

Delivery Plan

2023-24

Outcomes Report



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Introduction

This is the third outcomes report for the Delivery Plan covering the five-year period from 2021 to 2026. During 2023-24, a Mid-Term Review of the Delivery Plan took place in collaboration with colleagues at Stockport Council. By undertaking a review part way through the five-year plan, the Objectives can be reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose and enable any key changes to be incorporated into a refreshed version.

The format of the Delivery Plan has changed following the Mid-Term Review to ensure it is more accessible to customers and other stakeholders. This Outcomes Report for 2023-24 follows the format of the updated Delivery Plan and contains high-level information to provide stakeholders with assurance that the intended outcomes and successes are being delivered.

The social housing sector has changed over the last few years and continues to evolve with a new approach to Consumer Regulation from 1 April 2024, a strengthened Housing Ombudsman Service and further changes coming to ensure the homes that customers live in are safe and well-maintained. There is also more focus on ensuring services are delivered in a transparent manner, that vulnerabilities are properly considered and that there are a range of ways in which customers can get involved in shaping service delivery and having their voice heard.

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. Stockport Homes work closely with Stockport Council to deliver actions which address the housing crisis. This includes supporting people who are homeless, encouraging rightsizing, and building more new homes across Stockport. We have a strong track record of partnership working which ensures that the neighbourhoods and communities we manage thrive and are places that people want to live. Many customers are facing financial pressures due to the cost of living, and we offer a range of support services to help people in different ways.

As a customer focussed organisation, we strive to be one of the sector's top performers as we believe customers deserve the very best services. When we benchmark our performance and satisfaction outcomes to other housing providers in Greater Manchester or nationally we are an upper quartile performer and, in some cases, we are at the top of the list. This reflects our commitment to service excellence and ensuring we deliver positive outcomes for customers. We feel it is important to benchmark our performance to also ensure the sector stays focussed on keeping standards high.

Stockport Homes Group

Stockport Homes Group (SHG) is the collective name for four, socially responsible interdependent companies within the Council family of companies. What makes us unique is our vision: one where entrepreneurship and innovation go hand in hand with social impact and a constant focus on delivering excellent services and outcomes for our customers. Our model ensures that social housing services in Stockport have a focussed approach, with specialist services in place to really focus on the customer first, to transform lives, as well as focus on value for money outcomes in a backdrop of ever-increasing costs and stakeholder demands and expectations. Our outcomes highlighted throughout this report demonstrate our commitment to delivering excellent core services, as well as aiding the Council and other partners in reducing demands and costs on their own services.

¹ Via Housemark

We manage approximately 11,500 homes on behalf of Stockport Council and nearly 1,000 homes that Stockport Homes own outright. We employ around 750 staff, have over 30,000 customers, and a turnover of £72m per year.

We're proud to be a landlord where entrepreneurship and innovation go hand in hand with social impact. Our group structure allows us to deliver more services and create efficiencies and economies of scale. This enables us to deliver key services which our customers value, such as homelessness support, employment initiatives, money advice services as well as telecare and private sector lettings. In a world of increasing demand but reducing resource we remain passionate about delivering services that go far beyond being a traditional landlord.

Our Mission, Aims and Values

SHG's Mission and Aims provide the strategic narrative to everything the companies do. The Values set out the culture and underpin the Mission and Aims.

SHG's Mission: One Team - Transforming Lives

Our Aims

Aim 1

Deliver excellent customer service, driven by customer feedback and experience



Aim 2

Provide safe, sustainable homes in neighbourhoods where communities can thrive



Aim 3

Contribute to making Stockport fairer by reducing inequality, poverty and supporting customers in all aspects of their lives



Aim 4

Maximise the impact of resources through growth, efficiency, and business transformation



Aim 5

Work collaboratively, influencing locally, regionally, and nationally to achieve more



Aim 6

Be an inclusive great place to work, where our values shine through everyone and everything we do



SHG's ASPIRE Values

Ambition

We have the ambition and courage to challenge, translating this into commercial success and brilliant outcomes for customers

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 deliver 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

Working with Stockport Council

As an ALMO, our relationship with the Council is fundamental to all that we do. We have a long-term Management Agreement with the Council in place, until 2042. Our plans are developed in line with the Council's strategic ambitions for the Borough to ensure we are aligned and working collaboratively to make best use of resources and ensure there is a strong focus on the provision of good quality social housing and excellent services for customers.

There are a range of Officer and Councillor liaison arrangements in place which ensure the work which SHG delivers is complementary to the ambitions of the Council and that together, we can ensure that we are creating opportunities for everyone.

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 2024-27

The 2024-27 Council Plan complements the One Stockport Borough Plan and outlines the key role the Council plays in supporting the Borough through the provision and delivery of effective and efficient services that are essential to everyday life. Over the next three years, the Council have four “Big Ambitions”.

These are:

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

There are two cross-cutting themes which are:

- ▶ Fair and Inclusive Stockport
- ▶ Climate Action Now

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.

This report will now outline how SHG has delivered against the six SHG Aims, noting key achievements and challenges as well as plans for the future.

Aim 1

Deliver excellent customer service, driven by customer feedback and experience



Key Objectives

- ▶ Ensure our customers have a positive experience with us and are satisfied with the service received
- ▶ Be a listening organisation that learns from complaints and drives forward improvement
- ▶ Hear our customers voice and enable that to shape service delivery – using data and insight along the way
- ▶ Ensure there are a range of ways for customers to access our services, including via digital channels
- ▶ Tailor our services by understanding specific needs and vulnerabilities and making reasonable adjustments

Measuring Success

- ▶ We will be able to show positive performance in the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and other key performance indicators
- ▶ We will be able to evidence how customers have shaped service delivery via engagement opportunities and customer feedback
- ▶ We can demonstrate how we have enabled a range of ways for a range of customers to receive services from us

Customer Access and Experience

SHG has a Customer Access Strategy in place which embodies SHG's commitment to strive for excellence in customer experience. There are a range of ways for customers to access our services. This includes in-person at our Head Office, phoning our One Number contact centre as well as via email and by using our website. We also offer webchat and customers can contact us via social media channels too. This range of options means customers can contact us in a way that best suits them and their needs.

During 2023-24, we interacted with customers in the following ways during a typical month

9,804
phone calls

2,881
emails

265
web chat

2,200
reception visitors

21,000
website views

587
web forms

Our performance during 2023-24 includes:

91.75%
calls answers

89.35%
of webchats
responded to within
five minutes

78.31%
of emails
responded to
within one day

To ensure our services are fully accessible, we provide interpreter and translation services to enable communication with customers that do not have English as a first language or use British Sign Language. Interpretation services can be offered on phone calls or face to face appointments. The fully accessible Stockport Homes website also enables content to be translated into different languages or displayed in different formats. Documents are translated upon request.

Across 2023-24, there were 1,698 interpretation sessions covering 18 different languages, of which the most popular languages were Farsi (661), Arabic (259) and Amharic (168). This included face to face interpreting and telephone conference calls. There were 32 British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation interactions with customers too.

In addition to this, interpretation services were provided by the Council to Ukrainian refugees housed within the Borough as part of the national 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme.

During 2023-24, a new Customer Charter was developed and launched across the business to set the standards for customer service delivery. This was complemented by Delivering Service Excellence training which has been provided to all customer-facing teams (345 staff trained). Following an external assessment, we have retained the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Standard for the 13th consecutive year.

Customer Voice

In addition to this, a new Customer Voice and Influence Strategy was approved and the actions within that are being delivered. This includes the creation of our new Customer ASPIRE Panel who will be key to our approach to co-regulation, customer assurance and scrutiny of service delivery moving forwards.

There are a range of ways which customers can engage with us and have their voice heard. During 2023-24, there were over 2,500 records of participation through a variety of customer engagement methods including panels, forums, focus groups, surveys and consultations.

We have also launched a new digital customer survey and engagement tool as part of our ongoing digital journey. The system enables us to obtain real-time customer feedback through targeted transactional surveys and communications. Since its implementation in August 2023, 76% of 'primary contact' customers have actively engaged with the platform by clicking on a link in a message, starting a survey, or updating their contact details. This has provided us with valuable feedback (both positive and negative) and enabled actions for improvement to be identified and taken forward.

Work to develop a Customer Vulnerability Policy also started to ensure there is clear guidance on how customer needs and vulnerabilities will be considered when delivering services and how these should be recorded on our systems. Staff training will be rolled

out to ensure that conversations take place with customers to understand how our services may need to be tailored more specifically to meet a customer's needs.

During 2023-24, 362 customers participated in the annual Customer Roadshow, where staff visited estates and asked customers to share what matters most to them about their homes, their neighbourhoods, and the services Stockport Homes provides. Clear themes emerged from their feedback, which has been used to shape the new Customer Charter.

A key theme in customer feedback is the importance of feeling safe at home. This includes concerns about Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and the cleanliness of the local area. These insights have informed changes to service delivery, including the introduction of a new Neighbourhood Resolution Officer in the Anti-Social Behaviour Service. There has also been a review of the Concierge Service and Caretaking Service Standards, which 382 customers have participated in. Additionally, a mobile patrol pilot project has been rolled out for the high-rise blocks.

Another important theme which has been highlighted by customers is the necessity of timely communication during repairs. Feedback from 125 customers about missed repair appointments has led to improvements in communication, including enhanced frequency and content of text reminders for repair appointments. This has been incorporated into a Repairs Service Review which saw 42 customers take part in focus groups and 761 provide feedback on proposed new repairs service standards.

The Building Safety Customer Panel identified six themes based on their experience of living in high-rise accommodation. These include emergency planning, improving communication to residents during incidents, lift maintenance, and communications during planned investment works. As a result of customer feedback, Stockport Homes has recruited a new Control Room and Emergency Planning Manager role to ensure the service meets customers' expectations and we are trialling new lift panel technology. Communications to customers during heating installation works at York Street were reviewed and improved, incorporating a Frequently Asked Questions guide and face-to-face drop-in sessions at the local community centre before, during, and after the works.

A working group of customers, together with an Independent Mentor, developed the Terms of Reference and Role Profiles for a new Customer 'ASPIRE Panel'. This panel further strengthens Stockport Homes' Accountability Framework and provides customers with an opportunity to monitor and challenge the organisation, offering a direct route to the Customer Focus Committee of the Board. Recruitment to the panel generated 210 expressions of interest and 57 applications, filling all 15 places available with a membership that is representative of the customer population.

The ASPIRE Panel will commission 'task and finish' scrutiny reviews in the future, but during 2023-24, our existing Customer Scrutiny Panel (CSP) continued to scrutinise our services and provide recommendations for improvement. During 2023-24, the CSP completed reviews on:

- ▶ Safer Neighbourhoods Service – to look at how easy it is for customers to report anti-social behaviour and how customer expectations are managed with regard to tackling ASB
- ▶ Complaints Service – to find out how customers can make a complaint, how easy this is to do and how effectively customers are communicated with throughout the complaint handling process.

Reports from all of the CSP reviews undertaken are reported to the Customer Focus Committee of the Board, including their Annual Report. The CSP have been involved in

a range of other work too, as outlined in the Annual Report. All of the CSP reports are available on the SHG website:

www.stockporthomes.org/my-home/get-involved/customer-scrutiny-panel/

Our performance in relation to Customer Voice and overall Customer Service for 2023-24:

KPI / TSM ³	Description	Year-End 2023-24	GM Average ⁴	HMK Average ⁵
TSM	Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with the overall service from their landlord	91.32%	72%	69.4%
TSM	Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord listens to tenants' views and acts upon them	89.75%	66%	58.9%
TSM	Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord keeps them informed about things that matter to them	92.65%	75%	69.5%
TSM	Proportion of respondents who report that they agree their landlord treats them fairly and with respect	93.63%	80%	76.3%

Customer Feedback

We know that sometimes, we don't always get things right, and at times, customers are dissatisfied with a service they have received and will want to make a complaint. We strive to understand and learn from what went wrong and how we can improve.

We have a dedicated Customer Feedback Team that handles complaints and works with colleagues to ensure the customer receives a thorough response and explanation. We have seen a reduction in overall complaints numbers during 2023-24 when compared to the previous year. We use complaints as opportunities to learn from customer experience and to shape service delivery moving forward. During 2023-24, we updated our Customer Feedback Policy to ensure it meets the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. We report back to our senior leaders each quarter in relation to complaints and changes made as a result.

We want to learn from complaints and analyse information to identify issues and trends in a more responsive way. Examples of learning from across 2023-24 include:

- ▶ Development of an improved process for identifying leaks and gaining access where needed, to ensure timelier resolutions and minimising impact on customers
- ▶ Logging mould washes as separate works orders to associated plastering and decorating works, to ensure that mould washes can proceed irrespective of whether the other works were convenient for the customer in the short-term
- ▶ Procuring a new sub-contractor for installation of uPVC doors given performance

³ Key Performance Indicator or a Tenant Satisfaction Measure

⁴ Average Threshold for Greater Manchester Housing Providers – also referred to as the median position

⁵ Average Performance Threshold from Housemark (a national benchmarking organisation) – also referred to as the median position

issues with the existing supplier as identified through formal complaints

- ▶ Amending Carecall processes to notify Next of Kin contacts when non-urgent medical assistance is requested, as they may be able to visit the service user and provide assistance and reassurance while awaiting an ambulance.

Our performance in relation to Customer Feedback for 2023-24:

KPI / TSM	Description	Year-End 2023-24	GM Average	HMK Average
TSM	Number of stage one complaints received per 1000 homes	22.96	49.9	39.7
TSM	Number of stage two complaints received per 1000 homes	4.43	5.5	5.3
TSM	Proportion of stage one complaints responded to within the HOS ⁶ complaint handling code timescales	98.9%	96.4%	83.3%
TSM	Proportion of stage two complaints responded to within the HOS complaint handling code timescales	100%	98.9%	83.3%
TSM	Proportion of respondents who report making a complaint in the last 12 months who are satisfied with their landlord's approach to complaints handling	61.54%	37%	33.8%

Consumer Regulation

During 2023-24, SHG has been getting ready for the Regulator of Social Housing's proactive consumer regulation and the new Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. Both of these came into force on 1 April 2024 and raise the bar in terms of expectations of regulatory bodies and the outcomes to be delivered by social housing providers.

SHG has undertaken lots of work, in collaboration with customers and colleagues, to prepare for the changes and make sure our policies and processes are fit for purpose and reflect the required outcomes in an increasingly regulated sector.

You can find out more about consumer regulation and the Housing Ombudsman via the Stockport Homes website.

www.stockporthomes.org/about-us/our-performance/consumer-standards/

www.stockporthomes.org/about-us/our-performance/complaints/

⁶ Housing Ombudsman Service

Aim 2

Provide Safe, Sustainable Homes in Neighbourhoods where Communities can thrive



Key Objectives

- ▶ Deliver our Asset Management Strategy to ensure properties are safe, free from hazards and that longer-term investment needs are met – including tackling climate change
- ▶ Deliver a customer focussed repairs and maintenance service
- ▶ Build more new homes across Stockport, for rent and shared ownership, to meet a range of different needs
- ▶ Proactively manage our blocks and neighbourhoods to ensure they are safe and welcoming places – addressing issues that arise
- ▶ Working with partners on neighbourhood prevention initiatives

Measuring Success

- ▶ We will be able to show positive performance in the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and other key performance indicators – including around decent homes, safety and neighbourhood management
- ▶ Evidencing how we have taken action to address issues that are important to our customers – feeding back where changes / improvements have been made
- ▶ Demonstrate outcomes from partnership working

Customer Access and Experience

During 2023-24, work continued to deliver actions from the Asset Management Strategy. A key focus during the year was to commence an ambitious project to understand our stock condition and the investment needs by carrying out a full stock condition survey. By the end of March 2024, 27% of properties had surveys completed. The information is being analysed by the Assets Team and the long-term stock investment plans will be updated based on the latest information. This is an important piece of work in ensuring customers' homes remain safe and hazard-free over the long-term and that financial resources are available to meet the requirements.

KPI / TSM	Description	Year-End 2023-24	GM Average	HMK Average
TSM	Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	0.01%	0.0%	0.31%

A range of work was delivered to improve customers' homes during 2023-24 and this covered three broad themes:

- ▶ Building Safety and Compliance
- ▶ Estate Regeneration
- ▶ Energy Efficiency / Carbon Reduction Works

Investment work completed during 2023-24 included:

- ▶ 68 new front entrance fire doors (completing the fire door replacement programme to high rise blocks)
- ▶ New communal front and rear doors installed to seven blocks in North Reddish
- ▶ Internal improvement works to 10 properties during the year which included new kitchens, bathrooms, WC's
- ▶ Communal upgrade works to 11 blocks in Cheadle Heath and Brinnington, with works including new decoration and flooring
- ▶ Switchover of analogue to digital phone lines upgrade for the warden call systems in Sheltered Schemes
- ▶ Continuation of work with Electricity Northwest to upgrade infrastructure cabling within high-rise blocks. To date, 13 high-rise blocks have benefitted from these works with another five either started or in the pipeline
- ▶ Customer satisfaction with investment works was 94.69%

Climate Change

We have a Climate Change Strategy in place which sets out how energy efficiency works are undertaken to provide safe and warm homes, reduce fuel poverty and contribute to the aspiration of the GM net zero-carbon target by 2038.

During 2023-24, the following outcomes have been achieved in relation to climate change initiatives and improvements to properties:

- ▶ 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
- ▶ 82 roof replacements, including 56 roofs where photovoltaic (PV) panels have been installed
- ▶ Heating upgrades to 547 properties providing customers with new gas boilers and radiators which are more energy efficient
- ▶ Communal heating upgrades at York Street which saw 227 properties fitted with new Heat Interface Units (HIU's), pipework and radiators across seven blocks
- ▶ Utilising Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 1 monies to improve the energy efficiency of 46 homes by completing works such as replacing old inefficient storage heaters with new high heat retention versions and installing Solar PV where appropriate
- ▶ Using grant funding from the Social Housing Quality Fund (SHQF) to complete works which included remedial measures to combat damp and mould and the installation of mechanical ventilation to 899 properties

Building Safety and Compliance

We have a duty of care and a legal responsibility to ensure that all of our buildings and properties are maintained so that they remain safe places for customers to live.

There are a range of policies, procedures, strategies and management plans in place detailing how we ensure buildings are managed in line with statutory obligations, including gas, electrical, fire safety, asbestos, legionella and carbon monoxide management. We

also manage a number of lifts in blocks and there are policies and working procedures in place for the management, servicing and maintenance of all of these lifts.

We have a dedicated team in place to manage Building Safety across the high-rise blocks in Stockport. During 2023-24, all blocks that require a registration with the Building Safety Regulator (BSR), have been successfully registered. SHG has also prepared its first draft Safety Case Report for when that is required to be submitted to the Building Safety Regulator.

Through a range of routine inspections and home visits the Building Safety Team will identify a range of support that customers of high-rise buildings may require. A Building Safety Residents Panel is in place, and they meet regularly and can raise concerns and issues being faced by high-rise residents directly with Stockport Homes.

KPI / TSM	Description	Year-End 2023-24	GM Average	HMK Average
TSM	Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their home is safe	89.75%	80%	76.1%
Corporate	% of properties and communal areas with a satisfactory electrical installation certificate	99.97%	-	98.65%
TSM	% of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out	100%	100%	99.97%
TSM	% of homes for which all required Fire Risk Assessments have been carried out	100%	100%	100%
TSM	% of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out	100%	100%	100%
TSM	% of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out	100%	100%	100%
TSM	% of homes for which all communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out	100%	100%	100%
Corporate	% of fire safety follow on actions completed within timescale per Fire Risk Assessment	96.17%	-	-

Responsive Repairs Service

There has been a lot of work ongoing to address a backlog of repairs that has developed since the Covid pandemic. A dedicated team has been set up to tackle this and ensure that repairs are undertaken in a timely manner. We know this is important to customers and timely repairs ensure properties are safe and well maintained. There is still more work to do in this area and in January 2024, a repairs service review commenced which will look at a number of areas of the repairs process and identify opportunities to be more efficient and effective moving forward.

Customers have been involved in the Service Review and more information about this has been provided under Aim 1.

KPI / TSM	Description	Year-End 2023-24	GM Average	HMK Average
Corporate	% satisfaction with repair (transactional)	99.19%	86.1%	88.2%
Corporate	% repairs completed at first visit	98.87%	90.7%	87.92%
TSM	Proportion of emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale	99.97%	98%	94.8%
TSM	Proportion of non-emergency responsive repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale	82.65%	83%	81.5%
TSM	Proportion of respondents who have received a repair in the last 12 months who report that they are satisfied with the overall repairs service	84.67%	72%	70.4%
TSM	Proportion of respondents who have received a repair in the last 12 months who report that they are satisfied with the time taken to complete their most recent repair	84.49%	69%	66.4%
TSM	Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their home is well maintained	88.86%	73%	69.4%

Damp, Mould and Condensation (DMC)

SHG operate a Rapid Response service with regards to dealing with customer enquiries around DMC. Within 14 working days, SHG will have visited the property, cleaned down any visible mould, redecorated the area with anti-fungal paint and carried out minor related repairs. Call back services are implemented within six months to check-in with the customer; any re-occurrence of the DMC will be addressed accordingly.

Customers are working with us on this journey as we know it is a key aspect of the landlord services we deliver. We continue to have a proactive approach to dealing with Damp, Mould and Condensation (DMC) cases and work across SHG to ensure customers reporting DMC are supported in a range of ways, including being able to heat their homes appropriately.

New Build Development

Despite the challenges to the delivery of new build housing, including increasing costs and contractors going into administration, SHG has delivered 55 new homes during 2023-24. This includes 11 for social rent, 37 for shared ownership and seven market sale properties. At the end of March 2024, there were 202 units on-site and under development which will bring more housing into the Borough in the coming months.

Neighbourhood and Tenancy Management

We are committed to the proactive management of our neighbourhoods and blocks to ensure they are places where people want to live, feel safe and feel part of a community. We deliver our neighbourhood management services in partnership with others and we contribute to the Council's Neighbourhood Prevention work in a number of ways. There is a well-coordinated offer with service being synchronised where possible to have a greater impact at a local level. This requires planning service delivery with the Council at a strategic level.

Customers are proactively contacted by their Neighbourhood Housing Officer (NHO), either as a home visit or a telephone call via the Current Tenants Visit (CTV) process. During 2023-24, a total of 2,936 CTV's were undertaken and 35% of these identified an issue that had previously been reported to us and the NHO was able to assist / signpost the customer further.

By using a targeted approach, SHG can ensure that customers are provided with any support / advice they may need to effectively manage their tenancy. When visits are undertaken, any property condition issues that are identified can then be addressed in a timely manner, with repairs being raised as needed or customers being referred to support services if appropriate.

Partnership working is at the heart of our approach to neighbourhood management including how we manage the many residential blocks across the Borough. We ensure that Grounds Maintenance, Caretaking and Building Security are delivered effectively to keep the areas we manage clean, safe and tidy. Our KPI for estate inspections graded at least good was 98.93% at year-end 2023-24 which demonstrates how this partnership approach leads to positive outcomes for customers.

KPI / TSM	Description	Year-End 2023-24	GM Average	HMK Average
Corporate	Average time taken to re-let empty dwellings (all re-lets)	13.5 days	39.9 days	67.6 days
Corporate	Estate inspections graded at least good	98.93%	-	-
TSM	Proportion of residents with communal area who report that they are satisfied that their landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained	85.96%	70%	65.5%
TSM	Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood	91.24%	69%	62.5%

Anti-Social Behaviour, Noise and Domestic Violence

Being a key partner in the One Stockport Safer Partnership (OSSP) is vital to our approach to managing noise complaints, anti-social behaviour, domestic violence and other exploitation such as cuckooing. We know these things can have a harmful effect on our customers so we work in a multi-agency approach, providing support and signposting and tackling the root cause where we can.

We encourage customers to report issues to us so that we can address them and take

positive action. We deal with more ASB cases than other housing providers in Greater Manchester and we believe this is because customers trust us to work with them to manage issues and resolve ASB and noise nuisance in a partnership approach. We welcome the opportunity to resolve ASB and noise nuisance before it escalates into more serious situations. However, we will take legal action where it is permissible and proportionate to do so. As can be seen below, there is high satisfaction with the ASB service based on feedback from customers that have used the service.

As an ALMO, SHG have devolved powers to take give community protection warnings and notices which is normally work carried out by the Council. These are useful and effective tools which many landlords do not have available to them and have to rely on the police for. It is important to note that the ASB figures below, where SHG's figures are higher than the sector average, includes ASB case types that other landlords do not categorise as ASB, as well as the work that SHG undertakes relating to cuckooing, supporting complainants, tackling tenancy fraud and working with customer to resolve issues locally. This proactive work is not undertaken by all providers. This approach is in line with best practice and the Housing Ombudsman 'Spotlight Report' on managing noise nuisance, where the focus should be on landlords resolving issues in line with their Good Neighbour Policy.

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.

Our work has been recognised at a national level - the Housing Ombudsman Service has identified our Good Neighbourhood Management Policy and Procedure as good practice for dealing with noise related issues.

Stockport Homes has also been recognised nationally for the work we do to protect vulnerable victims. We have presented about the work delivered to a range of audiences including at universities, other Local Authorities, Police forces and Charities. We have also won a POP (Problem Orientated Policing) Award from Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for work we have done within Stockport in supporting victims of cuckooing.

Outcomes in this area include:

- ▶ Referred 22 cases to mediation to resolve issues between neighbours
- ▶ Issued 46 Community Protection Warnings (CPW's), 20 Community Protection Notices (CPN's) and 39 Injunctions. Where issues have not been resolved, we have taken further legal action including three committals to prison and three closure orders to ensure safe neighbourhoods
- ▶ We have dealt with 230 cases of cuckooing and exploitation combined. In 70% of the cases, the person identified themselves as being a victim and accepted our intensive support to enable them to remain in their homes
- ▶ This saved an average of £508,000 in void costs by supporting the victims to stay in their homes and £35,000 in homeless prevention costs.
- ▶ Our Complainant Support Specialist has worked with 120 vulnerable complainants in 2023, providing one-to-one emotional support to enable them to access other services

as well as arranging for target hardening measures to help them feel safer in their homes.

- ▶ Temporary CCTV has been installed in 90 ASB cases to enable evidence to be captured and to help the customer feel safer.
- ▶ Noise monitoring equipment was also successfully used in 103 cases to take appropriate action to resolve noise nuisance.
- ▶ Further work to improve the feeling of safety has been target hardening works which saw the installation of 227 measures including locking letter plates, door chains, additional security light and dummy cameras

We offer a range of support options for customers facing domestic abuse and have specially trained staff working at Stockport Homes. We work with customers to help them stay safely in their own homes, or access options to move if that is preferred. We will also signpost customers to support services and seek injunctions against perpetrators as required. We can offer one-to-one support, counselling and a range of other support and advice services to enable people to remain safe.

During 2023-24 we have been working to obtain the Domestic Abuse Handling Alliance (DAHA) accreditation to show how we deliver a safe and effective response to domestic abuse.

KPI / TSM	Description	Year-End 2023-24	GM Average	HMK Average
Corporate	% of ASB complainants satisfied with the outcome of their case (transactional)	84.4%	-	-
TSM	Number of anti-social behaviour cases (including hate incidents) opened per 1000 homes	113.88	49.6	38.56
TSM	Number of anti-social behaviour cases that involve hate incidents opened per 1000 homes	2.34	1.0	0.7
TSM	Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with their landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour	85.13%	64%	57%

Innovative Ways to meet Housing Need

Given the housing crisis, it is important that we continue to make the best use of the stock we have available. This includes offering services such as right-sizing, mutual exchange and having a proactive approach to tackling housing fraud.

During 2023-24, 182 customers were supported to mutually exchange their home with another customer (either another Stockport Homes customer or one with another housing provider). 25% of those mutual exchanges were customers with a housing need and a recognised reason to move, for example over-crowding, under-occupying or had a medical condition being exacerbated by current housing circumstances. The mutual exchange service has enabled them to move to a property that better meets their needs moving forwards.

By exchanging and not ending a tenancy (which then becomes a void property), efficiencies of £226,228 were achieved. The Mutual Exchange Team continue to support customers to access the online service, provide community events publicising the service and further support customers who need a more complex mutual exchange, for example a five-way mutual exchange.

The Right Sizing Service supports customers who live in larger family sized properties who want to move to a smaller property. Focusing initially on customers who live in three and four-bedroom houses, the service, in year one, has brought an additional 26 three or four-bedroom houses back for re-allocation. There is a waiting list of customers who are committed to moving through the service once suitable properties have been identified for them to move to. By offering dedicated customer service and financial support, work is undertaken with the customer to address barriers which may generally prevent a move occurring, for example arranging and paying removal costs or carpets in the new home. Financial support for the service has been made available through external homeless funding and all properties made available are re-allocated to customers facing homelessness.

Recently, a new Housing Fraud Investigation Officer has been employed who will undertake investigations into tenancy fraud and recover properties for re-allocation to people in housing need.

We continue to contribute to the Council's work around specialist and supported housing to meet people's care and support needs. There are a range of ways in which we do this including building specialist accommodation (such as a new Extra Care Scheme in Cheadle which is currently under construction), delivering our Housing Support service, and we have a range of support services for older people including Carecall and Sheltered Housing. We also work with the Council to support care leavers and people with learning difficulties / disabilities.

Aim 3

Contribute to making Stockport fairer by reducing inequality, poverty and supporting customers in all aspects of their lives



Key Objectives

- ▶ To work with our partners to enable customers to access help, support and advice to tackle poverty, inequality, unemployment
- ▶ Provide a range of housing options to address the housing need in Stockport – with a clear focus on tackling rough sleeping and homelessness
- ▶ Promoting a range of ways that people can continue to live independently in their homes and make a positive contribution to their community
- ▶ Working in partnership to focus on prevention and delivery outcomes in a collaborative, efficient way

Measuring Success

- ▶ Demonstrate how help and support provided has produced positive outcomes for customers
- ▶ Reduced burden on statutory service by working in a preventative, partnership model
- ▶ Enabling people to live in their homes independently

Tackling Poverty, Inequality and Unemployment

We have a range of services in place to help and support customers and these include tackling poverty (including food and fuel poverty), reducing inequalities and enabling people to access work, training or volunteering opportunities.

We deliver several Your Local Pantry schemes across Stockport where people can access fresh, affordable food. There is also our Furniture Recycling Scheme which provides furniture to help make a house a home and create more sustainable, comfortable tenancies.

Your Local Pantry

- ▶ Your Local Pantry (YLP) is a network of community food stores set up to help reduce grocery costs for Stockport residents.
- ▶ At the end of March 2024, pantry membership stood at 288 members across the five pantries, this includes 67 new members referred via the Stockport Council Cost of Living helpline.
- ▶ A total of 8,658 pantry visits were made by members during the year which equates to an estimated spend value of £181,818
- ▶ Community volunteers work alongside the staff team to manage the day-to-day running of each Pantry.
- ▶ We currently have 26 volunteers who support the pantries each week with others helping on an ad-hoc basis producing a social value outcome of £84,474.
- ▶ 4,116 hours of volunteer time committed and during 2023-24, three new volunteers were recruited and supported through a comprehensive induction and training programme

Furniture Recycling

- ▶ The Furniture Recycling project collects donated furniture and recycles it for provision to households who are experiencing furniture poverty / financial hardship. The project supports Stockport's most vulnerable households to set up home initially and sustain their tenancy and contributing to the reduction in the number of properties subsequently becoming empty. The warehouse in Hazel Grove also offers customers the opportunity to visit and select their own items, offering more dignity and choice.
 - ▶ 348 households donated furniture to the project along with goods from 178 void properties
 - ▶ 321 households in need were supported and this included supplying 294 white goods, 134 sofas, 178 wardrobes and drawers
 - ▶ Funding of £42,744 was provided from the Council's Household Support Fund and this enabled an additional 140 beds and mattresses and 124 white goods to 126 households
- ▶ From an environmental perspective, recycling of furniture also prevents it from ending up in landfill.
 - ▶ A total of 42.1 tonnes was diverted away from landfill

Employment

Employment opportunities continue to be made available via our engagement with local employers, delivering sector-based services that increase opportunities for customers and provides employers with a trained and skilled cohort of staff, including:

- ▶ Motiv8 has been a successful project which worked with people most removed from the labour market to make progress in their lives and move towards education, training and employment. During 2023-24, across Greater Manchester, 505 participants supported in total, of which 223 completed training, 89 secured employment and 306 commenced job-searching.
- ▶ SKYlight have worked closely with Athena Partners in 2023-24 to deliver the Government Funded Maths course ("Multiply") which supports customers to develop critical thinking skills in relation to finance and budgeting. The Athena Partnership has also been successful in securing the GMCA funded Working Well; Support to Succeed contract over the next 12 months. SKYlight will engage and support economically inactive residents in Stockport and Trafford.
- ▶ For sector-based employment events, the bespoke collaboration with Marks & Spencer Food Hall in Stockport led to an initial assessment centre which welcomed 91 customers, with 24 being selected to take part in a week of intensive training delivered by SKYlight Employment & Training team. Of those, 13 customers were selected by M&S for work placements and 11 customers were offered permanent employment.
- ▶ The Employment Team continued to work closely with customers who were not successful and six went on to secure other employment demonstrating a 70% success rate for progression into employment when customers attend sector-based training with the SKYlight.

We also work with Stockport Credit Union to support customers to be able to access sustainable forms of finance. We partner with Beacon Counselling to offer a free, confidential counselling service to customers. During 2023-24, Beacon Counselling

received 272 referrals from Stockport Homes which enabled 720 counselling sessions to be delivered.

Housing Options to Address Housing Need

We deliver homelessness services on behalf of the Council and work together to deliver the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. The primary reason for homelessness in Stockport is the lack of affordable housing. In addition, the ongoing gap in 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.

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

GM Housing First

- ▶ SKYlight, our charitable subsidiary, has worked with a range of GM partners to secure the GM Housing First contract.
- ▶ Housing First is an approach to meeting housing need and homelessness that is based upon the premise that housing is the priority requirement that must be met first, and this then provides a stable base from which recovery and progress can be made with very intensive support.
- ▶ 13 customers were being supported in Stockport at the end of March 2024

Rough Sleeper Accommodation Project (RASAP)

- ▶ The Rough Sleeper Accommodation Project (RSAP) provides capital funds from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to purchase and renovate one-bedroom, self-contained properties from the open market.
- ▶ Fixed term tenancies are offered to individuals with a history of entrenched rough sleeping. In addition, 10 x one-bedroom properties have also been allocated from Stockport Homes' existing portfolio and specifically assigned to the RSAP programme.
- ▶ Integral to the success of the programme are the dedicated officers providing person centred, intensive support.
- ▶ Of the 15 customers currently engaged on the project, 12 are sustaining their tenancies and proactively engaging with support. These 12 customers are responding to structured support addressing a range of challenges which would otherwise put their tenancy at risk.

Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI)

- ▶ The Rough Sleeper Initiative provides a Rough Sleeper Outreach Worker and Rough Sleeping Navigator via GMCA funding. Specialist support for mental health and substance misuse is also provided via a Dual Diagnosis Worker and Psychologist available through the Greater Manchester Mental Health team.
- ▶ The Rough Sleeper Outreach Worker is primarily focussed on responding to reports of rough sleeping. There were 19 people known to be rough sleeping in Stockport at the

end of March 2024.

- ▶ The Rough Sleeping Navigator role supports a small, high-intensity, case load of rough sleepers to access services and supports transition off the streets and into accommodation.

Offenders

- ▶ As part of our partnership working with One Stockport Safer Partnership and Probation, we employ an Offender Engagement Officer who delivers direct and practical support to offenders in housing need. This enables us to engage with the most excluded in the Borough who struggle to maximise their full potential.
 - ▶ 18 individuals have been supported under the Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Scheme into private rented accommodation
 - ▶ Seven units are utilised to deliver the Community Accommodation Scheme with the following outcomes achieved:
 - ▶ 13 people supported to find and maintain employment
 - ▶ 3 people have commenced training courses

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

- ▶ We continue to support the Council in the delivery of support to Refugee and Migrant households in the Borough. The initial priority remains the support of Ukrainian households who have been 'hosted' under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme for a period of six months. 36 new households consisting of 57 people arrived and were resettled into hosting arrangements within the Borough.
 - ▶ During the course of the year, extended hosting arrangements have been agreed for 45 households consisting of 102 people.
 - ▶ 31 households consisting of 75 people were supported to move to private sector accommodation within the Borough when their existing hosting arrangements came to an end.
 - ▶ 16 households consisting of 30 people that lived in safer areas of the Ukraine decided to return.
 - ▶ Unfortunately, hosting arrangements for five households consisting of 11 people broke down and rematching arrangements had to be secured quickly to avoid homelessness presentations.
 - ▶ 62 households consisting of 106 people continue to be supported by SKylight and the Council's Migrant Communities team.

Three Sixty Living and GM Ethical Lettings

SHG, through Three Sixty Living, is working with GM partners through the Ethical Lettings Agency (Let Us) to improve access to, the quality, and affordability of accommodation in the private rented sector. This initiative improves the housing options for those facing homelessness when social housing can't meet the demand, offering quality private rented accommodation at Local Housing Allowance rent levels.

Our in-house Three Sixty Living service provides a full lettings and property management solution to privately owned properties and blocks across and around the Stockport and Greater Manchester area. This provides another option for customers to explore

and access the private rental market and have their property managed by Stockport Homes. Currently, there are 220 properties managed by Three Sixty Living. Three Sixty Living retained its 'Gold Award' at the British Property Awards for lettings services within Stockport with judges citing 'Three Sixty Living continues to prioritise customer excellence whilst exhibiting attention to detail'.

Three Sixty Living also work to support the Council in delivering on the Homeless Families Leasing Project (HFLP). This project released £306,000 of DLUHC funding to be used to incentivise private landlords to lease properties to Three Sixty Living for a period of five years. Nine properties have been leased through the HFLP to date, all allocated to applicants to prevent homelessness.

Mutual Exchange and Right-Sizing

We operate a mutual exchange service which operates and connects customers wishing to exchange their tenancy with another social housing customer in order to better meet their housing needs, for example, to address under or overcrowding. Properties are advertised online and on social media to encourage positive outcomes.

We also have a dedicated service to support customers who live in larger family sized homes and want to 'right size' into a more manageable and suitable one-bedroom property. We work proactively to identify customers who may benefit from right-sizing with communication sent advertising the service. The aim of the right-sizing service is to maximise use of larger family sized accommodation and the service supports customers who wish to right size by directly securing a new property for them, removing the need to apply through Home Choice, the Choice Based Lettings service.

During 2023-24:

- ▶ There were 182 mutual exchanges that took place
- ▶ 26 customers used the rightsizing service to move to a new property and enabled larger accommodation to be provided to families in housing need

Supporting People to Live Independently

We have a range of services in place that enable people to live independently, in their own homes and make a positive contribution to their local communities.

Older Persons Services

We have an Ageing Well Strategy in place which supports the Council's objectives to ensure that Stockport is a place where people are supported to remain active, retain their independence and have a sense of purpose and wellbeing as they grow older. With an ageing population, it is essential that dedicated services are provided to meet the needs of this customer group.

We have eight Sheltered and one Extra Care scheme across the Borough which provide accommodation to meet the needs of older people and enable them to live as independently as possible. We are building a new Extra Care scheme in Cheadle called Edinburgh Close. This will provide additional, specialist housing for older people in the Borough preventing or delaying their need to enter more expensive residential care.

Housing Support

We have a range of support initiatives in place to help support customers to manage and maintain their tenancies. This starts before tenancies are granted through the work of the

Tenancy Ready Team who provide bespoke support to customers who are highly likely to receive an offer of accommodation imminently, where tenancy sustainability issues have been highlighted.

The Tenancy Ready Team works with customers right through to the tenancy sign up process ensuring the tenancy starts successfully and will then engage further support for the customer through the Housing Support Team or other specialist support providers should there be an ongoing requirement.

The Housing Support Team works with vulnerable customers who are struggling to maintain their tenancies and assist them in accessing other support services. They work with customers to address issues they are facing to enable tenancy sustainment. This might include referring them to money advice, energy advice, the furniture service or other external partners who can provide additional support.

During 2023-24:

- ▶ 98.2% of service users were living independently at the closure of their support
- ▶ 89.2% service users were living independently 12 months after their support ended

Adaptations

Stockport Homes works with the Social Care Service at Stockport Council to deliver an adaptations service to install physical alterations to customer's home to allow them to live as independently as possible. These can be either minor or major adaptations.

- ▶ Examples of minor adaptations undertaken include grab rails and half steps.
- ▶ Examples of major adaptations can include ramps, wet rooms and stair lifts.

SHG delivers adaptations funded via the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) on behalf of Stockport Council. We employ an Occupational Therapist to support the delivery of the service and ensures that adapted properties are allocated appropriately as they become available.

During 2023-24:

- ▶ 94.12% customer satisfaction with the adaptations service
- ▶ 100% of customers stated there was improvement to their life after adaptations were installed

Carecall

Our Carecall service provides a telemonitoring and response service which includes personal alarm monitoring and a fall response service. Carecall supports people to live independently in their own homes. A device is installed into a customer's home that allows them to press a button on a pendant and call for help should they need it. This service operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

During 2023-24:

- ▶ 93.9% of calls answered by Carecall within 60 seconds
- ▶ Code 1 emergency calls were attended to in an average of 19 minutes

Partnership Working

One Stockport – Partnership Working with Stockport Council

We are a key partner in One Stockport and work closely with the Council and other

partners to deliver the shared strategic ambitions of the Council. SHG has an involvement in many ways. Our mission is strongly aligned with One Stockport, particularly SKYlight which seeks to relieve poverty and address economic disadvantage. SHG has been a key partner in the local response to the current cost-of-living crisis and has worked across agencies and in partnership to deliver support to customers and communities.

SHG is a member of the Stockport Housing Partnership, which is a group of housing providers across Stockport that aim to ensure a consistent approach to, and the resolution of, key issues (e.g., anti-social behaviour, tackling domestic violence and meeting housing need).

SHG also sits on and attends meetings of the One Stockport Safety Partnership, the local statutory Community Safety Partnership, through which public sector partners work together and alongside community and voluntary organisations to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and re-offending and substance misuse.

Safeguarding

We continue to support multi-agency safeguarding work across Stockport and contribute to the improved safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. We are an active member of a range of sub-groups delivering the priorities of both the Children's and Adults Safeguarding Boards.

Across SHG, we have developed a comprehensive network of over 50 Safeguarding Champions who provide advice, support and training staff dealing with safeguarding issues. Our 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.

SHG funds 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 and other professionals.

We also work in partnership with the Council where there is a Serious Case Review which has been directed by a Safeguarding Board (Children's or Adults). We fully participate in all Serious Case Review processes, working closely with the Council and partners. Across the safeguarding partnerships, there is a clear commitment to ensure that the learning from Serious Case Reviews is shared and any actions implemented. In terms of Coronerial Inquests, the number of requests has increased in recent years. We work with the Council's legal team to prepare statements / evidence for Coroner's Court and Officers will attend the hearing as required.

The Prevention Alliance

SKYlight is a partner in The Prevention Alliance (TPA) along with Age UK Stockport, Jigsaw Support, Nacro and Talk Listen Change. The TPA deliver early help and prevention support to improve the wellbeing of residents in Stockport. The TPA are funded by Adult Social Care at Stockport Council to deliver the Boroughwide Contract from April 2022 to March 2027, with potential for a two-year extension up to March 2029.

The contract includes the delivery of Stockport Support Hub and Your Support.

- ▶ Stockport Support Hub is a single point of access for people and professionals looking for support in Stockport. Through extensive local knowledge and partnership working, the Hub helps people reach the right support at the right time and prevent escalation into statutory services.

- ▶ During 2023-24, Stockport Support Hub received 7,148 referrals.
- ▶ The Hub provided advice on 4,987 occasions to 3,424 individuals and issued 1,504 foodbank vouchers
- ▶ Your Support have dedicated Key Workers who provide one-to-one support to help people who are feeling overwhelmed. Through person-led support people are encouraged to improve their health and wellbeing addressing issues such as housing, finances, digital skills, and confidence to enable them to live a full and independent life.
 - ▶ During 2023-24, Your Support received 1,263 referrals
 - ▶ 97% of people showed an improvement to their wellbeing at case closure.
 - ▶ 97.2% of all agreed goals were either partially or fully achieved, demonstrating that overall people are making positive progress.

The TPA are key partners in DigiKnow, Stockport's Digital Inclusion Alliance to help shape, support and promote digital inclusion in Stockport. The TPA delivered 1,286 digital support sessions to help people improve their digital skills and access in 2023-24.

Stockport's Third Sector

We continue to work closely with Sector 3 and Stockport Council to develop a more consistent joined-up voice of the Third Sector. Our Funding Officer supports community groups to identify and access a range of grant funding to maximise local opportunities to the Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise Sector (VCFSE) to ensure a vibrant third sector community.

During 2023-24, working directly with local Third Sector groups, we have contributed to securing £636,137 of grant income into the Borough. This includes:

- ▶ Make A Difference and Ongoing Women's Local Support (OWLS) supported to access almost £40,000 of consultancy support and core cost grant funding
- ▶ £254,913 National Lottery Reaching Communities grant awarded to the RTime partnership of Stockport Council and SKylight led by Active Stockport CIC (Life Leisure) to deliver a three-year programme of youth work
- ▶ £36,000 grant from Greater Manchester Environment Fund to develop a new Community Interest Company "Seeding the Change".
- ▶ £242,235 National Lottery Reaching Communities grant provided to Starting Point over three years to recruit and train 250 new digital champions and support Stockport Councils 'Digiknow' project.

Greater Manchester Housing Partnership (GMHP)

We are a member 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. 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.

GMHP works closely with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and the Greater Manchester (GM) Health and Social Care Partnership. This comes together into a 'Tri-partite Agreement' that was approved in 2020, where common goals and ambitions

have been formally adopted. Examples of GM wide projects include:

- ▶ GM Housing First
- ▶ Athena
- ▶ GM 'Let Us' Ethical Lettings Scheme and the pledge to minimise evictions across all 24 members of the partnership
- ▶ GMCA Digital Projects

Aim 4

Maximise the impact of resources through growth, efficiency, and business transformation



Key Objectives

- ▶ Deliver our 2023-26 Business Plan
- ▶ Ensure we manage our finances and resources appropriately to deliver value for money
- ▶ Use the subsidiary companies to deliver services in an efficient and effective way – generating new income streams and accessing external funding where possible
- ▶ Growing the services that we are strong at delivering already
- ▶ Review and transform services to ensure they are efficient, make the best use of digital technology and innovative solutions

Measuring Success

- ▶ Demonstrate outcomes from the Business Plan and how services for customers have improved over time
- ▶ Being able to report on Value for Money outcomes and show we have a deep understanding of our cost base and outcomes
- ▶ Deliver outcomes via the subsidiaries
- ▶ Report on outcomes from growth and transformation to show financial savings made and benefits generated along the way

SHG Business Plan

Work has been ongoing across 2023-24 to deliver actions from the SHG Business Plan for 2023-26. A Year One update report has been developed which details the outcomes already being seen. The document is available on our website here:

<https://www.stockporthomes.org/media/4qrc3ip2/group-business-plan-highlight-report-2023-final.pdf>

We carefully manage our finance and resources to ensure we can continue quality services to customers and maintain our long-term future as a business. Each year, we have a rigorous budget setting process where we question and challenge where money is being spent and ensure value for money is being obtained.

As we operate in a group structure, there are opportunities available within the subsidiary companies to be more efficient with our resources and deliver more services to our customers. Some of the ways we do this is by being able to offer a range of employment terms and conditions across SHG and making Gift Aid contributions to SKylight from other companies within the group structure. For 2023-24, this totalled £52,000.

As part of the SHG Business Plan, we will also look for opportunities to generate income from selling services to third parties that we have strengths in delivering now. This adds resources to delivery of our core services and helps to protect them in a world of stretched resources with ever-increasing competing demands.

We stringently monitor our cash flows and borrowing to make sure we are always financially sustainable. We are rigorous in our longer-term financial planning, with 30-

year cashflows forecast, a suite of stress tests, and a detailed 30-year Business Plan for the HRA and the Asset Management Plan. All of this ensures we have the outlook and business intelligence to highlight future risks to investments into the housing stock, to guide decision making in the present. There have been a number of financial challenges over the last year to navigate including high building cost inflation, increasing customer demands, a constraint on income via a rent increase cap, and a short-term approach to rental policy by the Government. This can make financial planning difficult, and repairs costs in particular have been a challenge for 2023-24. In spite of these challenges, we have been able to deliver balanced budgets and maintain financial viability.

Value for Money

Our Value for Money Strategy for 2021-24 encourages colleagues to look for opportunities to do more with less and embed a culture of VFM. We consider how more digital solutions and new technologies can bring about change and efficiency and we have a structured approach to transformation which ensures that intended outcomes are delivered – both financial and customer experience.

As part of our Business Transformation and Change Strategy, we will be conducting rigorous service reviews, in conjunction with customers, to ensure transformation and VFM is continually maximised. A service review of Repairs started in January 2024 and looked at how the service was being delivered against a backdrop of a 62% increase in demand for repair works over the last two years and significant increased costs. Opportunities for improvements have been identified, including capturing clearer detail on the repair works at the point of reporting. The review also looked at types of repair works and identified actions to contain future costs. Three Sixty have been successful in winning the tender to complete the new build scheme at Melford Road with a value of £3.6m, which is a significant achievement for our in-house contractor and brings opportunity for more inward resources to support core services to customers.

Some examples of efficiencies from 2023-24 include:

- ▶ Three successful housing fraud cases leading to a saving of £126,000 in void / rehousing costs which have been avoided
- ▶ A saving of £212,000 in senior management costs due to restructuring roles following resignation of staff
- ▶ A reduction of £30,000 in print and postage costs by using more digital approached
- ▶ A reduction of £30,000 in biomass supplier cost following retendering of the contract
- ▶ Social Housing Quality Fund monies of £225,000 used to deliver mould cleaning services

Income Collection

Our Customer Finance Team are focussed on collecting rent, water and service charge income from a range of customers. There are policies and procedures in place to ensure income collection is maximised, as well as a range of support services to provide money advice, ensure customers are accessing the correct benefits and seek other support as needed. We coordinate the Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) scheme on behalf of the Council.

During 2023-24, £62.6mn of charges were raised for collection by the team, an increase of £5mn from the previous year. Our income collection rates are in the top quartile when benchmarked against other providers.

KPI / TSM	Description	Year-End 2023-24	GM Average	HMK Average
Corporate	Rent collected as a percentage of rent due	100.31%	90.9%	99.58%
Corporate	Rent arrears as a percentage of rental debit	1.86%	10.9%	3.06%

Throughout the year, there has been an increasing number of Universal Credit (UC) claimants, as more customers migrate over to the UC system. Just over 2,100 customer were referred to money advice and the team assisted those customers in claiming £6.7mn of benefits and support to enable them to pay their rent, charges and other outgoings. £3.2mn of the £6.7mn related to housing costs support.

We continue to collect water income on behalf United Utilities and with strong performance results in that area, we are able to use surpluses generate to fund added value services. This includes key support services delivered via SKylight.

Business Transformation

SHG is committed to transforming its business to continue to achieve its efficiency and service delivery excellence ambitions. The Business Transformation and Change Strategy 2023-26 brings together many themes throughout SHG, but in particular having a focus of VFM and change management to improve service delivery and customer experience. This Strategy is one of four pillars to our transformation goals and is supported by a Data Strategy, a Digital Strategy and a Technology Strategy.

Our digital transformation will showcase how you can do more for less when embracing automation, customer self-service options, and the use of innovative solutions such as Robotic Process Automation.

In terms of digital outcomes:

- ▶ £200,000 of efficiencies through automation & system changes
- ▶ Our webchat facility has been interacted with over 16,000 times
- ▶ 11,000 customers have completed website forms
- ▶ Over 50,000 people have connected and engaged with us over social media channels
- ▶ We have seven different websites, with over 450,000 visits, where customers can find out more about the wide range of services we deliver

During 2023-24, we went live with Phase 1 of Project Phoenix – the implementation of the new housing management system. This has been a significant project, as is any new system implementation, and will bring process and service delivery improvements along with an organisational-wide emphasis on customer and asset data insight. This will shift SHG from being an organisation that responds to customer needs to one that can pre-empt those needs and offer solutions in advance.

Aim 5

Work collaboratively, influencing locally, regionally, and nationally to achieve more



Key Objectives

- ▶ Ensure we are meeting the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman Service and regularly sense-check the quality of services provided
- ▶ We will respond to consultations to ensure our voice is heard within the sector and we will lobby organisations to effect change
- ▶ Make an effective contribution to partnerships and networks driving change for social housing customers – acknowledging the challenges faced by the Council and working together
- ▶ We will share best practice and showcase where we have delivered positive work for customers

Measuring Success

- ▶ Demonstrate compliance with Regulatory Standards and the requirements of the Ombudsman via self-assessment and any engagement with those bodies
- ▶ Identify forthcoming policy / funding changes and ensure we are able to reshape services / policies as required
- ▶ Demonstrate a range of positive outcomes from our role in the Greater Manchester Housing Providers (GMHP)
- ▶ Have our best practice recognised by others

The Regulator of Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman Service

Following the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 becoming law, the Regulator of Social Housing consulted on its new approach to regulation across the social housing sector during 2023-24. This included a new set of Consumer Standards (which went live on 1 April 2024) and a new approach to inspections, which means more proactive inspections of social housing providers, including ALMO's and Local Authorities.

To fully consider the new proposals, we set up a Consumer Regulation Project Group which brought together key staff from across SHG. We undertook a gap analysis and created an action plan to ensure we were able to evidence we were meeting the requirements and intended outcomes of the new regime. This will ensure both the Council and SHG are ready for an on-site inspection by the Regulator, with the ambition of obtaining the highest level of inspection grading.

In addition, we also have set up a Regulation Project Board which oversees our regulatory requirements in a wider sense and includes oversight of data and value for money work in relation to regulatory requirements. Whilst we have been looking at the new requirements, we have still been working to the existing Regulatory Standards which have been in place throughout 2023-24 and have evidenced compliance via a self-assessment, which was approved by SHG Board in March 2024. We also hold a quarterly Assurance Meeting with the Council which includes the Director of Place Management and the Strategic Lead

for Housing. This meeting provides assurance to the Council on key regulatory issues, performance, satisfaction and customer feedback results and allows an opportunity for challenge and scrutiny and for the Council to request further information as needed.

As well as meeting the needs of the Regulator of Social Housing, it is also important that we are working in line with the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Service. We have reviewed and updated our approach to complaints and customer feedback in line with the Ombudsman's new Complaints Handling Code. This has included reviewing our Compensation Policy and appointing the Chair of the Customer Focus Committee and the Cabinet Member responsible for Housing (at the Council) to be the 'Member Responsible for Complaints'.

We want to ensure that when we get things wrong, customers have the opportunity to tell us about this and work with us to rectify any issues. We then use complaints as learning opportunities to review and amend how services are delivered based on feedback from customers. More information about learning from complaints is provided under Aim One.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)

The Regulator has introduced Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) from 1 April 2023. SHG has been undertaking satisfaction surveys with all customers which contain perception-based questions and are being undertaken with customers via Current Tenant Visits. A number of telephone and online surveys have also been completed with customers.

The outcomes from the TSMs are included throughout this report and are reported regularly to our Executive Leadership Team, the SHG Board and to the Council. We also have a dedicated page on our website where customers can access this information at any time:

<https://www.stockporthomes.org/about-us/our-performance/tenant-satisfaction-measures/>

We will be submitting the data to the Regulator as per their requirements. Utilising their published data, and by working with Housemark, we will then be able to benchmark our performance nationally and against specific peers. We will work with GMHP to compare results across Greater Manchester and with the NFA to consider how we benchmark against other ALMO's. Any opportunities to improve service delivery based on TSM feedback will be identified and actioned.

Sector Consultations

It is important to us that we participate in Government or other consultations to ensure we have our voice heard and contribute to policy development within the social housing sector. We do this via a range of mechanisms including responding to:

- ▶ Government Consultations
- ▶ Consultations undertaken by the Regulator of Social Housing, the Building Safety Regulator and the Housing Ombudsman
- ▶ Working with our partners at GMHP to provide joint GM responses to key issues
- ▶ Working with organisations such as the National Housing Federation (NHF) and the National Federation of ALMO's (NFA) to input into consultation response and lobby the government on key issues the sector is facing

Partnership Working

Greater Manchester Housing Partnership (GMHP)

We are a member 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. More information about the outcomes from this partnership are outlined in Aim 3.

We work closely with the National Federation of ALMO's (NFA) and the Chair of the SHG Board is also a Board Member at the NFA. One of our customers also participated in the NFA's Tenant Advisory Panel. Our Chief Executive attends strategic meetings with the NFA and is also part of the CEO network with the National Housing Federation (NHF).

Awards and Accreditations

Our awards and accreditations are one way of demonstrating our commitment to delivering excellence across all service areas, and our commitments to both customers and colleagues. They also serve to share best practice within the housing sector, for others to learn from, and for us to learn from others. They show our passion and contribution to wanting to keep standards high within the sector more generally. These are recognised by external bodies.

Accreditations demonstrate our compliance with best practice standards. Some examples include:

- ▶ Customer Service Excellence (CSE) (retained for 15 years)
- ▶ Investors in People (IIP) Platinum (retained for 15 years)
- ▶ ROSPA Health & Safety accreditation for Three Sixty (retained for five years)
- ▶ Resolve ASB Standard (re-accredited every three years)
- ▶ Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation (pending)

Key awards which SHG have received during 2023-24 include:

- ▶ Northern Housing Awards - Landlord of the Year
- ▶ Northern Housing Awards - Best Approach to Building Safety – SHG
- ▶ Affordable Housing Awards - Landlord of the Year
- ▶ Building Innovation Awards - Most Innovative Contractor
- ▶ RoSPA Awards - The Achievement Award - Gold Accredited.
- ▶ GM POP Awards - Best Victim Centred Plan
- ▶ Housing Heroes / Women in Housing - Health and Wellbeing
- ▶ Housing Heroes / Women in Housing - Inspirational Colleague
- ▶ Manchester Young Talent Awards - Finance Professional of the Year
- ▶ British Property Awards - Viaduct sales - 2023 Gold Winner Estate Agent in Stockport - Gold Winner

Aim 6

Be an inclusive great place to work, where our values shine through everyone and everything we do



Key Objectives

- ▶ Being an 'employer of choice' and offering a range of ways to gain employment with us, including work placements and apprenticeships
- ▶ Offering a range of benefits to attract and retain talent such as flexible working, reward and recognition and career development opportunities
- ▶ Being clear on what our resource needs are now and in the future and utilising workforce planning to grow talent and invest in training and qualifications
- ▶ Always be inclusive and promote our #BeYou culture

Measuring Success

- ▶ Being recognised by Investors in People (IiP) and Best Companies as a great place to work
- ▶ Having a diverse and representative workforce and offering a range of opportunities to all
- ▶ Ensuring staff are competent in their roles and receive required training and development
- ▶ Retaining talent and attracting new colleagues via recruitment campaigns

Employer of Choice

Stockport Homes strives to be an excellent employer, through supporting and developing staff to deliver the best possible service for customers. For the last 15 years, we have been recognised by Best Companies as a great place to work. This is a reflection of the high levels of colleague engagement across the organisation. We believe we can only deliver excellent services to customers by attracting and retaining excellent staff. Being recognised externally as an employer of choice helps us to attract and retain staff, especially in a sector where housing skills and experiences is very competitive.

In 2023, we attained the following positions in Best Companies:

- ▶ Number 2 - "Best Housing Association to Work For"
- ▶ Number 19 - "Best Company to Work for in the Northwest"
- ▶ Number 22 - "Best Large Company to Work For"

We are an Investors in People (IIP) Platinum organisation, which has been maintained through implementing and sharing best practice for people management and development. During 2023-24, we had an annual review of our accreditation and maintained Platinum which confirms our excellence in our people practices.

In addition, we are a member of the GM 'Good Employment Charter' which aims to raise employment standards across GM. As a member, we have made the Supporter Commitment and meet the membership criteria in all characteristics of the Charter.

Our People and Organisational Development Strategy for 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.

Key Metrics for 2023-24 include:

Retention of staff:

- ▶ 85.73% compared to 80.70% for the previous year

Pension enrolment:

- ▶ 96.56% of team members opted into the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) compared to 94.21% for the previous year
- ▶ 92.34% of team members opted into the Social Housing Pension Scheme (SHPS) compared to 88.54% for the previous year

Staff achieving 100% attendance:

- ▶ 68.17% achieved 100% attendance in 2023/24 compared to 61% for the previous year

Sickness absence:

- ▶ Stockport Homes: 3.83 days lost compared to 5.2 days in 22/23
- ▶ SKylight: 7.48 days lost compared to 4.09 days in 22/23
- ▶ Three Sixty: 7.05 days lost compared to 10.1 days 22/23

Time to Hire:

- ▶ 42 days from advert to offer compared to 49 days in 22/23

During 2023-24, we also reviewed the Subsidiary Terms and Conditions and made some changes, including increasing maternity, paternity and adoption pay and increasing the pension contributions as well as a salary sacrifice option. We have continued with our incentive scheme for Three Sixty colleagues.

Our apprenticeship programme provides people with an opportunity to work whilst obtaining an appropriate qualification over an 18 – 24 month period which will then enable the post holder to progress further in their employment. As well as increasing the number of apprenticeship opportunities within SHG it also provides opportunities for aspiring managers and leaders to gain experience of supporting and mentoring staff, with a bespoke training programme and the development of supportive networking groups for both apprentices and mentors.

The apprenticeship programme isn't just about entry-level roles, it has since expanded to higher level positions due to the continued expansion of apprenticeship qualifications.

To date, 20 roles across the business have been converted to apprenticeships in a wide range of service delivery areas. A mentor is provided to each apprentice within their service area helping to develop aspiring managers as well as giving an apprentice peer support. The level of apprenticeships offered by Stockport Homes Group varies from Level 2 (GCSE standard) to Level 7 (master's degree standard).

A total of six new apprentices completed their apprenticeship and 100% of them secured a permanent role within SHG. This demonstrates the commitment to recruiting the right talent to support future succession planning.

In 2023-24, we had 34 colleagues undertaking an apprenticeship with 18 being current colleagues and 16 being newly recruited apprentices.

Workforce Planning and Talent Management

During 2023-24, there has been a focus on workforce planning to ensure we have the right staff with the right skills to meet our strategic business aims. We have:

- ▶ Increased our focus on Learning and Development (L&D) by implementing a business partnering structure to ensure closer working with operational managers to better understand learning requirements.
- ▶ Commenced the development of training matrices per job role which will ensure we have a robust approach to knowledge and skills in line and are spending our L&D budget in the right places
- ▶ Undertook a thorough review of our recruitment approach with more in-house support to better manage recruitment campaigns and attract high calibre candidates and have a more targeted approach
- ▶ Implemented a new approach to using workforce data in decision-making via quarterly People Agenda meetings with each Executive Director
- ▶ Put plans in place to do a full workforce planning exercise in 2024-25 to include analysis of future needs, identifying critical roles and future skill sets required. This will inform the next P&OD Strategy from 2025 onwards.

Using our GROW conversations approach, the L&D team continued to conduct individual development discussions with 22 colleagues during the year, showing our commitment to talent management within SHG. We have continued to deliver Leadership Development and will be reviewing this as part of our exploratory and planning work for professionalisation and mandatory qualification requirements.

Across 2023-24, there were 9,370 hours of learning undertaken which based on a headcount of circa 700 colleagues, equates to 13 hours of learning per colleague.

Diverse and Representative Workforce

Stockport Homes has a 'One Team' culture linked to the Mission and #BeYou approach, which is the vision for an inclusive workplace. We are proud to be an inclusive workplace and have an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy in place to ensure there is a continual focus on inclusivity and best practice.

We are a Disability Confident employer and have signed up to the Race at Work Charter. We are placed amongst the Top 100 employers within the Stonewall Inclusive Employers - showing our commitment to creating an inclusive workplace in line with our #BeYou approach

Based on snapshot data from April 2023, our reporting for Gender Pay Gap shows we have achieved a 0% Gender Pay Gap for Stockport Homes Limited.

Both SKYlight and Three Sixty saw an improvement in their gender pay gaps with SKYlight having a positive gap (+1.8% median) and Three Sixty achieving a gap less than the industry average (-14%).

Last year we became part of a GM wide initiative to boost ethnic diversity in leadership roles. This initiative is called Movement of Change and is being undertaken in conjunction with Manchester University. One element of this is the Boost Programme which is a diversity mentoring programme across GM. We saw our first mentee complete the programme following a period of mentoring with a Director from another GM provider. Our next mentor and mentee are due to be enrolled in Summer 2024.

We have a number of Colleague Groups in place where we encourage staff engagement and feedback including Proud (LGBTQ+), Empower (ethnic minority staff) and Enable (disability). We have expanded this network introducing new groups focusing on carers and the people navigating the menopause. Each group has a clear direction and makes a positive impact in SHG. These groups operate in addition to other consultation channels such as Colleague Voice (our cross-organisation employee consultation group) and recognised Trade Unions.

During 2024-25, there will be an increased focus on understanding neurodiversity and how we can support colleagues and customers with additional requirements. Our commitment to mental health and wellbeing continues with training and dedicated awareness raising events.

Supporting Colleague Wellbeing

Colleague wellbeing is important to us, and we have a range of benefits in place for staff to ensure a healthy work life balance and access to support and other services as required.

One of the benefits offered to staff is our 'Maximising our Potential' flexible working offer. Enabling our team members to have choice and determination about how and when they work supports their ability to balance their work and home life commitments effectively. It also enables us to continuously review service delivery to ensure our practices remain current and responsive to customer needs.

This flexible approach is based on trust, empowering our teams to design their work patterns with the understanding that our customers always remain at the heart of everything we do.

We offer a Health Cash Plan where staff can access a range of benefits such as optical / dental / physiotherapy treatments to maintain and enhance their health and wellbeing. This also includes access to a confidential Employee Assistance Programme as well as more specialist counselling, should that be required. The benefits platform also offers opportunities to save money whilst shopping, dining or undertaking leisure activities.

For the last two years, we have partnered with Once Upon a Smile as our Charity of Choice. Across a range of events and activities, we raised a total of £38,561.25 for Once Upon a Smile. This is part of our strategic commitment to giving something back and enabling staff to participate in charity and fundraising activities.

In March 2024, we selected our new Charity of Choice which is The Wellspring. They are a dedicated homeless support charity based in Stockport. We have already raised just under of £1,000 from our SHG Big Quiz held in March 2024 and have a range of events planned across 2024-25.

Conclusion

Stockport Homes has continued to deliver effective, efficient and high-performing services and supported a wide range of customers during the second year of this five-year Delivery Plan. This is against a backdrop of macro-economic difficulties and increasing scrutiny on the housing sector from a range of stakeholders, including customers and the media. There is always more we could do, and sometimes things do go wrong. Our aim is to respond quickly and effectively when this happens, to acknowledge where we were wrong and put improvement measures in place where appropriate.

We continue 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 relation to data quality and digital technology and processes are in place to enable more efficient service delivery to customers.

We continue 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 "One Team, Transforming Lives". The delivery of quality housing services and the continued investment in the Borough by Stockport Homes as part of our Delivery Plan means shows the contribution that we make to Stockport being a great place to live, work and socialise.