within the programme. Participants in the programme achieved 1,879 individual outcomes relating to Health & Well-being, Finance and Employability & Self-confidence and Self-development.
 - The Steps to Work Programme, commissioned by the Council, engaged 59 young people, with 13 supported into employment in the past year.
 - Refocussing delivery of the Holiday Clubs to young people ages 11–17 in 2022/23 (provision to secondary school aged children being a gap identified by the Council). Clubs have been delivered every school holiday with a total of 715 places provided.
 - Six schools received Mental Toughness sessions through the SHINE programme, engaging 81 young people in total.
 - Seven customers regularly engaged in co-production of Ageing in Place Pathfinder activities and successfully delivering local events hosting 40+ residents with a range of partner agencies.
 - Money Advice delivery split between remote and face-to-face provision, broadening their reach and accessibility of support, with 676 face-to-face and 971 remote for 2022/23.
 - Furniture Recycling collected items from 338 households and void (empty) properties and delivered to 433 households in need, with 49 tonnes diverted from landfill in 2022/23.
 - £200,000 funding was provided from the Council’s Household Support Grant in December 2022 to provide discretionary financial support for households in need as well as furniture for vulnerable households

leaving temporary accommodation and for food supplies for Stockport pantries.

2 CONTEXT

2.1 The Supporting Communities Strategy has been developed following consideration of a wide range of national, regional and local factors and other strategies which shape the focus and priorities for action, including:

- One Stockport Borough Plan.
- One Stockport Economic Plan.
- One Stockport Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Stockport Council's Social Value Charter.
- Cost of Living Crisis and the particular impact on those living in social housing.
- Prevalence of health conditions and disabilities amongst social housing tenants.
- Age and employment status of social housing tenants.
- Digital exclusion.
- Increasing need from Refugee and Asylum Seeker households.
- Polarisation between different areas of the Borough.
- Greater Manchester (GM) Social Value Framework.
- Greater Manchester Strategy 2021 – 2031.
- Greater Manchester Digital Blueprint for 2023 – 2026.
- Stockport Homes Customer Voice & Influence Strategy.
- Stockport Homes Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy.
- Stockport Homes Ageing Well Strategy.
- Stockport Homes Civil Society Strategy.

2.2 The Strategy outlines the ambitions going forward, with a keen awareness of the financial pressures on SHG, the Council and wider partners. Objectives have been developed in line with the strategic priorities of the Council for the Borough.

2.3 All social investment opportunities are evaluated and delivered on a sound financial footing, with a clear understanding of the cost and benefits, and a long-term sustainable plan for sourcing funding.

3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

3.1 The Strategy has five main strategic objectives and outcomes:

- **SUPPORT HOUSEHOLDS TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF THE RISING COST OF LIVING**

Outcome - A higher than average level of tenancy sustainment and customers report improved ability to deal with financial issues.

- **PROGRESS CUSTOMERS INTO EMPLOYMENT AS A KEY ROUTE OUT OF POVERTY**

Outcome - An employment, skills and training offer resulting in an increase in customers accessing secure and sustainable employment.

- **REDUCING DIGITAL POVERTY BY SUPPORTING CUSTOMERS TO ACCESS AFFORDABLE DEVICES, CONNECTIVITY AND SKILLS TRAINING**

Outcome - Reduction in customers reporting they are offline compared to the 2022 digital survey and increased digital engagement with SHG services and information.

- **STRENGTHENING LINKS WITH HEALTH PARTNERS TO IMPROVE WELLBEING WITHIN SHG HOUSEHOLDS**

Outcome - Customers report increased health and wellbeing from engaging in services and activities delivered or supported by SHG.

- **EMBED SOCIAL VALUE INTO EVALUATION OF PROJECTS AND PROCUREMENT**

Outcome - SHG will have a robust and comprehensive approach to measuring its social investment decisions. This will enable informed decisions to be made about future investment and demonstrate the delivery of its mission to be 'One team, transforming lives'. SHG's approach to measuring social value will reflect good practice whilst making best use of resources.

Full details of the actions required to deliver the objectives can be found in the Strategy and Action Plan.

4. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

- 4.1 An assessment has been undertaken. This highlighted the difference between digital inclusion and digital literacy, which particularly impacts on ethnic minority households. Around health and wellbeing, the needs of the growing refugee population in Stockport may well include facilitating access to counselling in other languages as well as close work with households from those communities to identify and meet other needs. The need to consider equality, diversity and inclusion within social value was also highlighted. Changes have been made to the Strategy in line with these findings.

5. CUSTOMER VOICE

- 5.1 Customers have been consulted on the various service areas included within the Supporting Communities Strategy. The implications for customers are

significant in a positive way, as by reducing inequalities, customers should have improved quality of life and prospects.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Supporting Communities Strategy details SHG's commitment to delivering a wide range of services and initiatives which seek to address the challenges faced by many of its customers and support customers to achieve positive outcomes in all aspects of their lives. SHG will continue to work closely with Council colleagues and a wide range of partners to ensure the Strategy delivers its ambitions and is aligned and complementary to other workstreams and priorities within the Borough.

7 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 That Members Committee comment and give feedback on the Strategy and Action Plan.