

SKYLIGHT BOARD MEETING**Monday 03 February 2025****16.30****SHG Boardroom, Cornerstone, 2 Edward Street****PRESENT / IN-ATTENDANCE:****Trustees (Present):**

- Priti Butler (via MS Teams)
- Nicola Firth
- Marie Gilluley (Chair)
- Tessa Wiley

Officers (In-attendance)

- Rachel Cossey, Governance Manager
- Samantha Donigan, Head of Assurance
- Anne-Marie Heil, Director of Customer Services (Lead Officer)
- Jonny Kelly, Governance Officer (minute-taker)
- John Kennedy, Assistant Director of Finance
- Julie Nelson-Hall, Social Inclusion Team Leader
- Martin Saunders, Head of Customer Access
- Amanda Ward, Head of Inclusion

01	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	Action
	<p>Kathryn Hanna (Board Member) and the Strategic Housing Lead sent their apologies.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
02a/ 02b	MINUTES FROM MEETING 04 NOVEMBER 2024 AND ACTION MONITOR FROM MEETING 04 NOVEMBER 2024	
	<p>Minutes from previous meeting approved.</p> <p>Progress with the action monitor was noted.</p> <p>A further update on action 01 was requested at the next meeting.</p>	AL
03	SKYLIGHT QUARTER THREE 2024-25 RISK REPORT AND THE 2025-26 SKYLIGHT RISK REGISTER (DECISION SUBJECT TO RATIFICATION)	
	<p>The Head of Assurance introduced the report to provide an update on delivery of the 2024-25 SKYlight Risk Register, present the 2025-26 Risk Register for Subsidiary Board approval, present the SKYlight Risk Appetite Statement for review, provide information relating to the Internal Audit Plan and provide a wider assurance update for Board Members. Key points of the discussions included:</p> <p>It was noted that no instances of fraud had been reported in Quarter 3.</p> <p>The Board agreed that it would be prudent for SKYlight to amend the risk rating for stakeholder understanding to 'amber'. This reflected concerns raised by SMBC, which had previously questioned whether SKYlight was the appropriate vehicle for certain projects.</p>	

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	<p>The Board discussed the risk relating to the financial management of SKYlight and enquired about the organisation's sources of financial advice. The Assistant Director - Corporate Finance confirmed that external auditors would be consulted on financial matters. Additionally, specialist advice on specific areas, such as tax implications, would be sought from experts when required.</p> <p>The Board reviewed the 2025/26 risk register and asked whether it should include risks related to regulatory compliance, such as safeguarding. The Head of Assurance confirmed that such risks were already covered within the SHG Risk Register, which applies to the entire Group.</p>	
	<p>RESOLVED: The SKYlight Board took assurance from the contents of the Quarter Three Risk Report, approved the amendment to the risk rating for Risk No. 4, approved the 2025-26 Risk Register, commented on the Risk Appetite Statement and provide feedback on the draft Internal Audit Plan for 2025-26.</p>	
04	<p>SKYLIGHT PROGRESS & FINANCE UPDATE REPORT QUARTER 3 2024/25 (ASSURANCE)</p>	
	<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 three 2024/2025. The discussion covered.</p> <p>The Board enquired whether any initiatives were underway to address the growing issue of youth homelessness in Stockport. The Director of Customer Services confirmed that there was a dedicated project focusing on youth homelessness. Additionally, existing services, such as homelessness prevention and mediation services, naturally cater to younger people and provide support or intervention where needed. The Director of Customer Services advised that Specialist Advisor on Youth Homelessness is visiting from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in March and would provide further insight and intelligence on best practice in supporting young people experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>The Board also highlighted that the risk appetite statement on the cover sheet, which classified 'Diversification and Growth' as 'open', was incorrect.</p> <p>The Board discussed the Social Supermarket, noting that 119 referrals had been received. They requested clarification on the referral sources. The Director of Customer Services explained that referrals came from multiple sources, including self-referrals and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).</p> <p>The Board discussed the government's announcement that Ukrainian nationals on specific schemes would be eligible to extend their visas in the UK for an additional 18 months. The Board sought clarification on the implications for SKYlight. The Director of Customer Services stated that SKYlight only fund one role which is mainly funded by funding received from SMBC, we have requested this continue. However without such support,</p>	

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	<p>many individuals would present as homeless to SHG, which would have a more direct impact on services and therefore if funding is not forthcoming from the council, the role will be funded via homelessness monies.</p> <p>The Board acknowledged the receipt of £85k in grants. They noted that £20k had been spent on a new van for the furniture service but requested clarification on how the remaining funds had been allocated, as this was not clearly detailed in the report. The Director of Customer Services confirmed that the report covered only Quarter 3, and the remaining funds had been allocated across other quarters, with the majority (£63k) spent on the Social Supermarket.</p> <p>The Board discussed engagement with offenders and whether the national early release scheme had resulted in additional funding. The Director of Customer Services confirmed that no additional funding had been provided but assured the Board that this had not posed a problem to date.</p> <p>The Board considered the forecasted overspend of £73k and asked whether savings would be made later in the financial year. The Assistant Director - Corporate Finance stated that if savings were possible, they would have already been forecast.</p> <p>The Board noted that there are currently 14 apprentices working within SKylight.</p> <p>The Board discussed the pilot program aimed at supporting young people who were not attending school. The Head of Inclusion confirmed that the initiative had recently commenced and was designed to provide mentoring to help young people re-engage with education. However, as SKylight had only one dedicated resource for this initiative, there were limitations in terms of capacity. The Board recognised the importance of maximising the impact of this resource and requested an update at the next Board meeting.</p>	AW
	RESOLVED: The SKylight Board noted and discussed the progress and financial position to date.	
05	SKYLIGHT BUDGET 2025/26 (DECISION)	
	<p>The Assistant Director - Corporate Finance introduced the report to present the 2025/26 SKylight budget to SKylight Board for approval. Key discussion points included:</p> <p>The Board noted that the risk appetite statement for financial management on the report cover was incorrect.</p> <p>The Board discussed the SKylight pension scheme (SHPS) and enquired about staff perceptions regarding lower employer pension contributions compared to SHG terms and conditions. The Director of Customer Services clarified that SKylight terms and conditions were for roles directly recruited to SKylight and that terms and conditions for employees employed prior to SKylight were not changed. She stated that new staff are given clear</p>	

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	<p>information about the different terms and conditions, that we have a transparent approach and that different terms and conditions are not uncommon in group structures within the housing sector.</p> <p>The Board considered the premises used for furniture recycling, noting that the lease would expire in June 2025. They enquired whether there was a risk that SKylight would be unable to extend the lease. The Director of Customer Services confirmed that negotiations were ongoing but noted that the situation had been complicated by the property owner's passing. She advised that in the worst-case scenario, the project would revert to its original location, which was not ideal but would allow operations to continue.</p>	
	RESOLVED: SKylight Board approved the 2025/26 budget.	
06	CUSTOMER VULNERABILITIES UPDATE (PRESENTATION)	
	<p>The Head of Customer Access provided an update on how customers with vulnerabilities were being supported, one year on from the initial review.</p> <p>The Board was informed that the Vulnerability Policy had been completed and that the number of vulnerability markers placed against customers had nearly doubled in the last 12 months.</p> <p>The Director of Customer Services noted that the Board had previously questioned whether 'vulnerability' was the most appropriate term. However, following an internal review, it was agreed that the term remained appropriate as it is widely used within the sector and by the Housing Ombudsman and the Regulator of Social Housing.</p> <p>The Board sought clarification on the definition of a vulnerability marker. The Head of Customer Access explained that it is a notation within the housing system identifying individuals with specific needs or vulnerabilities within a household.</p> <p>The Board enquired about the scope of vulnerabilities considered, such as age. The Head of Customer Access confirmed that while personal details are already recorded for all customers, this project specifically focused on illnesses and disabilities. However, other factors, such as age, were not excluded from consideration.</p> <p>The Board was advised that the project had no set end date but would naturally transition into standard operations within the next 6–12 months. A further update was requested at that time.</p> <p>Board Member Priti Butler offered to participate in any working groups related to this area to provide operational guidance and support.</p>	<p>MS</p> <p>PB</p>

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	RESOLVED: SKylight Board commented on the presentation.	
07	SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES' STRATEGIES UPDATE (ASSURANCE)	
	<p>The Head of Inclusion introduced the report to update SKylight Board on the progress made on SHG's Supporting Communities Strategy and explained how actions from the former Support to Civil Society Strategy had been incorporated within this wider strategy. The discussion covered:</p> <p>The Board emphasised the importance of synergy between SKylight and SHG to better support deprived communities and leverage external funding and support.</p> <p>The Board discussed whether the strategy's objectives were measurable and how success would be determined. The Head of Inclusion explained that the strategy focused on identifying needs and understanding communities and setting clear actions and objectives to be achieved based on such. The Board noted that the strategy would guide future investment decisions.</p> <p>An annual review of the strategy was requested.</p>	AW
	RESOLVED: Board noted the progress made against the Supporting Communities Strategic objectives and the inclusion of a new objective taken from the Civil Society Support Strategy, enabling the Civil Society Support Strategy to be discontinued due to the significant duplication between both documents.	
08	YOUR LOCAL PANTRY (YLP) UPDATE (PRESENTATION)	
	<p>The Social Inclusion Team Leader presented an update on Your Local Pantry (YLP), covering recent changes and their impact. The discussion covered:</p> <p>The Board was pleased to note strong attendance at the cooking sessions. They noted their importance for a number of customers, such as care leavers.</p> <p>The Board noted as 101 lapsed member were removed YLP was able to offer membership to 140 new members, bringing the total membership to 265, though numbers fluctuate weekly.</p> <p>The Board suggested exploring partnerships with local businesses that have strong corporate social responsibility commitments to secure additional support. The Social Inclusion Team Leader confirmed that this was a key focus area moving forward.</p>	JNH
	RESOLVED: SKylight Board commented on the presentation.	
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.	
11	REVIEW OF THE MEETING	
	<p>The Board agreed that it had been a productive meeting with robust discussion and debate.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Board for their engagement with the reports and presentations.</p>	

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