

PRESENT / IN-ATTENDANCE:

Trustees (Present):

- Marie Gilluley (Chair)
- Priti Butler (Via teams)
- Tessa Wiley
- Nicola Firth

Officers (In-attendance)

- Anne-Marie Heil, Director of Customer Services (Lead Officer)
- John Kennedy, Interim Director of Finance and Resources
- Kelly Cleaver, Senior Finance Business Partner
- Samantha Donigan, Head of Assurance
- Rachel Cossey, Governance Manager
- James Dunn, Governance Officer (Note taker)
- Andy Kippax, Strategic Housing Lead, Stockport Council
- Verity Gleave, Head of Marketing and Communications (Item 3 only)
- Kate Maddocks, Relationship and Growth Manager (Item 3 only)
- Sarah Smith, Head of Homelessness and Rehousing (Item 5 only)
- Jay Makipour, Inclusion and Support Services Manager (Item 6 only)

01	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	Action
	<p>The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming attendees, noting that Priti Butler was attending via Teams. There was no declarations of interest or apologies for absence.</p> <p>The Chair then led a heartfelt tribute to the late Kathryn Hanna, describing her thoughtfulness, commitment, and valued contributions to the SKYlight Board. Members reflected that Kathryn was passionate, community minded and dedicated, with Tessa and Anne-Marie sharing impressions from her funeral, highlighting the breadth of her voluntary work and the impact she had on others.</p>	
02a/ 02b	MINUTES FROM MEETING 23 OCTOBER 2025 AND ACTION MONITOR FROM MEETING 23 OCTOBER 2025	
	<p>The Chair invited comments on the previous minutes. No amendments were requested, and the minutes were accepted as an accurate record.</p>	

	<p>The Board reviewed progress on outstanding actions. It was confirmed that the risk regarding DBS checks on subcontractors had been noted. The Chair raised a question regarding national apprenticeship scheme changes recently announced, noting potential opportunities to expand apprenticeship placements. Members discussed the importance of monitoring forthcoming detail and ensuring SHG explores additional placements where feasible. Officers to keep the Board updated on apprenticeship reforms and opportunities for expansion.</p> <p>The recent SHG Board Away Day was discussed, where the Council’s Chief Executive, Councillor Michael Cullen, presented an update. The Board noted that his insights into the local government settlement and the upcoming town centre expansion were particularly valuable, highlighting the severe financial pressures on northern authorities and the innovative approach of establishing new schools to drive community development. Board members stressed that increasing numbers of Stockport residents, including new communities, would place further demand on SKylight and wider SHG services.</p> <p>Regarding feedback on reporting formats, members noted improvements in visuals and graphics within reports, although narrative content sometimes limited how much could be depicted. The Chair also acknowledged a positive update on the Live Well programme, now planned for a future Board meeting. The Community Fund was discussed, with members noting increasing demand and that additional funds had been allocated in the 2026/27 budget.</p>	<p>LJ & Gov Team</p>
<p>03</p>	<p>SKYLIGHT BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE (CONSULTATION)</p>	
	<p>The Head of Marketing and Communications and the Growth Manager presented an initial draft of the SKylight business plan direction, following consultation across service areas. They explained the plan’s design principles: a concise, public facing document emphasising clarity, accessibility, and distinct branding within SHG. They described the alignment with the Corporate and Stockport Homes delivery plans, and the approach to defining measurable annual aspirations across each service area.</p> <p>Board discussion focused heavily on the proposed strategic priorities. Members queried the wording around “maximising funding,” expressing concern that the phrase suggested income generation as an end in itself rather than enabling service delivery. A number of members felt that the current financial climate makes significant new funding unlikely, and suggested the priority should instead capture efficiencies, value for money, and delivering outcomes sustainably.</p> <p>It was also emphasised that relationships with the voluntary and community sector are strong, although public perception may not reflect this, and the plan should distinguish between actual partnerships and external misconceptions. Members also noted a need to recognise emerging needs identified through</p>	

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	<p>customer data, and to frame Live Well alignment in terms of reducing duplication and adding value rather than solely attracting funding.</p> <p>The style guide prompted additional discussion, the Board suggesting incorporation of trauma informed design principles and referencing existing colour palettes and guidance. Officers agreed to explore this.</p> <p>The Board asked when the plan would return and was informed it would be brought back in May with refined milestones and measurable outcomes. Members also raised the question of broader contextual information, such as demographic trends or Stockport specific challenges. The Director of Customer Services explained that this sits primarily within the Corporate Plan and Delivery Plan rather than the SKylight business plan itself as it is relevant across the entire group.</p>	VG / KM
	RESOLVED: That the SKylight Board noted and commented on the proposed business plan direction.	
04	SKYLIGHT BUDGET 2026/27	
	<p>The Interim Director of Finance and Resources introduced the budget context, reiterating the ongoing risks associated with reliance on Gift Aid but confirming that the SHG financial plan assumes sufficient Gift Aid will continue to support SKylight's existing activities. Upcoming proposals for Gift Aid payments will progress through ELT and Audit & Risk Committee. The Senior Finance Business Partner presented the draft 2026/27 budget.</p> <p>Board members raised several questions regarding use of minimum reserves and practical application of stress testing, noting difficulties in identifying meaningful actions if certain scenarios materialise.</p> <p>Officers clarified that reserve levels are already approved annually through the accounts but agreed this could be referenced more clearly in budget reporting. They explained that stress testing serves as both transparency and management planning across all companies in the group. Stress testing assumptions to be refined as part of group-wide annual process.</p> <p>Further questions related to funding stream exploration, with discussion clarifying that bidding is often reactive to external opportunities but aligned with established service priorities.</p>	
	RESOLVED: That the SKylight Board approved the 2026/27 budget.	
05	HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY OVERVIEW AND UPDATE	

	<p>The Head of Homelessness Services presented an overview of homelessness pressures and the development of Stockport's new homelessness strategy which is being co-produced by SHG and the Council. She emphasised the severe and worsening housing shortage across tenure types, reduced social housing turnover, and rising homelessness presentations (forecast 2,600 this year). She highlighted increasing reliance on B&B accommodation, which may be outside of Stockport, which incurs significant costs and hardship for households.</p> <p>The Board discussed the impact of Home Office accelerated decision-making on asylum claims and impact on statutory duties in relation to homeless families in particular. This is more of a challenge in Stockport due to there being two asylum hotels.</p> <p>Data also shows rough sleeping has risen sharply, with 48 individuals recorded in the annual count, an increase of 17 from the previous year total of 31. There was discussion on entrenched rough sleeping and options for specialist accommodation models. Board Members shared experiences from Liverpool involving small, supported units funded via enhanced housing benefit. Officers welcomed the insight while recognising feasibility challenges in Stockport.</p> <p>The Head of Homelessness Services confirmed that a detailed action plan accompanies the strategy, shared across multi-agency partners, and that political sensitivities around content were being actively managed before publication following May's elections.</p> <p>The Board requested the draft action plan to return to Board after going through approval processes.</p>	SS & Gov Team
	RESOLVED: That the SKylight Board noted and commented on the overview and update	
06	SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES' STRATEGY UPDATE	
	<p>The Inclusion and Support Service Manager presented a comprehensive update across the six objectives of the Supporting Communities Strategy. Members expressed strong appreciation for the progress, noting particularly the scope and impact of digital inclusion and employment initiatives. A question was raised about whether multiple Lottery awards referenced were part of a single or separate bids; officers agreed to confirm details. The Board welcomed the update and asked for key figures from the presentation to be shared in writing for reference.</p>	JM JM
	RESOLVED: That the SKylight Board noted the update on the Supporting Communities Strategy.	
07	SKYLIGHT RISK REPORT QUARTER THREE 2025/26	

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	<p>The Head of Assurance presented the quarterly risk update and proposed risk register for 2026/27. Two previously amber risks had returned to green following improved stakeholder perception and progress on the project position risk. Homelessness remained the only amber risk, reflecting pressures outlined earlier in the meeting. In reviewing next year’s register, it was proposed to remove the Carecall Business Plan risk, given its financial impact sits elsewhere within the group and is captured within the corporate register.</p> <p>A discussion was held on recruitment risks, the Director of Customer Services explained that there are some challenges with some roles, fixed term positions, and competition within the sector, but recruitment is being managed effectively.</p> <p>Members also queried the internal audit plan sequencing, including potential audit response to recent compliance issues. Officers explained the timeline, residual flexibility and alignment with lessons learned processes.</p>	
	<p>RESOLVED: That the SKylight Board gained assurance from the contents of the report, approved the changes to risk ratings for 2025-26, approved the 2026-27 Risk Register (subject to ratification by SHG Board), commented on the Risk Appetite Statement and provided feedback on the draft Internal Audit Plan for 2026-27.</p>	
08	SKYLIGHT PROGRESS & FINANCE UPDATE REPORT – QUARTER THREE 2025-26	
	<p>The Director of Customer Services introduced the quarterly report, noting both positive developments and emerging issues. Key highlights included progress on the Ageing in Place Pathfinder, the strong delivery of the Economic Inactivity Trailblazer with 22 placements underway and eight more to commence before March and exit planning for the Support to Succeed programme following GMCA’s decision to end the programme. The Community Fund was on track to fully allocate its remaining £6k. A specific spotlight was provided on Housing First, which remains financially favourable with improved funding and controlled expenditure. The year-end forecast position was a £118k favourable variance. Financially, the overall position to December is £166K favourable to the budget, with a year-end forecast position of £118k favourable to budget.</p> <p>Board members praised improvements in visual presentation and data clarity. A question was raised about a reference to Woodbank Hall and its potential use for veterans. The Director of Customer Services confirmed exploratory conversations had taken place, funded by a small community catalyst grant, although feasibility remains uncertain given extensive structural issues and the Board would be updated on any developments.</p>	
	<p>RESOLVED: That the SKylight Board noted and discussed the progress and financial position to date.</p>	
09	SHG REPORTS FROM PREVIOUS QUARTER (ASSURANCE)	

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	<p>The Governance Manager noted that a selection of SHG Board reports relevant to SKyLight had been added to Team Engine, including the Customer Experience Strategy, Age Friendly Strategy, corporate performance reporting, and delivery plan update. Members were invited to review these outside the meeting should they wish.</p>	
10	GOVERNANCE UPDATE	
	<p>The Governance Manager updated the Board on upcoming recruitment across all three boards during spring and summer 2026. SKyLight Board recruitment will take place after Stockport Homes and Three Sixty Boards, with up to two vacancies being recruited for.</p> <p>The Governance Manager confirmed that Stockport Homes Board members cannot form a majority on SKyLight Board.</p> <p>Members were encouraged to support the recruitment process by sharing information within their networks when available.</p>	
11	FORWARD PLAN	
	<p>The forward plan was presented for information, noting items expected for May and August meetings.</p>	
12	REVIEW OF THE MEETING	
	<p>The Chair invited reflections. Members felt the meeting had been productive, with open discussion and informative presentations, particularly on homelessness, the business plan and finance updates. There were no concerns raised, and the meeting closed with thanks to all participants.</p>	

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