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## MEMBER COMMITTEE UPDATE REPORT

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### 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report contains items that fall outside the significance of a full, individual report but are areas Members may find of interest given their wider impact on the community. Members are invited to comment on or question any of the items covered.

### 2 SHG FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

- 2.1 SHG has engaged with flood risk management (FRM) specialists Enzygo to identify and understand flood risks in the Borough. 47 properties were identified as being at pluvial zone 3 risk, and 13 properties at fluvial zone 3 risk. This equates to 99% of SHG properties having no perceived risk of a 1 in 100-year flooding event. However, SHG recognises that weather patterns are being impacted by climate change, and as such will resurvey periodically to ensure ongoing climate change resilience in this area.
- 2.2 SHG has taken a proactive approach to FRM, implementing a schedule of visual and CCTV inspection of 10 sites under riparian rights obligations. In addition, SHG are entering the 3rd of a 5-year improvement programme to install a range of individual property flood prevention measures including door barriers, drain non-return valves and anti-flood air bricks at those properties with the highest risk.

### 3 HOUSING OPTIONS FOR OLDER PEOPLE (HOOP)

- 3.1 In Quarter 3, SHG's dedicated Housing Options for Older People service (HOOP) provided bespoke advice and information on 409 occasions to customers and internal & external colleagues. The HOOP Officer works closely in partnership with Adult Social Care, Stockport Support Hub, Viaduct Healthcare, SWA, Disability Stockport and step-down facilities throughout the Borough.
- 3.2 During the quarter, the service made 17 referrals for extra care housing and provided information and advice on 10 further cases. Referrals for extra care housing can prevent the escalation to costly residential care provision. The project also provided advice and support to 11 customers regarding benefits, money management and affordability, seven focused on advice relating to adaptations and eight regarding other issues to facilitate independent living, for example accessing care or providing information on the Carecall service.

- 3.3 The service supported five people in hospital with step-down accommodation facilitating a move into suitable accommodation, thereby preventing delayed discharges.

## **4 MENTAL HEALTH AND HOUSING SUPPORT WORKER (MHHSW)**

- 4.1 SHG fund a dedicated Mental Health and Housing Support Worker post to support customers experiencing poor mental health. Between October and December 2023, 35 referrals were received from external agencies and SHG. The MHHSW provides advice and support directly, as well as supporting access to health services and other specialist provision. Between April and November 2023, 149 onward referrals were made. The MHHSW also provides advice and guidance to other SHG colleagues around mental health issues and navigating mental health pathways.

## **5 BEACON COUNSELLING SERVICE**

- 5.1 The free counselling service commissioned by SHG offered to SHG tenants and The Prevention Alliance (TPA) customers is delivered by local provider, Beacon Counselling. The service completed the first full year of delivery in September 2023. In that time, 415 referrals were received, and 1,087 counselling sessions were conducted. This included 390 assessments, 346 lower-level counselling sessions and 351 complex case counselling sessions. The most common presenting issues included anxiety and panic attacks, followed by depression as a result of ill health and long-term sickness.

Customers accessing the service have commented on how much it has helped them:

*"The counsellor has been excellent; she's sat and listened to what I was saying and she never judged me."*

*"Excellent service and very compassionate."*

*"My counselling gave me confidence in myself and reassurance in what I do."*

In Q3, 69 referrals were received, and 164 sessions delivered. This includes 41 assessments, 32 lower-level counselling sessions and 91 complex case sessions.

## **6 INDEPENDENT LIVING UPDATE**

- 6.1 The Independent Living Team are completing the annual programme of Winter Welfare visits to 718 of the most vulnerable, older customers across the Borough. The purpose of the visit is to ensure customers are keeping warm and well during the winter period. A range of topics are discussed with the customers including energy costs, benefit checks, money advice, mobility and adaptation needs, falls prevention, flu jabs and fire safety. Customers are also offered on-going welfare calls. The visit is supported by a pack of information, collated in partnership with Council colleagues and a range of other partners, which is left with the customer.

All visits will be completed by the end of January. 68% of visits carried out last year resulted in a support need being identified that was either addressed by SHG's internal services or referred to partner agencies.

Image - Content of the Winter Welfare Pack.



## 7 HOMELESS HOSPITAL ADVOCATE (HHA)

7.1 The Homeless Hospital Advocate (HHA) works closely with the Pennine Care mental health inpatient wards at Stepping Hill Hospital. This service encompasses ward visits from the point of admission to referrals into SHG Housing Options Team and continued support when the individual is resettled into the community.

7.2 In Quarter 3, 12 referrals were received with a variety of outcomes achieved.

- 3 x discharged to family and friends
- 1 x discharged to Temporary Accommodation
- 2 x remain in hospital
- 1 x returned to Housing Association property
- 1 x discharged to supported living accommodation
- 2 x Step Down Accommodation
- 1 x returned to their property with additional support from Homeless Prevention Team
- 1 x relocated out of area with the support of HHA & Safer Neighbourhoods Team due to issues relating to risk

## 8 FUNDING

8.1 The SHG dedicated Funding Officer provides a range of support to the VCFSE / Third Sector to assist in obtaining grant funding. This includes providing information on appropriate grants and advice and guidance on searching for funding. The Funding Officer supports with bid writing and reviewing grant applications developed by individual groups to ensure they meet the standards required to secure essential resources. Since April 2023, 65 bids have been

submitted and 31 have secured funding, excluding pending bids this is a 76% success rate.

## 8.2 Successful bids this quarter include:

- Make a Difference (MAD) who deliver the Stockport Women's and Girls Network (SWAGN). SHG have supported MAD to successfully access the Fusion 21 programme to set up both MAD and SWAGN as Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIOs) and access a follow on £10,000 development grant.
- Social Events Activities (SEA) are a group for people aged 50 years and over. SHG has supported SEA to secure their third successful National Lottery Awards for All grant totalling £4,400. This will provide a variety of group activities.
- Whitehill Allotments made their first grant bid successfully securing £1,000 from the ASDA Foundation.
- Groups including Social Events Activities, Brereton Court, Webb Lane Allotments and Heaton Norris Pavilion Committee were each awarded Forever Manchester Christmas grants after working with the funding officer.

## 9 SKILLS & EMPLOYMENT

- 9.1 A wide range of training events and activities were delivered in Quarter 3. In recognition of the fact that the festive period can be a challenging time for some customers, the team delivered higher numbers of health and well-being focussed activities with 15 sessions delivered including walking groups, stress busting sessions and therapeutic arts and crafts sessions. The Team also delivered a range of employment focused sessions including Manual Handling, First Aid at Work, Safeguarding and Food Hygiene providing customers with a Level 2 qualification and the Introduction to Volunteering course. In total 139 customers received training across 245 accredited and non-accredited courses. The externally funded Multiply course was also delivered to seven learners.
- 9.2 The seven-week Introduction to Housing Course, which provides a comprehensive introduction to working within the housing sector, was well attended again this quarter. This was the second course delivered in 2023, with 15 learners completing the accredited course to date. The People & OD Team are currently reviewing whether the course can be adapted and delivered to new employees joining SHG.
- 9.3 The Employment team received 263 referrals during the quarter and supported 45 customers into employment. 857 individual outcomes were achieved with customers as part of their bespoke employment & training action plan, ranging from attendance at the job club, interview preparation, CV writing, attendance at training and volunteering opportunities and job searching.
- 9.4 Locally unemployment figures have increased this quarter, a trend mirrored in both GM and nationally. There is a particular increase in the unemployment figures for the 18-24 age group. During this quarter, the Employment Team have successfully placed two young men from highly complex backgrounds into employment as part of the Steps to Work programme commissioned by the Council.

- 9.5 The Employment team supported the Council's Inclusive Jobs Fair held in Offerton in October, with 22 referrals taken at the event. In November, Mims Davies, the Minister for Social Mobility, Youth and Progression, visited Cornerstone to gain a greater understanding of the bespoke youth offer SHG deliver in partnership with the DWP. SHG has gifted the DWP a regular workspace at Cornerstone to deliver the Movement to Work Youth Hub. During the visit, the minister met the young people, DWP staff, and members of the Employment team to hear examples of the successful joint work that has been undertaken.
- 9.6 Hazel Grove High School held a 'World of Work' event in November. A member of the Employment Team attended to promote careers in housing to the Year 9 students. This involved sharing information on a typical day and being part of a Q & A panel. 270 students took part in the event and the team have been asked to complete further sessions in the future.
- 9.7 Commissioned by Brinnington Big Local, the team continue to deliver the Job Fit programme in Brinnington. To date 14 customers have engaged with the programme, one customer is currently on a work placement, three have completed training sessions and two have secured employment. Many of the customers supported by this programme are furthest from the employment market and intensive work has been undertaken in relation to confidence building, upskilling and employment and careers advice.
- 9.8 Working in partnership with Athena, SKYlight has been successful in securing the contract to deliver the Support to Succeed contract commissioned by GMCA and funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. SKYlight will deliver the programme in Stockport with other housing providers delivering in other areas of Greater Manchester. The programme is aimed at those who are economically inactive, over the age of 19 and not currently engaged on another DWP mandated employment programme. There is a particular focus on the over 50s cohort as part of this programme. The contract will commence in January 2024 and ends on the 31 March 2025.

## **10 MUTUAL EXCHANGE – EMPOWERING AND INFORMING CUSTOMERS**

- 10.1 Saturday 11th November saw colleagues from SHG come together at Bridgehall Community Centre to provide an information morning on the benefits of the mutual exchange process. The event was advertised to current tenants with over 60 customers attending and the purpose of the event was to emphasize the benefits in choosing mutual exchange to move home whilst also highlighting the demand and supply of social housing within Stockport and the limited opportunities most current tenants have in securing a transfer.
- 10.2 At the event the Mutual Exchange team talked through the registration process; House Exchange demonstrated the national mutual exchange service which is free of charge to Stockport Homes tenants; Housing Officers and Independent Living Officers talked about their role and the support they can give tenants to support moves; and Three Sixty Living attended to give advice on how to best 'market' your property to attract more interest similar, to how estate agents stage properties as part of the selling process.

- 10.3 Through the recently launched Mutual Exchange online system, tenants can use photographs to showcase key features of their property. The system also suggests possible mutual exchanges and the customer is the driver of the process, able to make direct contact with any proposed possible matches.
- 10.4 The event received positive feedback from the customers who attended and applications to join the mutual exchange service have since been received. Other customers who were already registered have updated their application, following the session, with property photos. This session was held following a similar session earlier in the year held on a weekday at Cornerstone.
- 10.5 Further sessions will be rolled out over the coming months to promote the service. 2022/23 saw 124 mutual exchanges achieved. As at January 2024, 145 mutual exchanges have been completed and this figure will continue to grow demonstrating the success in moving homes through this way.

## **11 INDEPENDENT LIVING TEAM - AGEING WELL PROJECTS**

- 11.1 The Age Friendly work in Brinnington in partnership with the GM Ageing Hub and Manchester Metropolitan University is progressing. £40k of funding has been secured from the Dunhill Foundation for a research project around age-friendly social housing and supporting 'ageing in place'. In addition, funding has been secured from a charitable organisation for an Ageing in Place Project (AIPP), with SKylight receiving 200k over three years. It has been agreed with the University that the smaller 'Dunhill' project be regarded as a sub-project of the main AIPP with resources combined to maximise efficiencies.
- 11.2 The two-year research project will focus on supporting healthy ageing and alleviating social isolation in older adults through events and activities. The AIPP is a GM-wide initiative comprising of projects that test 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. Critical to the success of the AIPP is the co-ordination and support of a steering group comprising older people within the local area and key partners who identify and set key objectives.
- 11.3 A wide range of activities and objectives have been achieved so far, recent activities include:
- Supporting the local Art Group to become a constituted group, resulting in successful bids to obtain grant funding. The team have also supported the group to build relationships with the five local care homes with care home residents participating in different art projects with the group. A 'forget-me-not' board representing the residents of the care home and art group is their current joint project.
  - A Wellbeing Day was held in conjunction with ABL (A Better Life), this event was to educate people around issues such as nutrition, health and maintaining well-being alongside delivery of a complimentary Yoga session. Slow Cookers were donated to attendees with healthy eating recipe books.
  - International Day of Older People was celebrated in the Community Centre, with thirty people enjoying a curry and quiz. It was a huge success and has been requested as a regular feature for the community going forward.

- Several warm spaces have been supported by the AIPP and the groups have been provided with pots, pans and cooking equipment enabling them to deliver free hot meals to the local community. All the warm spaces have been well attended; Life Leisure have asked that AIPP take over their warm space in February 2024.
- A Year One learning event hosted by the GM Ageing Hub and MMU took place in October with the Assistant Director of SKYlight representing Stockport and housing providers on the panel. Two Brinnington residents attended and found the event a great learning opportunity enabling them to meet residents from other pathfinder projects. As a result of this, they have been invited to visit other Pathfinder areas.

11.4 Community Audits for year two of the project have commenced with the team concentrating on completing the audits with older people living in general needs properties including the tower blocks. Further plans for year two include improvements to the communal gardens within Conway Towers, Brecon Towers and Ludlow Towers and the creation of a community garden at First House linking in with the local community groups, the café and the pantry.

11.5 The Council's UK Shared Prosperity Funding is supporting the development of the Brinnington Circle <https://hmrcircle.org.uk/> with a £20k grant. This will be another ideal opportunity for SKYlight to work closely with the Council and Circle to develop social networks for older people.

11.6 The most recent steering group meeting was well attended with a wide range of partners and residents agreeing projects to be delivered in Year Two. These projects will focus on Social Participation, Community Support and Health Services, Outdoor Spaces and Buildings.

## 12 MARKETING

12.1 SHG has been named 'Landlord of the Year' in the Affordable Housing Awards 2023.



12.2 These National awards are judged by experts, drawn from a wide range of organisations, including housing associations, local authorities, and government bodies from across the UK.

12.3 The award gives recognition for the hard work and achievements of the team at SHG - at a time when service delivery and support for customers is more important than ever. With a commitment to being much more than a landlord, SHG supports opportunities for customers and communities to thrive in increasingly difficult economic times and involve customers in every aspect of service delivery.

12.4 Three Sixty won the title of 'Most Innovative Contractor' in the Building Innovation Award. These awards recognise and celebrate pioneering individuals and organisations that are taking construction in the UK to the next level.

12.5 Home Marketing was 'Highly Commended' in the Stockport Business Awards, in the category of 'Best Internal Marketing Team'. These awards celebrate business excellence and the business community within the Stockport Borough.



## 13 CONCLUSION

13.1 Social Housing is going through a very challenging time with increasing homelessness and much greater expectations from customers, stakeholders and regulators. Where this will lead is currently unknown, but SHG continues to strive to deliver excellent services and be a sector leader while maximising its contribution to Stockport in the widest sense.