

SKYLIGHT BOARD MEETING

Monday 04 August 2025

16.30

SHG Boardroom, Cornerstone, 2 Edward Street

**PRESENT / IN-ATTENDANCE:****Trustees (Present):**

- Priti Butler (Via MS Teams)
- Nicola Firth
- Marie Gilluley (Chair)
- Kathryn Hanna
- Tessa Wiley

Officers (In-attendance)

- Kelly Cleaver, Senior Finance Business Partner
- Jo Cole, Head of Environmental Services (item 03 only)
- Samantha Donigan, Head of Assurance
- Verity Gleave, Head of Marketing (item 04 only)
- Anne-Marie Heil, Director of Customer Services (Lead Officer)
- Jonny Kelly, Governance Officer (minute-taker)
- Wayne Hurst, Furniture Projects Team Leader (item 03 only)

01	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	Action
	<p>Andy Kippax (Strategic Housing Lead) sent apologies for the meeting.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
02a/ 02b	MINUTES FROM MEETING 06 MAY 2025 AND ACTION MONITOR FROM MEETING 06 MAY 2025	
	<p>The minutes from the meeting held on 6th May 2025 were approved, along with the associated action monitor. Following this, introductions were made by all attendees.</p> <p>The Board discussed the minutes, particularly the use of hotels for refugees and queried whether any protests had occurred in Stockport. The Director of Customer Services confirmed that there had been no protests.</p> <p>The action monitor was also reviewed, with particular attention given to the staff vacancies within SKYlight. The Board inquired about how the workload was being managed in the interim. It was confirmed that the wider team was absorbing the responsibilities until new staff members are appointed.</p>	
03	FURNITURE SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25 (ASSURANCE)	

AUTHOR: Jonny Kelly**LEAD OFFICER SIGN OFF: 08.08.2025****DATE: 04.08.2025****CHAIR APPROVED DRAFT: 09.08.2025**

	<p>The Furniture Projects Team Leader introduced the report to provide the Board with update of the delivery of Furniture Services in 2024-2025. Questions were invited. The discussion covered:</p> <p>Clarification was provided regarding the Furnished Tenancy Scheme and the Furniture Recycling Project. It was highlighted that the former is managed by SHG, while the latter falls under SKYlight. It was confirmed that the recycling initiative operates at a deficit, whereas the furnished tenancy scheme is profitable. The Senior Finance Business Partner explained that SHG views both schemes in tandem, with the surplus from the furnished tenancy scheme subsidising the recycling project. This approach supports sustainability, acknowledging that while the recycling project is costly, it delivers significant benefits to customers.</p> <p>The Head of Environmental Services announced that SKYlight will be introducing a new business plan to address ongoing challenges within the recycling project.</p> <p>The Furniture Projects Team Leader highlighted that SKYlight’s approach has attracted interest from other housing organisations, positioning it as a sector leader in this area. He clarified that SKYlight engages with other providers solely for the recycling project, not the furnished tenancy scheme which is only delivered to SHL customers. The Board acknowledged that some costs associated with the recycling project are offset by other business areas due to the broader benefits it delivers.</p> <p>The Board noted that the service is considered unique and is set to be the subject of a case study publication.</p> <p>It was also noted that there are slight discrepancies between the budget and forecast figures compared to the business plan. The Director of Customer Services confirmed this would be addressed in the action monitor.</p>	KC
	RESOLVED: The SKYlight Board approved the report	
04	SKYLIGHT MARKETING ACTION PLAN (CONSULTATION)	
	<p>The Head of Marketing introduced the report to present a SKYlight Marketing action plan to Board. Questions were invited. The discussion covered:</p> <p>The Board discussed the Council’s review of SHG and its findings related to SKYlight. It was noted that SKYlight aims to maintain a high profile, and the Head of Marketing confirmed that bulletins are indeed shared with Councillors.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about negative coverage from the Manchester Evening News (MEN) over the past year. The Head of Marketing acknowledged this and stated that efforts are being made to share positive stories, including case studies and award submissions, although MEN has not always deemed them newsworthy.</p>	

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	<p>The Board asked about the nature of SKYlight’s relationship with MEN. The Head of Marketing explained that there are no in-person meetings, and while Stockport Council maintains a close relationship with MEN, SKYlight’s communications strategy differs, particularly in maintaining political neutrality. She emphasised SKYlight’s commitment to transparency and accountability and confirmed that the organisation will continue to challenge any unfair portrayals.</p> <p>The Board also inquired about self-referrals through the website. The Head of Marketing confirmed that online forms are being actively used and monitored, with increasing engagement.</p> <p>Regarding the allocation of marketing resources, she explained that the dedicated SKYlight Marketing Partner works closely with Heads of Service to prioritise promotional efforts. The effectiveness of these efforts is assessed through ongoing statistical analysis, which generally indicates positive outcomes.</p>	
	<p>RESOLVED: The Board reviewed and provided feedback on the SKYlight Marketing action plan.</p>	
05	SKYLIGHT RISK REPORT QUARTER ONE 2025/26 (ASSURANCE)	
	<p>The Head of Assurance introduced the report to provide an update on delivery of the 2025-26 SKYlight Risk Register and provide a wider assurance update for Board Members, including progress against the Internal Audit Plan. Questions were invited. The discussion covered:</p> <p>The Board discussed Risk 7, which concerns challenges in recruiting and retaining suitable staff. The Director of Customer Services explained that many vacancies are due to fixed-term contracts funded externally. She reassured the Board that there are no critical concerns, though the nature of these contracts contributes to the vacancy rate.</p> <p>In terms of consumer regulation risks, the Director of Customer Services confirmed that SKYlight is well-positioned to demonstrate its contributions, particularly in relation to domestic abuse standards. She clarified that the OWLS project is referenced in the risk register for this reason.</p> <p>The Board also revisited the topic of stakeholder mapping, previously discussed at a Board away day. The Head of Assurance noted that while extensive stakeholder planning has occurred in connection with Stockport Homes’ 20th anniversary, a formal stakeholder map has not yet been documented.</p> <p>The use of hotels for homelessness accommodation was discussed, with the Board seeking clarity on the importance for them to be “sighted” on this issue, as noted in the risk register. The Head of Assurance clarified that the</p>	

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	<p>emphasis is on being aware of the associated risks, which will continue to be reported at future meetings.</p> <p>The Director of Customer Services provided an update on the review of the Homeless Service. Given the scale of the service, the review will take several months, and the Board will be kept informed of progress.</p>	
	RESOLVED: The SKylight Board took assurance from the contents of the report	
06	SAFEGUARDING ANNUAL REPORT 2024/2025 (ASSURANCE)	
	<p>The Director of Customer Services introduced the report to provide SKylight Board and Customer Focus Committee with assurance on the Safeguarding arrangements at Stockport Homes Group. Questions were invited. The discussion covered:</p> <p>The Board discussed safeguarding challenges, and Priti Butler offered to connect SKylight staff with individuals in her organisation to share best practices and provide assurance on SKylight's policies and procedures. The joint-funded social worker role was also discussed. Initially intended to be shared between SHG and social care, the role has become more focused on adult social care due to workload pressures. A Service Level Agreement (SLA) was established, and the Board noted that the role would be reviewed to assess its value for money.</p> <p>The role of contractors in safeguarding was also discussed. The Director of Customer Services confirmed that safeguarding is addressed during procurement, though there is always room to strengthen this further.</p> <p>The Head of Assurance added that the requirement for DBS checks are often part of the procurement process when appointing contractors, depending on the nature of the role. The Board were interested in the level of risk in the deployment of contractors who may not have DBS checks or training. The Director of Customer Services agreed to quantify the scale of contractor visits to aid in identifying the risk level.</p> <p>The Director of Customer Services noted that SHG and SKylight are frequently invited to safeguarding meetings by other agencies, particularly when concerns are significant.</p>	<p>PB</p> <p>AMH</p>
	RESOLVED: SKylight Board took assurance from the report.	
07	SKYLIGHT BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE (ASSURANCE)	
	<p>The Director of Customer Services introduced the report to provide an update to SKylight Board on the progress made against the fourth year of the Business Plan. Questions were invited. The discussion covered:</p> <p>The Board commended the updated business plan, noting that it is now more closely aligned with organisational aims. Despite a challenging year, the report was seen as very positive. The Board discussed the importance of understanding service user demographics and how SHG uses data to</p>	

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	<p>ensure appropriate support. The Director of Customer Services confirmed that progress is being made, particularly in projects like the pantries. It was agreed that future reporting will aim to provide service user data across all SKYlight activities.</p> <p>The Director of Customer Services explained that a new group Business Plan will be developed, under which will sit a dedicated SKYlight Business Plan, as well as a separate plan for the Recycling and Furnished Tenancy projects, while all of SKYlight's other projects will be incorporated into the overarching SKYlight Business Plan. The aim is to make the plans shorter and more visual in the future and discussion on the future Business Plan will be included at the SKYlight Board Away Day.</p> <p>It was suggested that the upcoming away day include a session on the review of different data types and case studies to identify areas for deeper analysis. This would help demonstrate how SKYlight is meeting its objectives and where further focus may be needed. The Director encouraged Board members to consider which service would benefit from a deep dive as it would not be possible to cover all areas.</p> <p>The Board also asked how SKYlight assesses service user journeys. The Director confirmed that a number of projects have frameworks in place and committed to continuing to enhance these to better evaluate whether services are reaching the right people.</p>	AMH
	RESOLVED: SKYlight Board noted and discussed the progress made	
08	SKYLIGHT PROGRESS & FINANCE UPDATE REPORT Q1 2025/26 (ASSURANCE)	
	<p>The Director of Customer Services introduced the report to provide a Progress and Finance update of SKYlight's business activity to the end of Quarter 1 2025/2026. Questions were invited. The discussion covered:</p> <p>The Board praised the comprehensive nature of the progress and finance report.</p>	
	RESOLVED: SKYlight Board noted and discussed the progress and financial position to date.	
09	SHG REPORTS FROM PREVIOUS QUARTER (ASSURANCE)	
	The Governance Officer noted the various reports from SHG Board and its committees, that have been uploaded to TeamEngine in the last quarter, which have implications for SKYlight and may be of interest for SKYlight Board Members.	
10	FORWARD PLAN (INFORMATION)	
	The Governance Officer introduced the forward plan of the expected business for 2025-26.	

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	Board members expressed interest in the “Funding the Future” event. The Governance Officer agreed to circulate further details.	JKEL
11	REVIEW OF THE MEETING	
	The Board concluded by commending the high quality and depth of the reports, noting that they provided substantial assurance. The breadth of SKylight’s work was acknowledged as extensive and impactful for the community.	

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