



# SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES STRATEGY

01 January 2024

Prepared by:	Tanya King
Date effective from:	01/01/2024
Policy approved by:	SHG Board
Review Date:	01/01/2027

EIA Required?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
EIA Completed?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Revision number:	1
Lead officer:	Tanya King

# 1 SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES STRATEGY

## 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 Social investment benefits local communities through reduced inequalities for health, education and household income, and social landlords through reduced tenancy turnover, settled and sustainable neighbourhoods and higher levels of engagement. Well designed and managed local social investment has a significant multiplier effect, benefitting the local economy many times more than the initial investment<sup>1</sup> by attracting other sources of funding and helping to keep money circulating in the local economy.
- 2.3 This Strategy builds on the achievements of the Social Investment Strategy 2020-23, which focused on 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 the Strategy, it is proposed to change the name to the ‘Supporting Communities Strategy’.
- 2.4 Key successes from 2020 – 2023 are evident across all streams of social investment work, with highlights including:
- During 2022/23 Motiv8 received a total of 172 new referrals 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.
  - 59 young people engaged in the Steps to Work Programme in partnership with Stockport Council, with 13 supported into employment in the past year.
  - Successful Holiday Clubs have been delivered during every school holiday, with a total of 715 places delivered to young people ages 11–17 in 2022/23.
  - 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.

- 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 voids and delivered to 433 households in need, with 49 tonnes diverted from landfill.
- £200,000 funding was secured from SMBC'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 food supplies for Stockport pantries.

## 3 CONTEXT

### 3.1 National

- 3.1.1 Over the past year, a changing and challenging economic backdrop has exacerbated pre-existing societal inequalities nationally. As of 2023, 92% of UK households reported an increase to their cost of living<sup>1</sup>, with social housing tenants being the most affected by the cost-of-living crisis<sup>2</sup>.
- 3.1.1 54% of social-rented households have at least one member with a long-term illness or disability, while 40% have reported mental health conditions, 8% have experienced homelessness and 18% are lone-parent households. People aged 65+ are also more likely to be in social housing, with the most common length of time in the sector being 10–20 years (24%)<sup>3</sup> demonstrating long-term anchoring to their community and the services they provide.
- 3.1.2 49% of families in poverty also live in social housing<sup>4</sup>, are twice as likely to be unemployed and three times as likely to be economically inactive. Those in work are also more likely to be in insecure work or low pay<sup>5</sup>. 37% of those who are digitally excluded are also social housing tenants<sup>6</sup>.
- 3.1.3 The impact of cost-of-living increases varies between groups. For example, single women and ethnic minority households are facing expenses that are 50% higher relative to their male and white counterparts, when compared to their income. Research suggests this is partly related to pre-existing gender and racial inequalities which cause wage disparities in the labour market and uneven childcare responsibilities.<sup>7</sup> People with disabilities, and families with caring responsibilities are also more susceptible to poverty<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> [Cost of living crisis in the UK - Statistics & Facts | Statista](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Cost of living latest insights - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [English Housing Survey 2021 to 2022: social rented sector - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> [\(Measuring-Poverty-2020-Web.pdf \(socialmetricscommission.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Housing and employment - Learning and Work Institute](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Government Digital Inclusion Strategy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Losing the inflation race | New Economics Foundation](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Who is at risk of poverty? | CPAG](#)

- 3.1.4 The recently released Digital Poverty in the UK research for the national body Good Things Foundation/Deloitte indicated one in two households in socio-economic classes DE<sup>9</sup> are in digital poverty<sup>10</sup>. Households experiencing digital exclusion are likely to be high users of public services, and lifting households out of digital poverty contributes to lifting them out of poverty more generally.
- 3.1.5 Recent wars and civil unrest in countries such as Ukraine, Afghanistan and Syria have placed additional pressures on social housing providers nationally, supporting high volumes of refugees and asylum seekers to re-settle in Greater Manchester and further increasing the demand for a range of housing and integration services.

## 3.2 Regional Context

- 3.2.1 Recent launches of regional initiatives focus on inequalities in the following areas: health and wellbeing, digital, and employment.
- 3.2.2 The Greater Manchester (GM) Social Value Framework<sup>11</sup> 2022 outlines six priorities with relevant themes around strong local communities, and developing education, employment, and skills. This firmly links to the Greater Manchester Strategy 2021 – 2031<sup>12</sup> and the GM Joint Forward plan 2023 - 2028<sup>13</sup> published by the GM Integrated Care Partnership. Both strategies share goals around wellbeing, employment access and retention, and digital inclusion which offer personal, social, and economic benefits regionally. The digital need in the area is underpinned by the Greater Manchester Digital Blueprint for 2023 - 2026<sup>14</sup>.
- 3.2.3 As a partner, SHG's commitments align with the social value mission set out by the Greater Manchester Housing Partnership (GMHP), particularly around maximising positive impact on the economy and provision for those most in need. Their social value report 2020 – 2021 demonstrates the immense impact made by social housing providers in a single year<sup>15</sup>.

## 3.3 Local Context

- 3.3.1 While Stockport is not considered a deprived borough overall, there are pockets of high deprivation with figures highest in Brinnington and Lancashire Hill (Census 2021). The highest areas of socially rented housing in the area are Brinnington

---

<sup>9</sup> . A, B, C1, C2, D and E is a socio-economic classification for households. produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). DE households are those in the two lowest socio-economic classification categories – including households whose chief income earners are in semi-skilled occupations, unskilled manual occupations, casual occupations, the lowest grade occupations, unemployed with state benefits, or are state pensioners.

<sup>10</sup> Digital Poverty when they do not have digital skills, devices, connection and/or cannot get online regularly.

<sup>11</sup> [Social Value can make Greater Manchester a better place - Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/social-value)

<sup>12</sup> [The Greater Manchester Strategy 2021-2031 Summary \(aboutgreatermanchester.com\)](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/strategy)

<sup>13</sup> GM Join Forward Plan, 2023–28, Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership, p. 9 – 11.

<sup>14</sup> [Greater Manchester Digital Blueprint 2023-26 \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/digital-blueprint)

<sup>15</sup> Delivering Positive Change Across GM, GMHP Social Value Report 2020 – 2021.

(56.5%), Central, Portwood and Shaw Heath (43.6%), Adswold (38.8%) and Offerton West (29.7%)<sup>16</sup>.

Stockport now has the biggest gap in deprivation between the most (Brinnington) and least deprived (Bramhall) wards in Greater Manchester<sup>17</sup> and is the 8<sup>th</sup> most polarised borough in England<sup>18</sup> with inequalities in employment, life expectancy and digitisation<sup>19</sup>. Stockport's ageing population is greater than the GM average<sup>20</sup>, with the most deprived areas seeing the most rapid increase in births alongside this<sup>21</sup>. Stockport also presents a higher percentage of young people with Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) than the North West and England.<sup>22</sup>

Over the last 12 months there has been an increase in residents presenting for financial and crisis support, particularly in Brinnington and Central, with JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment) 2022 figures reporting nearly 35,000 people to be affected by income deprivation. Your Local Pantry has seen the highest number of visits since January 2021 and a 47% increase compared to pre-Covid<sup>23</sup>. Commitment to place-based interventions continues to be of high priority, with plans to scale up delivery of a person-centred neighbourhood model<sup>24</sup>.

- 3.3.2 Locally, 83% of working age benefit claims in Stockport are linked to ill health or disability<sup>25</sup>, with increasing levels of mental health concerns since the Covid-19 pandemic and cost-of-living crisis particularly for younger women, and those with a disability or financial vulnerabilities. The #BeeWell survey (2021/22) reported low mental wellbeing (18%) and low social satisfaction (20%) amongst young people, particularly for girls, those on free school meals, SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and those who identify as LGBTQ+. Most recent JSNA reports (2022) present increasing diagnosis rates of mental health and wellbeing concerns, particularly anxiety and depression diagnoses. These issues appear to worsen with increasing deprivation rates<sup>26</sup>, including cases of severe mental health conditions. The One Stockport Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2023 – 2030) aims to address such challenges, in which public services will be called upon to play a significant role.
- 3.3.3 The One Stockport plan targets this local need in their 10-year plan, including ambitions around 'confident and empowered communities' and increasing opportunity, skills, health, and happiness. This is supported by The Cultural Strategy 2022 - 2025; bringing in a £2.6 million Cultural Development Fund to connect communities and promote health and wellbeing through culture and

<sup>16</sup> [Tenure of household - Census Maps, ONS](#)

<sup>17</sup> Census, 2021.

<sup>18</sup> [The Stockport Council Plan - Stockport Council](#)

<sup>19</sup> [One Stockport | All together as one](#)

<sup>20</sup> Census, 2021.

<sup>21</sup> Stockport Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), Mental Health and Wellbeing, 2022, p.10

<sup>22</sup> Stockport Family Partnership Board Update, July 2023.

<sup>23</sup> RAS SitRep Meeting Notes, May 2023

<sup>24</sup> GM Join Forward Plan, 2023–28, Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership, p.15

<sup>25</sup> Stockport Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), The Health Gap, 2020, p. 11

<sup>26</sup> Stockport Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), Mental Health and Wellbeing, 2022, p.3

creativity<sup>27</sup>.

- 3.3.4 Stockport Council's Social Value Charter outlines five shared priorities<sup>28</sup> that align with SHG aims for social investment including community empowerment, resilience, and targeted support.

### 3.4 Stockport Homes Context

- 3.4.1 From its mission of 'One team, Transforming lives', to its embedded company values, social investment is at the centre of SHG's business model. The growth of SHG's Charitable Community Benefit Society, SKylight (formerly 'Foundations' established in 2018), is indicative of the continued positive impact and high demand for services.
- 3.4.2 Stockport Homes Group (SHG) is a lead organisation in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) 'Digital Inclusion Pilot'; partnering with BT/Openreach to tackle their approach to accessible connectivity for social housing residents.
- 3.4.3 This Strategy complements the objectives set out in SHG's Customer Voice and Influence Strategy, particularly Objectives 2 and 3 focussing on wider community engagement and modernising strategic engagement. It also aligns with SHG's EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) strategy, including Objective 4 (supporting independent living and safe, engaged, and inclusive communities) and Objective 3 (understanding the diverse needs of our customers). There are also clear links with the Ageing Well and Civil Society Support Strategy, in supporting aims in reducing social isolation and financial exclusion and enhancing wellbeing and social value through funding streams.
- 3.4.4 Six principles underpinning the objectives and delivery of the Supporting Communities Strategy have been retained from the previous Strategy:
- A place based, tailored approach to working with communities.
  - Always using customer/community insight and evidence to inform decision making.
  - Partnership working to maximise positive outcomes, including through procurement.
  - Proactively seek external funding sources and resources for all projects, to maximise outcomes from SHG's social investment.
  - Adopting a sustainable LIFE (Lead, Influence, Follow and Exit) model to projects
  - Using ASPIRE values to ensure social investment decisions are ambitious, innovative and delivered to an excellent standard.
- 3.4.5 Where SHG has a concentration of homes in a neighbourhood (for example Brinnington, Offerton, Adswold/Bridgehall) it will most often seek to be the lead agency in delivering social investment, providing a dynamic and ambitious approach in line with its aims and ASPIRE<sup>17</sup> values. On some themes where

<sup>27</sup> [Culture Stockport, Stockport Cultural Strategy 2022-25](#)

<sup>28</sup> [Stockport Social Value Charter, Stockport Council](#)

partners have more expertise than SHG, for example health, social investment will be directed to support partners most in touch with local communities.

Social investment is at the core of SHG's work. In addition to the core housing services investment in customers and communities, many added value services are delivered through external funding. This includes the commission generated by collection of water rates, external grant funding and income from contracts. For example, Motiv8, Rough Sleeper Initiative and GM Housing First projects all bring income and ensure SHG maximises investment in customers and communities. Gift Aid from Stockport Homes, Three Sixty and Viaduct to SKylight has provided a significant financial contribution, combined with more emphasis on income generating opportunities, such as, to a lesser degree, sales of high value items donated to the furniture recycling project.

- 3.4.6 This Strategy outlines the ambitions for these services going forward, with a strong awareness of the financial pressures on SHG and partners. All social investment opportunities are evaluated and delivered on a strong financial footing, with a clear understanding of the cost to SHG and a long-term sustainable plan for sourcing funding.

## 4 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

### 4.1 OBJECTIVE ONE: SUPPORT HOUSEHOLDS TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF THE RISING COST OF LIVING

High levels of inflation resulted in higher than usual rent and service charge increases for the 2023/24 financial year. Based on September 2023 inflation levels, rents could increase by a further 7.7 per cent from April 2024 (under the CPI+1% current rent policy). It is essential that customers, particularly those not receiving housing costs benefits, are supported to meet the cost of these increases.

Information sharing by frontline teams in monthly SHG cost of living meetings and Borough-wide data shared in the Council's Resident Advice & Support meetings indicate a significant increase in demand from households in need, many of whom have never accessed support before. By providing a wide range of co-ordinated support to some of the most vulnerable households in the Borough, SHG is reducing demand on partner agencies such as health and social care.

SHG works closely with Stockport Council as one of its 'Trusted Partners' and has benefited from allocations from the Household Support Grant to support furniture, pantries, energy advice and Money Advice teams with most vulnerable households. This funding is temporary, and decisions are continuously being made about eligibility for services to make best use of limited resources.

Linked to the increase in demand and uncertain food supply, an options appraisal has been completed for the pantries to ensure affordable food is focussed on those households in most need. An ambitious Furniture Business Plan has been developed to grow the service to meet demand for furnished tenancies and generate more income from furniture recycling to reinvest in the project.

Energy Advice supports those most vulnerable to fuel poverty, offering help with tariffs, energy efficiency, addressing fuel debt, and delivering support funding to eligible households. Demand has changed due to the cost of living crisis and is now more focussed on debt and support funding than changing suppliers.

Managed Migration (i.e. moving all working age legacy benefit claimants over to Universal Credit) has started in Stockport. This is likely to be a significant change and challenge for some households, who will be offered targeted support with the transition by the Money Advice Team.

#### **Objective One actions:**

- Deliver ambitious furniture business plan to expand number of households supported with furniture poverty via furnished tenancy and recycling services.
- Deliver outcomes from pantry Options Appraisal to ensure a sustainable offer is delivered which contributes to meeting the needs of households experiencing food poverty.
- Ensure Money Advice services focus support on those on Managed Migration
- Deliver targeted energy advice to households in most need, using learning from the household support grant funding and liaison with partners
- Work closely with Stockport Council to review and improve working relationships to ensure smooth transition between services for vulnerable customers.
- Develop and implement clear plans to support customers with cost of living if household support grant funding ceases.
- Identify and access external funding to support households wherever possible, making best use of SHG resources to focus on those most in need.

**Objective One outcome: A higher than average level of tenancy sustainment and customers report improved ability to deal with financial issues.**

## **4.2 OBJECTIVE TWO: PROGRESS CUSTOMERS INTO EMPLOYMENT AS A KEY ROUTE OUT OF POVERTY**

The priority remains to progress customers into quality, sustainable employment, as well as providing excellent training that inspires customers to begin a 'learning journey'. The focus on supporting customers furthest from the employment market to reduce their barriers to work continues, with Motiv8 retaining its focus on those over the age of 18 presenting with multiple complex needs. Following on from the success of the original Motiv8 programme (2016 – 2023 funded by ESF and the Big Lottery), the DWP<sup>29</sup> have now granted funds to the partnership to continue a small, focussed service from 10<sup>th</sup> April 2023 for 12 months. This programme is supporting those identified not in employment, training or education who present with complex barriers preventing them from moving forward with their lives. In addition to this cohort,

---

<sup>29</sup> Department for Work and Pensions



the over-50s have also been identified as a key demographic across GM. Specific support will be tailored to this group, recognising needs around identifying transferable skills to move into new sectors of the economy. SHG's role as an employer is detailed in the People & OD Strategy.

**Objective Two actions:**

- Work with local employers to deliver bespoke sector-based events with guaranteed job interviews for customers.
- Work with Athena partners to secure funding via UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) to provide services to the residents of Stockport.
- Work with partners to secure funding streams to deliver innovative services aimed at reducing the impact of worklessness and poverty.
- Develop sustainable networks with partners to create opportunities for customers to access employment, training and education opportunities.

**Objective Two outcome: An expanded employment, skills and training offer resulting in an increase in customers accessing secure and sustainable employment.**

#### **4.3 OBJECTIVE THREE: REDUCING DIGITAL POVERTY BY SUPPORTING CUSTOMERS TO ACCESS AFFORDABLE DEVICES, CONNECTIVITY AND SKILLS TRAINING.**

The 2022 SHG roadshow identified 25% of survey respondents were not online, a finding endorsed by the University of Liverpool as 'robust research'.

SHG has played an integral part in the delivery of an innovative pilot with GMCA, local authorities, Internet Service Providers and housing organisations. The purpose of the pilot was to research affordable connectivity options for households on low incomes, including social tariffs. Insight gathered through the customer roadshow revealed around 25% of respondents were not online, mainly older people and those with disabilities.

Another emerging digitally excluded group is the increasing refugee population, for whom language is an additional barrier to accessing online services. SHG therefore needs to enhance its commitment to providing information and support in formats which can be accessed by customers who are not online. This aim has been boosted by key digital partner Start Point being awarded £250k Lottery funding to extend the network of digital champions across the Borough.

The digital inclusion actions in this Strategy form part of SHG's wider Digital Strategy, which will explore large scale affordable connectivity options for customers such as wifi in blocks and temporary accommodation.

**Objective Three actions:**

- Support Start Point to deliver three-year Lottery funded Digital Champions programme through steering group to benefit SHG households in digital poverty.
- Seek external funding for additional skills sessions delivery in areas identified as high need.

- Focus digital support particularly on older customers who are least likely to be online.
- Gather improved insight on digital access to services for ethnic minority groups<sup>30</sup> and use this to improve take-up.
- Embed corporate commitment to provide information in a range of formats, including non-digital, to meet customer needs.
- Remain an active partner in Greater Manchester digital inclusion work, including contributing to developing a strategy for the group.

**Objective Three outcome: Reduction in customers reporting they are offline compared to the 2022 digital survey and increased digital engagement with SHG services and information.**

#### **4.4 OBJECTIVE FOUR: STRENGTHENING LINKS WITH HEALTH PARTNERS TO IMPROVE WELLBEING WITHIN SHG HOUSEHOLDS**

SHG is committed to playing a greater role in reducing the Borough's health inequalities. Mapping of health and wellbeing work within SHG during 2022 clearly shows significant staff time is spent either directly or indirectly supporting customers with health-related issues. Whilst there are positive examples of close working with health partners, particularly in homeless services, it has proved difficult to engage with strategic health partners to deliver more substantial projects. A focus for this strategy will therefore be to engage with senior health partners to develop closer work on projects where health and housing can both add value.

Mental wellbeing is the focus of the majority of SHG's social investment. This forms a core part of many services including Temporary Accommodation, Housing Options, Independent Living and the TPA (The Prevention Alliance). It includes practical support with maintaining a tenancy, signposting and accompanying customers to more specialist health services, as well as referrals to the SHG free counselling service for tenants. This includes recognition of the specific health needs of refugee and asylum seeker households, where SHG could act in an advocacy role where health services could be better tailored to meet need. The long-term counselling contract was re-procured in 2022 with an allowance for more complex cases. It was anticipated these would comprise a third of customers, but patterns of demand have significantly shifted, with complex cases making up around 80% of demand and consequently a long waiting list has developed. The contract is due for renewal by September 2024, prior to which the model will be reviewed to identify ways in which this shift in demand could be accommodated within the existing budget.

Stockport has an older population than the national average and SHG tenants have an older profile still. Actions to ensure more people are supported to stay

<sup>30</sup> Protecting Minority Ethnic Communities Online (PRIME) Workshop Report: Tackling racialized inequalities and discrimination in the design and delivery of online social housing services

well and live at home for as long as possible are covered in SHG's Ageing Well Strategy 2021-24. The Ageing in Place Pathfinder (AIPP) targets Stockport's increasingly ageing population in its most deprived areas, led by GM Ageing Hub with the Manchester School of Architecture. As one of eight lead organisations, SHG has received funding of £300k to deliver the project in Brinnington for the next three years; collaborating with residents and local networks to deliver community-led engagement projects focusing on 'ageing well'.<sup>31</sup>

#### **Objective Four actions:**

- Engage with key senior health partners in Stockport to deliver joint objectives to benefit those households most impacted by poor health.
- Support local and national health related events through publicity to targeted households.
- Review and re-procure the SHG counselling contract to ensure it meets the needs of tenants.
- Support delivery of Stockport Council's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, in particular:
  - The Whole School Approach to mental wellbeing through holiday clubs
  - Review youth mental toughness sessions to ensure format and content makes maximum contribution to the mental wellbeing of young people in SHG neighbourhoods
  - Support mental health based civil society groups to access longer term funding to sustain their work.
- Engage with customers who are refugees to better understand how to signpost to accessible health related services, including counselling.
- Develop healthy food cooking courses and recipes for pantry members.

**Objective Four outcome: Customers report increased health and wellbeing from engaging in services and activities delivered or supported by SHG.**

## **4.5 OBJECTIVE FIVE: EMBED SOCIAL VALUE INTO EVALUATION OF PROJECTS AND PROCUREMENT**

Social investment at SHG is funded by both internal and external sources. Some examples are listed below:

- Core business, e.g. Money Advice Team, Independent Living Team, Stockport Homes Community Fund.
- Income generation, e.g. Gift Aid contributions from Stockport Homes, Three Sixty, Viaduct to SKylight, water monies commission.
- External tenders and contracts secured, e.g. TPA, GM Housing First.
- External grant funding, e.g. Household Support Grant, Big Lottery.
- Procurement and supply chain, e.g. procuring local businesses, social value measures in contracts.
- Assets, e.g. investment in community centres.

<sup>31</sup> [The Ageing In Place Pathfinder - Greater Manchester Combined Authority](#)

Work on social value has progressed less quickly than anticipated. Discussions with Stockport Council about their approach to securing social value from procurement has led to positive commitment by the Assurance team to focus on this over the next 12 months and beyond. A new Procurement Strategy is planned for 2024 and ambitions related to securing social value through procurement will be incorporated into that Strategy.

The other aspect of this work is to review SHG's approach to measuring social value delivered through in-house projects. Social value can be used to measure how effectively projects deliver benefits to individuals and communities and may demonstrate value for money which cannot be seen when looking solely at financial inputs/outputs. There are different ways to measure these social value outcomes, but an approach adopted by many housing providers is to use the HACT (Housing Association Charitable Trust) UK Social Value Bank. This is a tool to measure and demonstrate the positive impact SHG's services have on people and communities. Social value measures will only be introduced for projects where it is practical to do so, and will create new insight to assist with funding bids, decisions about sustainability etc.

The equality, diversity and inclusion review of the strategy also identified a need to review the impact of social value work on minority groups in greater detail to be clear if there are gaps in access or opportunities.

**Objective Five actions:**

- Review approach taken by other local partner, then agree and embed clear approach to securing social value from procurement.
- Agree and embed clear approach to measuring social value generated by SHG services.
- Link with the Civil Society Strategy to assess the impact of SHG's social investment work on equalities, diversity and inclusion through community group support, funding opportunities and local connections, as identified in the EDI report 2022/23.

**Objective Five 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 best practice whilst making best use of resources.**

## 5 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

5.1 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, rather

than considering it as a technical measure. Changes have been made to the Strategy in line with these findings.

## **6 LINKS TO POLICIES**

6.1 This Strategy links to several other SHG Strategies and Policies:

- Ageing Well Strategy
- Customer Access Strategy
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy
- Customer Voice and Influence Strategy
- Environmental Services Strategy
- Civil Society Support Strategy
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
- People and OD Strategy
- Marketing and Communication Strategy
- Value for Money Strategy
- Delivery Plan

It is also linked to Stockport Council Strategies around Place Based Integration, Local Plans, and All Age Living.

## **7 ACTION PLAN**

7.1 All actions within this Strategy have been developed into an action plan attached at Appendix One. Targets for each outcome will be identified and reported by individual service areas responsible.

## **8 OWNERSHIP, MONITORING & REVIEW**

8.1 The Strategy will be monitored by the Customer Focus Committee and SHG Board. An annual impact assessment will be reported to Board and customers, highlighting outcomes and achievements.