



Solihull
Community Housing
Shaping our neighbourhoods

SCH Delivery Plan

2019 / 2020



Contents:

1. Foreword
2. About Solihull Community Housing (SCH)
3. Delivering the Solihull Council Plan
4. SCH Future Strategic Vision
5. What we will deliver in 2019 / 2020
6. Finance and Risk

Appendix 1: Key performance indicators

Appendix 2: Governance structure

1. Foreword

Welcome to the Solihull Community Housing (SCH) Delivery Plan for 2019/20

This Plan sets out SCH's key delivery priorities for the coming year, building on the work done since 2017/18 to progress the SCH Future Strategic Vision.

SCH Future Strategic Vision:

- Provide Homes;
- Improve Wellbeing;
- Strengthen Communities

At its heart the Plan is about partnership working:

- With residents – tenants, leaseholders and others who use and help shape our services
- With the Council – supporting and delivering activities to help achieve the priorities set out in the Council Plan
- With other key partners – health services, the police and fire services, housing association partners, voluntary and charitable organisations

The fundamental partnership that we have with our tenants and other residents who use our services is a key theme of this year's Delivery Plan. The work of SCH is primarily about supporting people, whether that is delivering services to individuals in need of specific housing related assistance or by generally improving homes and neighbourhoods, on our own and with others, to make them better places in which people can live and thrive.

Improving customer satisfaction and engagement, together with effective joint working with a range of partners, will increase prospects for achieving mutually beneficial outcomes within a challenging political, economic and social landscape.

Last year saw a number of significant developments for social housing. The Social Housing Green Paper promised following the Grenfell Tower tragedy was published in August 2018. Key themes included hearing the voice of residents, the condition and safety of homes, eradicating stigmatisation, improving performance and regulation of social landlords, and increasing the supply of social housing. SCH contributed to the Council's response to the Green Paper consultation document.



SCH Chief Executive,
Fiona Hughes



SCH Board Chair,
Richard Hyde

Towards the end of 2018, a new extra care supported housing scheme was opened at Saxon Court. This new build facility in North Solihull was developed by SCH in conjunction with the Council, and is an example of the contribution that SCH can make to meeting identified housing need. The decision not to implement the high value social homes provisions of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 was welcome; as was the rather unexpected announcement that Housing Revenue Account borrowing caps were to be lifted altogether. We will continue to support the Council in maximising the opportunities that this, and any flexibilities on the use of Right To Buy (RTB) receipts, may create for increasing the supply of much needed homes for social rent in Solihull.

The increased recognition of the importance of social homes for rent is positive, but very significant challenges remain. Brexit has dominated the political agenda, while Universal Credit, and other welfare reform and financial constraints, impact on many of our customers and requires that we continually reflect on how we can best maintain and, wherever possible, improve service delivery.

Solihull's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) shows that there are high levels of home ownership in Solihull (75% compared with 64% for England), but that housing costs are high and rising. 15% of the overall housing stock is Affordable Housing, lower than the West Midlands average. There are more households in housing need in North Solihull than in the rest of the borough. It is concerning that the homelessness

acceptance rate is nearly double the England average. However, the number of households benefiting from efforts to prevent homelessness has risen considerably and the number of households in temporary accommodation is lower than the rest of England (1.1 per 1,000 households, compared to an England average of 3.4).

Maximising income collection in the current climate is increasingly difficult for all social landlords. The requirement for increased support for persons who are homeless or threatened with homelessness brought about by the Homelessness Reduction Act is positive in intent, but the practical delivery of sustainable housing alternatives is problematic. While the number of households in temporary accommodation is lower than the England average, there is increasing pressure on this provision and, regrettably, we have seen an increase in the need to use hotel accommodation as a short-term response to the need for immediate temporary accommodation assistance.

Nevertheless, we continue to make good progress towards achieving the SCH Future Strategic Vision and this year, looking forward, we will begin to consider how we may refresh our strategic vision and reset our vision for 2020 - 2025.

At the core of what we do is providing safe, good quality homes, improving the environment around them and promoting the wellbeing of our customers. This year, we have developed a fresh brand to better reflect the entirety of what we do and which, hopefully, our customers will readily recognise and be happy to associate with.

2. About Solihull Community Housing (SCH)

2.1 Constitution and Governance

Solihull Community Housing is an Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) established in 2004 to manage housing services on behalf of Solihull Council. We are a limited company with one shareholder, which is Solihull Council.

SCH's Board is made up of four tenants, four councillors and four independent people chosen for their specialist skills and experience.

Our relationship with the Council is defined by a Management Agreement which specifies the services that SCH will deliver and how the Agreement is monitored and reviewed. This Delivery Plan is an integral part of the performance monitoring and service improvement process because it details how SCH will deploy the available resources in the most effective way to deliver the priority outcomes for the coming year.

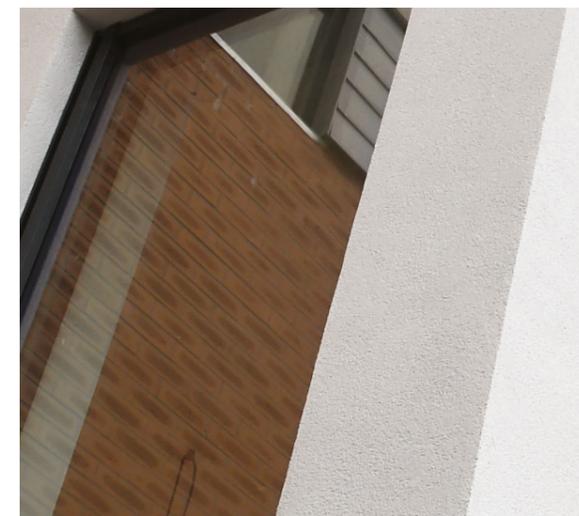
A comprehensive performance monitoring framework is in place and progress against key performance indicators and the Delivery Plan priorities is reported to the SCH Board on a quarterly basis. The Council oversees our performance by means of a Quarterly Monitoring Board, which is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Housing.

The governance arrangements for SCH consist of the SCH Board and its committees, as set out in Appendix 2. The framework includes a Scrutiny Panel made up of tenants and leaseholders.

The Regulator of Social Housing is now a stand-alone body and, following the Green Paper consultation, it seems likely that Consumer Standards will be subject to increased scrutiny. Solihull Community Housing will continue to support the Council in ensuring that these standards are met.

As reflected in our company name and the new SCH brand, our commitment to the 'community' of Solihull is paramount to our purpose.

Overall, SCH is uniquely placed through our connections to the Council and other partners, and through our closeness to local communities, to provide a holistic housing function and a range of other services for the benefit of Solihull residents.



2.2 Organisational Management Framework

The SCH Executive Management Team (EMT) consists of the Chief Executive, Executive Director Housing and Communities, Executive Director Asset Management and Development, Executive Director Customer and Corporate Services (Interim), and the Chief Financial Officer.

A broader Operational Management Team (OMT) comprising senior managers (including the Executive Team) meets on a monthly basis. Solihull Council Business Partners attend periodically and the group receive presentations from visiting agencies on matters of specific interest.

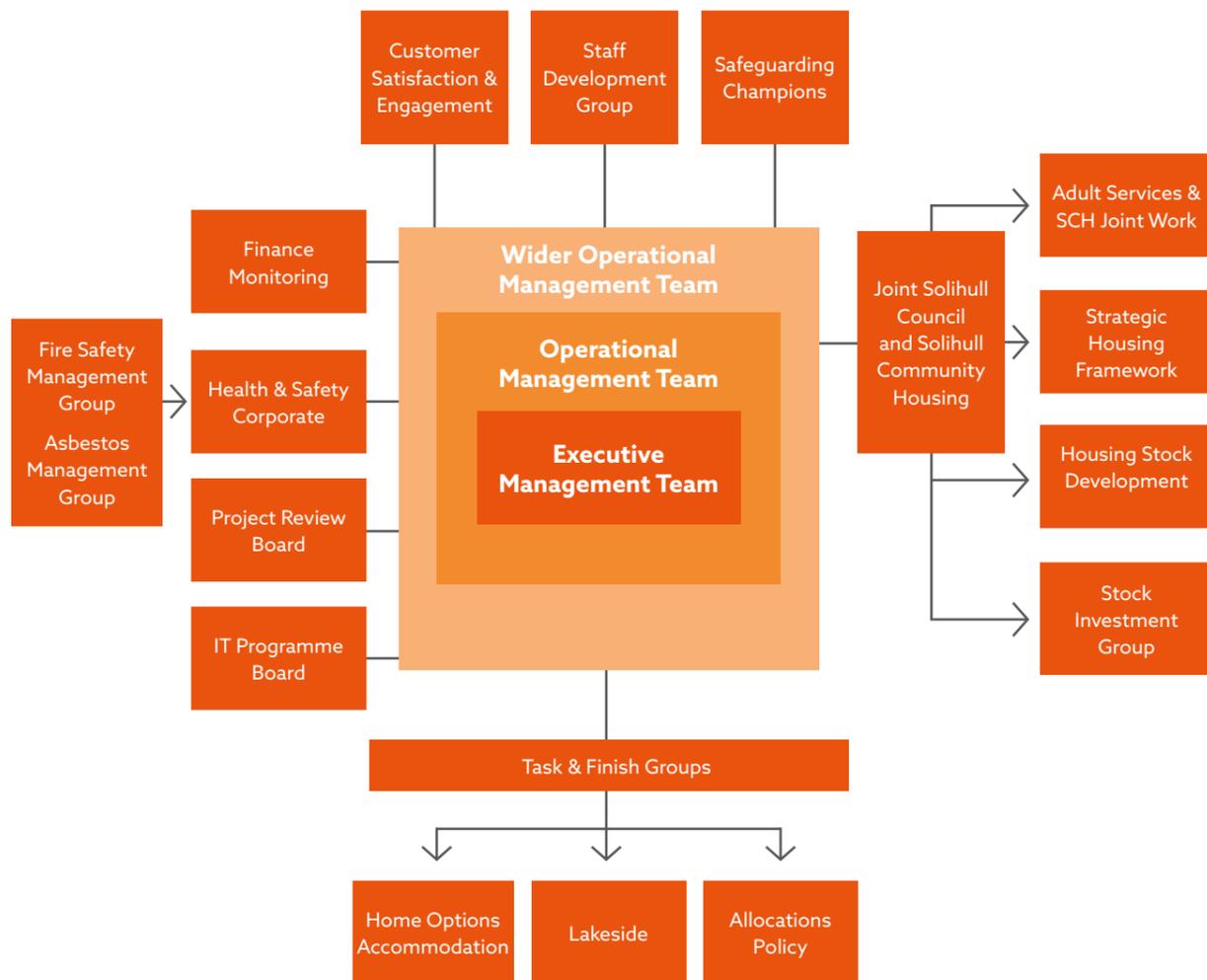
A Wider Operational Management Team (WOMT) comprising senior managers and their reports convenes every two to three months to receive

business updates and conduct workshops on issues of topical importance.

This core structure of management meetings is the organisational hub for making and communicating key operational decisions. A further tier of subject specific groups meet regularly and report back into the hub, as set out on the next page. Of particular importance is health and safety, and fire safety management.

Two new groups were established last year to focus on the priority areas of customer satisfaction and engagement, and staff development. The framework includes a range of Task and Finish groups focused on directing the delivery of specific projects and some of these are jointly run with Solihull Council.

Figure 1: SCH Organisational Framework



Solihull Community Housing - Fact File



1.

We manage just under 10,000 tenanted homes and some 1,200 leasehold properties, together with just fewer than 5,000 garages and a small number of shared ownership properties.



2.

We manage just less than 100 temporary accommodation units for homeless households in need of urgent accommodation, which are sourced from within the Council's own housing stock and supplemented by 40 plus properties acquired through private sector leasing.



3.

We employ just fewer than 260 FTE staff



5.

In addition, we maintain a co-located presence at the Better Living Centre and have a CCTV Control Centre. The St Basil's Youth Hub provides specialist homelessness prevention services for young people.



4.

SCH staff operate from three primary office locations: Endeavour House in Kingshurst, and the Asset Management Hub in Chelmsley Wood, together with a customer facing Housing Options Team in Chelmsley Wood town centre.

In the calendar year 2018 we:



Let
694
Council homes



Achieved a void
turnaround of
20 days



247
households were assisted with
rehousing when homelessness
could not be prevented or relieved



97.23%
of rents due were collected



461
households where
homelessness was
prevented or relieved



1,773
properties across all tenures had
adaptations carried out



163,890
telephone calls were received
into our Contact Centre



35,933
repairs were carried out



8,851
gas services were carried out

2.3 SCH Services

The housing functions carried out by SCH are delivered through the following core service areas:

Customer and Business Support

Activities:

This is a cross-cutting service area focused on customer contact and engagement providing support to frontline housing management teams:

- A telephone Contact Centre ¹
- Supporting customer satisfaction and engagement activity
- Complaints handling
- Policy planning
- Safeguarding
- Communications
- Performance management
- Governance support ²

Housing and Communities

Activities:

- Tenancy enforcement and estate services
- Tenure blind ASB response
- Income Collection
- Tenancy Support
- Money Advice
- Housing Options and Homelessness
- Wellbeing Service: supporting people to continue to live independently

Asset Management and Development

Activities:

- Day to day repairs and void properties
- Compliance (e.g. gas servicing)
- Fire safety
- Managing the capital investment programme
- Increasing diversity of housing supply
- Asbestos
- Procurement
- Supporting the Council in the supply of additional homes
- Providing environmental services through the Better Places Team

¹ The Council also provide frontline customer access to SCH services through Solihull Connect
² Human resources, equalities, IT, legal and financial services are provided to SCH from the Council



2.4 Working with our partners

Working in partnership is fundamental to our commitment to the borough and SCH is an active partner within the:

- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Safer Solihull Board
- Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) ¹
- Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB)
- Housing Options for Older People Board (HOOP)
- Housing Options for Younger People Board (HOYP)
- The Solihull Together Board
- Domestic Abuse Priority Group (DAPG)
- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) ²
- Multi-Agency Homelessness Forum (MAHF)
- Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)
- Harm Reduction Forum (chaired by SCH)

And at a regional level:

- The West Midlands Mayor's Homelessness Taskforce

1. Local Safeguarding Children Partnership by September 2019
2. Virtual member



3. Delivering the Solihull Council Plan

The work of SCH is aligned with the Solihull Council Plan 2018-20 (A step to 2020, a stride to 2025).

The Plan sets out the Council's Vision, Purpose and Values:

Vision:

Where everyone has an equal chance to be healthier, happier, safer and prosperous through growth that creates opportunities for all.

Purpose:

'Great Lives and Great Services' - to be an organisation that improves lives by delivering great services.

Values:

Open, honest, clear, approachable and keeping our promises.

The Plan sets out five priorities which represent the major steps that need to be taken to move closer to achieving the Vision:

1. Delivering inclusive growth
2. Planning and delivery of Solihull's low carbon future
3. Managing demand and expectation for public services
4. Developing and delivering our approach to services for the most vulnerable
5. Making the best use of our people and physical assets

These priorities will be delivered through a comprehensive set of programmes and activities. The Plan looks forward to 2025 with a review in 2020. Through the work set out in this Delivery Plan, SCH is contributing to each of these priorities, for example:



1. Inclusive growth: working with the Council to increase the social housing stock and implementation of locality working to underpin connecting opportunities for inclusive growth such as the emerging Inclusive Growth Corridor across North Solihull and East Birmingham.
2. Planning and delivery of Solihull's low carbon future: in supporting the 'Solihull Green Prospectus', SCH will work with the Council to identify opportunities to further Solihull's low carbon vision, such as in the delivery of energy efficient new build homes.
3. Managing demand and expectation for public services: this year we will launch the Customer Promise and publish a set of core service standards. Our work on community engagement also underpins this work.
4. Developing and delivering our approach to services for the most vulnerable: the SCH Wellbeing services and the provision of specialist housing for vulnerable customers.
5. Making the best use of our people and physical assets: staff development and intelligent investment in the existing housing stock are important aspects of our Strategic Priorities for 2019/20.

4. SCH Future Strategic Vision

SCH has a five-year Future Strategic Vision (2017 – 2022) designed to ensure that our service delivery and collaborative work with partners achieves impactful outcomes that are focused on meeting the priority needs of those we serve.

SCH 2022 Vision:

Provide Homes	Improve Wellbeing	Strengthen Communities
---------------	-------------------	------------------------

The Vision is underpinned by a set of specific objectives to be progressed through four key delivery themes, as set out below:

SCH 2022 - A Future Strategic Vision Provide Homes; Improve Wellbeing; Strengthen Communities

SCH Objectives	Delivery Theme	Outcomes
Provide warm, healthy homes and safe places to live	Team 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SCH is equipped to deliver the Future Strategic Vision Governance is robust and the leadership style motivates and nurtures Shared organisational culture and set of acceptable behaviours Focus on operational and cost performance reduces the cost to serve
Add social value through productive partnerships	Service 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear service offer and delivery specifications Managed customer expectations and negative behaviours addressed Accelerated channel shifting promoting digital inclusion Savings and efficiency targets realised to sustain core services
Make best use of assets and resources	Value 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fulfil a distinct social mission and set of social value services Operate fully productive partnerships with Solihull Council and other agencies Contribute to the delivery of the Solihull Council Plan and realisation of its outcomes Make a difference to Solihull residents and communities
Grow and diversify	Growth 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grow income from a range of diversified activities Build and acquire additional social rent and affordable homes Offer innovative housing products in response to local needs Ready to develop a range of affordable tenures
Innovate, evolve and learn		
Continual improvement		

During the course of 2019/20, we will refresh our Future Strategic Vision 2017-22 and develop a strategic vision for 2020-25.

5. What we will deliver in 2019/2020

Introduction

The SCH Future Strategic Vision (SCH 2022), objectives and delivery themes have directed our business priorities since 2017 and seen us through what has been a difficult period for social housing providers.

Significant achievements have included:

- Restructuring of front line services, including Asset Management and Neighbourhood Services
- Redesigned the homelessness service to comply with the Homelessness Reduction Act changes
- Launched a new Wellbeing service delivery model
- Developed and implemented a new Asset Management Strategy
- Developed new build schemes in conjunction with the Council, including a supported housing scheme for homeless persons and an extra care housing facility at Saxon Court
- Taken a lead role in the development and implementation of locality working
- Worked to maintain income levels while supporting tenants through a period of major welfare reform

However, since its conception, there have been some significant shifts in housing policy and, in this light, we will begin to review our strategic vision as we move through the coming year. In developing a refreshed vision and set of values, we will build upon the core elements of SCH 2022



and re-articulate our longer term goals against the background of an increasing focus on the purpose, value and potential of social housing to create our vision for 2020-2025.

While the primary focus of SCH continues to be the delivery of core housing services, we are committed to playing our part in effective partnership working to deliver beneficial outcomes for Solihull residents and communities. In particular, we recognise the role that housing can play in achieving healthier communities and SCH will promote and contribute to public health initiatives such as making homes 'smoke free'. We are also committed to supporting employment opportunities and provide an apprenticeship programme for a minimum of six entrants each year.

Last year, SCH developed a new corporate brand which we began to implement in 2018/19. Our new brand reflects the core of SCH:

- Creating Homes
- More Than Bricks and Mortar
- Strengthening Communities
- Customer Service
- Passion in People
- Working Together
- A Responsible Business

The new SCH brand better reflects the entirety of what we do now, our fresh outlook for the future and, in particular, our commitment to make a positive contribution to: **'Shaping Our Neighbourhoods'**.

SCH Strategic and Operational priorities

In planning the 2019/20 Delivery Plan, we have identified a number of strategic and operational (service specific) priorities.

These priorities are underpinned by our key performance indicators (KPI's) for 2019/20. These targets reflect the Delivery Plan priorities and will help to drive improvement across key service delivery areas. Where benchmarking information is available, our approach to target setting for 2019/20 takes into account top quartile performance in line with the SCH Board's aspiration to pursue excellent performance. When considering and setting targets, several other factors are taken into account:

- Historical performance
- Current performance
- Benchmarking, where available
- Resource requirements
- Any legislative changes that have either taken effect or are due to be introduced in the period
- Organisational priorities as set out in the Delivery Plan

SCH Strategic Priorities

SCH is introducing six strategic priorities for 2019/20, which are designed to further Solihull Council's priorities, align with national policy imperatives, develop our staff and, very importantly, produce a step change in customer satisfaction and engagement.



Strategic Priority 1:

To deliver a step-change improvement in customer satisfaction and engagement with SCH services.

Satisfaction survey results have shown that customers are generally happy with individual service transactions, although our latest perception survey response on 'overall satisfaction' with the SCH service has shown a decrease over the year of 7% (down to 72%). Addressing this will be an absolute strategic priority for SCH.

Effective customer engagement is key to ensuring we are delivering the services that customers need and in the way that they want to receive them.

How we will respond:

- Investigate the reasons for overall dissatisfaction
- Embed the importance of engaging effectively with customers across all service areas
- Increase SCH 'visibility' and opportunities for customers to engage with us
- Improve service delivery to customers

Delivery milestones for 2019/20:

- Deliver improved customer satisfaction as measured through KPI outcomes
- Implement a SCH wide refresh of customer excellence training
- Launch the Customer Promise and publish core service standards
- Review approach to tenant scrutiny
- Introduction of a new policy that will support earlier and swifter resolution of complaints
- Implement a revised customer engagement and involvement framework

Strategic Priority 2:

Utilise opportunities for stock growth in the context of the Solihull Strategic Housing Framework and invest intelligently in the current housing stock.

The Strategic Housing Framework, which is a key programme for delivering the Solihull Council Plan, is developing policy proposals against the following priority areas:

1. Accelerating housing delivery
2. How affordable housing can meet local needs
3. Improving the condition of private housing
4. Private rented sector housing
5. Wellbeing and specialist housing
6. Homelessness

This work is being overseen by a steering group comprising Directors from Solihull Council and the Chief Executive of SCH, reporting to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The SCH Development function forms part of the Asset Management Directorate. Embedding the partnership arrangements with the Council to establish a development pipeline to grow social housing stock and add value is a priority for 2019/20. SCH has been effective in bringing forward developments to meet specialist needs or to make best use of problematic sites. Given the policy announcements on lifting the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap and the potential for more flexible use of Right to Buy (RTB) receipts, this has been identified as a strategic priority.

SCH welcomes the opportunity for involvement in the regeneration of the Kingshurst centre and housing delivery, as a party to the relevant Project Board.

SCH is ideally placed to deliver a local development offer given our position and focus within the borough because:

- We are embedded within the community
- We are a local employer
- We have an ambition to increase the corporate footprint within the community
- We have a strong collegiate working relationship with Solihull Council
- We aspire to be a top performing social housing organisation
- We have a readiness to deliver an improved service offer through a commitment to undertake difficult projects

Effective, value for money, investment in the existing housing stock within SCH's management remains a priority. The Asset Management Strategy, approved in December 2017, incorporates an asset performance tool which is now being used to plan future stock investment decisions. A stock condition validation exercise has also been commissioned to inform this process.

The Asset Management Stock Investment Group was established jointly with Solihull MBC to provide oversight and challenge in relation to the review of the investment programme 2019-22, scrutinising assumptions made to date and ratifying key priorities.

During 2019/20 we will conclude the review of stock investment to facilitate the balancing of the HRA, with a concurrent focus on the following key areas of activity:

- Following the stock condition validation exercise, formally establish strengths and weaknesses and develop a stock condition action plan
- Highlight known future investment requirements, challenge proposals and phasing to align with budget allocation
- To develop and pioneer innovative procurement approaches to maximise funding opportunities
- Conduct a business case for consideration to review the retrofit of fire sprinklers in high rise homes

How we will respond:

- Embed the partnership with the Council to agree a development pipeline that will grow social housing stock and add value
- Support the Council's strategy for managing its garage sites and stock located within the borough
- Deliver approved recommendations arising from the Asset Management Stock Investment Group

SCH's stock growth and investment activity will complement the Council's Green Prospectus approach, supporting Solihull's transition to a low carbon, sustainable economy.

Delivery milestones for 2019/20:

- Collaborate with the Council on specific projects relating to stock growth and new build activities
- Consider the potential for SCH future involvement in Council owned sites
- Explore opportunities presented by the lifting of the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap to add to the social housing stock e.g. by increasing the acquisitions programme
- Start work on new build developments comprising 14 homes for shared ownership and 14 for social rent, including:

- Seven bungalows built to Passive House standards, providing energy efficient and environmentally friendly homes that deliver benefits in terms of fuel poverty and 'green' returns. The use of modular construction methods and utilising local labour, adds social value to our work and we will evaluate the potential for extending this form of development within the borough.
- Conclude the review to balance the Housing Revenue Account
- Embed the Asset Performance Tool and develop a plan for its application.



Strategic Priority 3:

Embed 'Safer Homes' as a core theme, integrating tenant engagement as an essential component.

The Social Housing Green Paper instigated following the Grenfell Tower tragedy was published in August 2018. A number of key themes emerged, not least of which was the safety and general condition of social housing stock, and associated engagement with residents. During 2019/20 SCH will embed 'Safer Homes' as a core theme, integrating resident engagement as an essential component. This will be progressed as a SCH strategic priority.

How we will respond:

- Implement learning from the Hackitt Review
- Investigate and implement good practice for effective engagement with residents
- Work effectively with partner agencies, in particular the West Midlands Fire Service
- Improved communication of key information and key messages

Delivery milestones for 2019/20:

- Safer homes information on website, and other digital platforms
- Drop in surgeries at high rise blocks
- Monitor and implement recommendations from the Hackitt Review
- Deliver accompanied fire risk assessments, involving residents in the programme of annual fire risk assessments
- All fire risk assessments will be Type 4 (intrusive) by the end of quarter 4, which will inform strategic oversight of the fire integrity of purpose built blocks of flats within SCH management

Strategic Priority 4:

Implement Locality Working.

During 2018/19, SCH led on the development of a locality working framework. Locality working focuses on involving local people, organisations and partners in shaping and delivering local services.

Significant progress was made last year, with a large number of stakeholders attending a launch event at the Renewal Centre. Attendees heard from Councillor Alison Rolf, Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities and Partnerships, Solihull Council's Chief Executive, Nick Page, and our Chief Executive, Fiona Hughes, who is leading this work. These introductory presentations were followed by workshop sessions facilitated by locality leads from Solihull Council, West Midlands Police and SCH.

Underpinning locality working will be preventative approaches to avoid more costly 'crisis' interventions. For example, the prevention of homelessness.

How we will respond:

- Embed the locality working framework, which will add value and consolidate SCH's place-shaping role.

Delivery milestones for 2019/20:

- Develop wider locality networks that engage and embed the role of the health, voluntary and community sectors
- Launch three locality plans
- Review locality opportunities for family and case specific joint working with partners



Strategic Priority 5:

Staff development.

Developing well-trained and motivated staff that display the skills and behaviours which reflect SCH's focus on excellent customer service and improving performance is a key priority.

Human Resources (HR) have worked closely with the Chief Executive and the Executive Team to develop a detailed work programme. A new HR Business Lead has been appointed to provide additional capacity within the team to support delivery of agreed priorities.

How we will respond:

- Deliver identified training priorities:
 - Customer service excellence
 - New behaviour framework as part of the appraisal process
 - Mental health first aid training
 - Safeguarding
 - Leadership development

Delivery milestones for 2019/20:

- Roll-out of a revised appraisal scheme
- Produce a work plan for the recently established Staff Development Group
- Review of HR policies, procedures and associated processes
- Development of the HR intranet and toolkits to support managers and promote self-service
- Hold a staff conference
- Produce an Organisational Development Plan
- Deliver a leadership development and culture change programme for staff
- Development of a staff wellbeing strategy
- Equality and diversity briefings and training to the SCH Board and staff



Strategic Priority 6:

Increase digital engagement.

Utilising the potential of digital technology is fundamentally important for redesigning our services in ways that improve customer experience and achieve value for money. Efficient automation, online convenience and high quality data will drive service improvement and support better engagement with customers.

How we will respond:

- Better use of IT equipment and tools to aid effective working
- Improve the digital offer to customers
- Better use of technology to improve communication and engagement with customers

Delivery milestones for 2019/20:

- Ensure effective implementation of customer self-serve through 'my SCH account'
- Implement a new CRM system
- Launch of a SCH 'App' for mobile devices
- Deliver an improved website and intranet
- Produce a plan to deliver digital enhancement



Operational Priorities:

Housing and Communities

Housing Options and Homelessness:

New duties introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) in April 2018, are placing significant additional demands on this service. The duties to 'prevent' and 'relieve' homelessness, to produce personalised housing plans and a duty on specified public bodies to refer persons into the service, have required the team to adapt to new systems and ways of working and, while the methods of recording are not directly comparable, evidence indicates that significantly more people are approaching for assistance.

This increase in demand, together with the fact that we are working with customers over a longer period of time, has also resulted in a higher number of households requiring temporary accommodation. As a consequence, there has been some placement of families in hotel accommodation.

SCH is the Council's main provider of homelessness services, with St Basils and the Solihull Integrated Addiction Service (SIAS) delivering services to particular customers. St Basils operate the Solihull Youth Hub service for 16 to 25 year olds, and SIAS assist singles over the age of 25 and those of any age who sleep rough. The Council and SCH, with the full cooperation of St Basils and SIAS, worked together very effectively to prepare for the implementation of the HRA changes. However, it is not always possible to predict the full implications of such a fundamental change and there has been significant learning from operating within the new

legal framework during 2018/19. Having verified the need for extra resources, the recruitment of additional staff, funded mainly through the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant, will establish the capacity required to further develop the service as we move into the second year of operation under the new legislative framework.

During 2019/20 we will also be continuing our work to consider larger office space for the customer facing Housing Options Team.

Increasing the range of prevention and alternative housing options is a priority area for development. Last year, SCH launched the Solihome scheme which aims to assist households with good quality privately rented accommodation. Not all households are in a position to access such accommodation but, as at the end of December 2018, the scheme had assisted 25 households. We will look to further develop this scheme during 2019/20, utilising Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and pursuing any government ('bid') funding opportunities. We aim to assist 40 households with suitable private sector accommodation in 2019/20.

Effective partnership working at local and regional level is key to tackling homelessness. SCH will support the Council and other partners in delivering the objectives of Solihull's new Homelessness Strategy, as well as contributing to the work of the West Midlands Mayor's Homelessness Task Force, including the introduction of the 'Housing First' initiative. Domestic violence is one of the main reasons

for homelessness. SCH manages the Sanctuary Scheme, which provides target hardening measures to enable some households to remain at home (those who choose to and for whom it is safe to do so). Domestic abuse is complex and the impact on victims, and any children in the household, is extremely traumatic. The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) launched its 'Make a Stand' pledge on domestic abuse last year and SCH has 'signed up' to the pledge.

This involves delivering on four focused commitments by September 2019:

- Put in place and embed a policy to support residents who are affected by domestic abuse
- Make information about national and local domestic support services available on the website and in other appropriate places so that they are easily accessible for residents and staff
- Put in place a HR policy, or amend an existing policy, to support members of staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse
- Appoint a champion at a senior level in the organisation to own the activity being done to support people experiencing domestic abuse

SCH is leading on a review of the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme. The review is progressing in two stages. By the first quarter of 2019/20 we will bring forward recommendations for amendments to the scheme in response to, and to align with, the Homelessness Reduction Act changes. The second stage will address longer term, more structural, issues such as an evaluation of the effectiveness of operating a Choice Based Lettings system in the current climate. This work, which falls within the remit of the Council's Strategic Housing Framework, builds on the foundations of an earlier review which was paused, primarily because of the impending changes to homelessness legislation. The review is timely as the Chartered Institute of Housing is carrying out research in this area as part of its 'Rethinking Allocations' initiative.

The Housing Allocation Scheme includes a Care Leaver Protocol and during 2019/20 we will be implementing an enhanced service to care leavers. This will include practical support of up to 8 hours for a care leaver moving into a tenancy for the first time.

In addition, a new lettings process will be implemented that puts the customer at its heart.

Income Collection:

The continuing impact of welfare reforms,

in particular the roll-out of Universal Credit, has had a very significant impact on many of our customers and on our ability to maximise income collection. As such, this is a performance management focus for 2019/20.

Possession action is very much a last resort and our Income Collection, Tenancy Support and Money Advice Teams work hard to help people to sustain their tenancies. We have had some success in this area already and the 'joined up' work of our Income Collection, Housing Options and Money Advice Teams will ensure that this trend continues into 2019/20.

We will continue to work very closely with the Council's Income and Awards Team and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), to mitigate, as far as possible, any affordability risks to customers arising from Universal Credit. In addition, we will work with Age UK now commissioned by Solihull Council to provide advice services in the borough.

Last year, we tested the use of 'Housing Contacts': an auto-dialler system designed to tackle lower level arrears by maximising opportunities for direct telephone contact with customers. The aim is that such early intervention will prevent rent arrears problems escalating to less manageable levels.

This year we will also give added impetus to our work in promoting the use of digital payment options by our customers.

Estate Management:

During 2019/20, we will be giving priority to improving our estate management service, in particular the external environment. This was an issue highlighted through our 'Join the Conversation' initiative whereby staff have been spending time in our local neighbourhoods speaking to customers to get their views on SCH services. SCH deal with fly-tipping issues and the Council take the lead responsibility for litter picking. A new KPI for estate inspections has been included for 2019/20, and we will work closely with the Council's neighbourhood teams to achieve an improvement in this area.

Wellbeing Service:

The SCH Wellbeing Service provides services to older and vulnerable people which support them to live independently in their own homes. This includes an alarm call service, contact / visiting support tailored to the individual needs of the customer, Handyman services and, where required, the use of assistive technology.

SCH works closely with the Council to ensure that the service is aligned with the strategic priorities of the Adult Care and Support directorate. At the end of 2018, the new build extra care scheme at Saxon Court was completed and became operational. SCH developed Saxon Court in conjunction with the Council and we will also be providing housing management services to the scheme. This is an example of how SCH can help the Council to meet the need for specialist accommodation and during 2019/20, we will be developing a comprehensive supported housing offer.

Delivery milestones for 2019/20:

- Embed the Housing Options and Homelessness staffing and working arrangements to maximise prevention and relief outcomes
- Review temporary accommodation requirements
- Continue our work to consider larger office space for the customer facing Housing Options Team
- Further develop the Solihome service and achieve 40 placements during 2019/20
- Implement a new lettings process that puts the customer at its heart
- Deliver the CIH Make a Stand pledge commitments by September 2019
- Bring forward Stage 1 recommendations for amendments to the Housing Allocations Scheme
- Implement an enhanced service to care leavers moving into SCH managed tenancies
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of the Housing Contacts contract on low level arrears recovery
- Deliver a campaign to promote the use of digital rent payment options
- Develop a supported housing offer
- Improve joint working with Solihull MBC Environmental Services to provide a more holistic response to customers



Asset Management and Development

Stock investment:

SCH will deliver stock investment through a capital works programme to the value of £16.1 million. The key projects are summarised below:

Capital Programme Key Projects 2019/20

Capital Works	Number of Units
Envelope and cyclical works to low rise flats	40 blocks / 160 properties
Reroofing - Flat	5 low rise blocks and 1 high rise
Reroofing - Pitched	90 houses and bungalows
Window replacements: low rise flats	125 units
Electrical test and improvement works	2000 properties
Central heating replacements	180 installs
Repair / overhaul lifts to high rise flats	5
Communal area decoration	48 sites
Sub Mains	10 blocks tested / 7 blocks upgraded

Repairs service:

Performance on repairs 'right first time' and 'appointments kept' needs to improve and this will be a priority focus for 2019/20. A Repairs Improvement Plan has been developed to drive increased performance in this area.

Garages:

Work on developing garage sites will continue, with three garage sites submitted for planning approval to deliver 21 housing units. In addition, some £100,000 will be invested to improve the garage stock.

Delivery milestones for 2019/20:

- Deliver the Repairs Improvement Plan
- To put customer service at the forefront of the investment and repairs service via a new Customer Service Team
- Deliver a stock investment capital works programme
- Conclude the work of the Asset Management Stock Investment Group
- Refocus our Compliance Team to become the 'Safer Homes Team', promoting simple, non-technical speak and understanding for our customers
- Embed a safety culture across our managed stock, engaging with and involving our customers in the safety aspects of the homes they live in

Customer and Business Support

Customer contact:

The SCH telephone contact centre is the primary first point of telephone contact for our customers. A business priority for the coming year will be to deliver excellent customer service through the contact centre alongside implementation of digital options to facilitate self-service and improve customer access.

SCH will also be implementing its new complaints policy and processes to achieve earlier and quicker resolution of customers' concerns.

Implementation of a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. This is an IT platform that will enable us to deliver a better service through more effective management of customer contact information and support greater consistency of approach in key services. These activities will support the SCH strategic priorities to improve customer satisfaction and increase digital engagement.

Performance management:

Outcomes from the annual HouseMark benchmarking exercise for the period ending 31 March 2018, showed generally improved performance. Overall operating costs reduced, our relative financial position compared to peers improved in relation to housing management costs per property; responsive repair costs per property; and major works costs per property. We also saw an improvement in performance with void rent loss and void re-let time in top quartile.

However, there was a deterioration in performance against some indicators and four areas of focus have been prioritised for 2019/20:

- Rent collection
- Responsive repairs – right first time and appointments kept
- Gas servicing
- Tenant satisfaction (identified as a Strategic Priority)

The KPI's for 2019/20 are set out in Appendix 1.

During 2019/20 we will also look to enhance our performance management framework by establishing an agreed methodology for measuring and reporting on the social value of the work carried out by SCH.

Governance:

The SCH Board underwent a comprehensive training and development programme last year. During 2019/20 there will be a Board appraisal carried out in line with SCH's Board Appraisal Policy. A fresh development programme will be developed based on the outcomes from the appraisal.

During 2019/20 the Board will continue to assess its performance and in particular look to match strong corporate governance models in other organisations.

Safeguarding:

The Contact Centre Service Support Team carries out valuable work to assist the Children's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and delivers 'face to face' safeguarding awareness training to our wider workforce. A comprehensive programme of safeguarding awareness sessions was delivered to all SCH staff during 2017 and 2018.

This year we will introduce a competency framework for multi-agency safeguarding training for those staff that require a more advanced level of training because of the nature of their work. This training will be mandatory and embedded through the staff appraisal process.

Delivery milestones for 2019/20:

- Priority focus on improving performance on rent collection; responsive repairs (right first time and appointments kept); gas servicing; and tenant satisfaction
- Carry out a SCH Board appraisal and develop a fresh Board development programme
- Introduce a competency framework for multi-agency safeguarding training
- Continue to implement the new SCH Brand
- Agree an effective measurement that will enable us to report the social value of our work

6. Finance and Risk

SCH is committed to sustaining service delivery quality while consistently delivering savings to work within a defined management fee. Working closely with the Council, we have embedded a robust system of financial control. This has enabled SCH to also assist the Council in achieving its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) by working on developing services that are aligned to Council priorities. We also contribute to the Council's MTFS process by participating in the Council's Budget Strategy Working Group that ultimately leads to the Council's agreed MTFS.

Over the coming years, the SCH Board is committed to reviewing how budgets are prepared.

The implementation of the Asset Management Strategy developed by SCH for Council housing stock will inform an intelligence based approach to future investment decisions that will consider the whole life cost of property. Capital investment for either property maintenance or development will be agreed through the Council.

Risk Management

Any emerging issues arising from Delivery Plan activity will be identified and recorded on the relevant risk register. All risks will be monitored regularly in accordance with SCH's Risk Management Framework.

The Grenfell Tower tragedy and subsequent inquiry and review processes increased the focus on the safety of homes, in particular fire safety. This was reflected in the Social Housing Green Paper published in August 2018, where safe and decent homes featured as a key theme.

SCH is very concerned to ensure residents' homes within our management continue to be safe. 'Safer homes' is a priority theme and our risk management oversight has been enhanced to reflect this. The SCH Board is taking a proactive role in the scrutiny of our fire risk and safety arrangements, with a new 'Audit and Risk' Committee having been established.



Delivery Plan Milestones 2019/20

Strategic Priority	Milestones	By When
1. Deliver a step-change improvement in customer satisfaction and engagement	• Deliver improved customer satisfaction as demonstrated by KPI outcomes	Q1-4
	• Implement a SCH wide refresh of customer excellence training	Q1
	• Launch the Customer Promise and publish core service standards	Q1
	• Review approach to tenant scrutiny	Q4
	• Introduction of a new policy that will support earlier and swifter resolution of complaints	Q1
	• Implementation of a revised customer engagement and involvement framework	Q3
2. Utilise opportunities for stock growth in the context of the Solihull Strategic Housing Framework and invest intelligently in the current housing stock	• Collaborate with the Council on specific projects relating to stock growth and new build activities	Q1-4
	• Consider the potential for SCH future involvement in Council owned sites	Q1-4
	• Explore opportunities presented by the lifting of the HRA borrowing cap to add to the social housing stock e.g. by increasing the acquisitions programme	Q1-4
	• Start on site: two new build developments comprising 14 homes for shared ownership and 14 for social rent, including seven homes (bungalows) built to Passive House standards	Q3
	• Conclude the review to balance the Housing Revenue Account	Q1
	• Embed the Asset Performance Tool and develop a plan for its application	Q2

Delivery Plan Milestones 2019/20

Strategic Priority	Milestones	By When
3. Embed 'Safer Homes' as a core theme, integrating tenant engagement as an essential component	• Safer homes information on website, digital platforms	Q1
	• Drop in surgeries at high rise blocks	Q1-4
	• Monitor and implement recommendations from the Hackitt Review and associated improvement plan	Q1-4
	• Deliver accompanied fire risk assessments, involving residents in the programme of annual fire risk assessments	Q1-4
	• All fire risk assessments will be Type 4 (intrusive), which will inform strategic oversight of the fire integrity of purpose built blocks of flats within SCH management	Q4
4. Implement Locality Working	• Develop wider locality networks that engage and embed the role of the health, voluntary and community sectors	Q1-4
	• Launch three locality plans	Q1
	• Review locality opportunities for family and case specific partner joint working	Q3
5. Staff Development	• Roll-out of a revised appraisal scheme	Q1
	• Produce work plan for the Staff Development Group	Q1

Delivery Plan Milestones 2019/20

Strategic Priority	Milestones	By When
5. Staff Development (continued)	• Review of HR policies, procedures and associated processes	Q3
	• Development of the HR intranet and toolkits to support managers and promote self-service	Q4
	• Hold a staff conference	Q2
	• Produce an Organisational Development Plan	Q1
	• Deliver a leadership development and culture change programme for staff	Q4
	• Development of a staff wellbeing strategy	Q1
	• Equality and diversity briefings and training to the SCH Board and staff	Q4
	•	
6. Deliver digital engagement	• Ensure effective implementation of customer self-serve through 'my SCH account'	Q1
	• Implement a new CRM system	Q1
	• Launch of a SCH 'App' for mobile devices	Q1
	• Deliver an improved website and intranet	Q1
	• Produce a plan to deliver digital enhancement	Q3

Operational Priorities

Service Area	Milestones	By When
Housing and Communities	• Embed the Housing Options and Homelessness staffing and working arrangements to maximise prevention and relief outcomes	Q2
	• Review temporary accommodation requirements	Q2
	• Continue our work to consider larger office space for the customer facing Housing Options Team	Q1-4
	• Further develop the Solihome service and achieve 40 placements during 2019/20	Q1-4
	•	

Operational Priorities (Continued)

Service Area	Milestones	By When
Housing and Communities	• Deliver the CIH Make a Stand pledge commitments by September 2019	Q2
	• Bring forward Stage 1 recommendations for amendments to the Housing Allocations Scheme	Q1
	• Implement a new lettings process that puts the customer at its heart	Q1
	• Implement an enhanced service offer to care leavers moving into a SCH managed tenancy	Q1-4
	• Monitor and evaluate the impact of the Housing Contacts contract on low level arrears recovery	Q1
	• Deliver a campaign for the use of digital rent payment options	Q2
	• Develop a supported housing offer	Q2
	• Improve joint working with Solihull Council Environmental Services to provide a more holistic response to customers	Q1-4
	•	
	•	
	•	
	•	
Asset Management and Development	• Deliver the Repairs Improvement Plan	Q1
	• To put customer service at the forefront of the investment and repairs service via a new Customer Service Team	Q1
	• Deliver a stock investment capital works programme	Q1-4
	• Conclude the work of the Asset Management Stock Investment Group	Q2
	• Refocus our Compliance Team to become the 'Safer Homes Team', promoting simple, non-technical speak and understanding for our customers	Q1
	• Embed a safety culture across our managed stock, engaging with and involving our customers in the safety aspects of the homes they live in	Q3
	•	
	•	

Operational Priorities (Continued)

Service Area	Milestones	By When
Customer and Business Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priortiy focus on improving performance on rent collection; responsive repairs (right first time and appointments kept); gas servicing; and tenant satisfaction and produce a position statement to measure progress against the SCH Board's performance ambitions and expected outcomes 	Q2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out a SCH Board appraisal and develop a fresh Board development programme 	Q1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce a competency framework for multi-agency safeguarding training 	Q1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue implementation of the new SCH Brand 	Q3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree an effective measurement that will enable us to report the social value of our work 	Q4



Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2019-2020

Ref	Title	Target 18/19	Target 19/20
Neighbourhood Services Income Collection and Welfare Reform			
NS1	Percentage of rent collected of rent due	97.90%	98.00%
NS2	Percentage of leaseholder service charges collected	98.50%	99.00%
NS4	Percentage of rent paid by digital means including Direct Debit	50.00%	60.00%
WR3	Reduction in areas due to Money Advice Team intervention	£220,000	£350,000
Tenancy and Estate Management			
NS9	Percentage of flatted blocks passing inspection (cleaning)	new	98.00%
NS10	Percentage of scheduled estate inspections completed	new	90.00%
NS33	Percentage of ASB cases closed with successful resolution	95.00%	97.00%
Home Options			
HO1	Average stay in temporary accommodation (all) - days	100	112
HO3	Average stay in temporary accommodation (Budget hotels) - days	42	10
HO5	Percentage of homeless approaches where prevention or relief achieved	40.00%	60.00%
Wellbeing			
WB1	Percentage of Minor adaptation works completed on time	97.50%	99.00%
WB2	Percentage of Major adaption works completed on time	95.00%	99.00%
WB20	Net gain of paying Wellbeing service users	revised	108

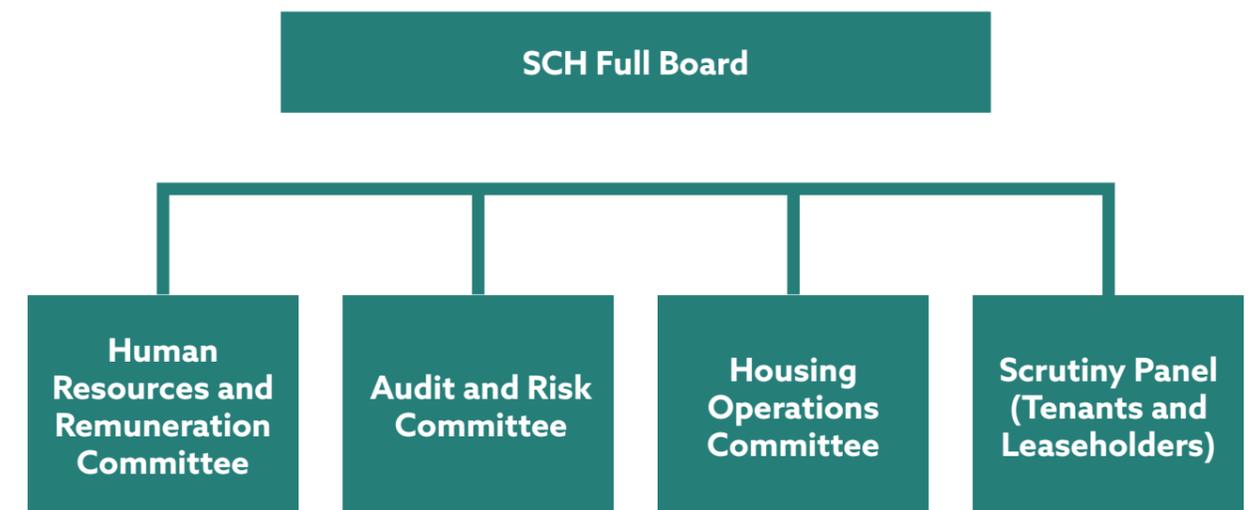
Ref	Title	Target 18/19	Target 19/20
Asset Management			
AM1	Percentage of properties with valid gas certificate	100.00%	100.00%
AM2	Percentage of repair jobs completed in timescale - All repairs	98.00%	99.00%
AM3	Percentage of appointments made - Response repairs	95.00%	98.00%
AM4	Percentage of appointments kept - Response repairs	96.00%	98.00%
AM7	Percentage of repairs completed right first time	90.00%	94.50%
AM17	Average number of repairs per property	2.92	2.78

Voids and Lettings			
VL1	Average re-let time of voids - days	19	18
VL13	Percentage of rent loss due to voids	0.90%	0.90%
VL16	Number of Lettable voids	85	85

Corporate			
CR1	Percentage of complaints resolved at stage 1	95.00%	97.00%
CR5	Short term staff sickness days	4.00	4.00
CR11	Enquiries resolved at first point of contact (Contact Centre)	80.00%	85.00%
CR28	Digital Inclusion customer portal	New	10.00%

Customer Satisfaction targets					
	Focus Area	Target Q1	Target Q2	Target Q3	Target Q4
AM19	Satisfaction with response repairs service	90%	90.5%	91%	91.5%
VL19	Satisfaction with new home	81%	83%	85%	87%
NS6a	Satisfaction with ASB case handling	84%	85%	86%	87%

Appendix 2 SCH Governance Framework





Get in Touch

Join us on social media:

 facebook.com/solihullcommunityhousing

 [@solihullhousing](https://twitter.com/solihullhousing)

 [solihullcommunityhousing](https://instagram.com/solihullcommunityhousing)

 [Solihull Community Housing](https://www.youtube.com/SolihullCommunityHousing)

Freepost RLSS-UEBA-RTUZ

Solihull Community Housing
Endeavour House
Meriden Drive
Solihull B37 6BX

Phone: 0121 717 1515

Typetalk: 18001 0121 717 1515

Text: 07781 474 722

Email: info@solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk

Website: www.solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk

