

Meeting	Development & Strategic Investment Sub Committee	 Shropshire Towns and Rural Housing
Date	Wednesday 12 February 2025	
Time	10.00am- 12.00pm	
Location	Teams Meeting	

Present:

Members

Jo Grivell (JG)	Executive Assistant (Minute Taker)
Harpreet Rayet (HR)	Managing Director
Andrea Martin (AM)	Board Co-optee
Emma Webster (EW)	Assistant Director of Development & Regeneration
Megan Claydon (MC)	Housing Commissioning Officer Shropshire Council
Jenny Daisley (JD)	Strategic Housing and Commissioning Manager Shropshire Council
Steve Robinson (SR)	Board Member and temporary Chair
James Woods (JW)	Operations Director
Ros Jones (RJ)	Corporate Director
Alex Hawley (AH)	Sustainability Manager
Richard Amos (RA)	Tenant Board Member

<u>1.</u>	<u>Introduction</u>	<u>Action</u>
	<p>SR agreed to Chair the meeting in the absence of the new Chair, Kathy Jones who will be joining as a new STAR Board member from March 2025.</p> <p>As there several new attendees to the meeting, members introduced themselves and their roles.</p>	
<u>2.</u>	<u>Declarations of Interest</u>	
	No declarations of interest declared	
<u>3.</u>	<u>Approval of Minutes of Meeting 26/11/2024 and Matters Arising</u>	
	<p>The minutes from the previous meeting were approved.</p> <p>The actions from previous meeting were reviewed and updates can be found in the table at the end of the minutes.</p>	
<u>4.</u>	<u>Development and Regeneration Update including Shared Ownership</u>	
	<p>Report was presented by Emma Webster and taken as read.</p> <p>EW gave the following overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development team have been focussed on the temporary accommodation programme. The deadline for completion is Summer 2025 and it is important to meet that timescale to ensure the Council can benefit 	

	<p>from the savings made for people they currently have in bed and breakfast accommodation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been a lot of technical issues uncovered during the construction stage which means the timeline has been extended. Most of the projects for the temporary accommodation programme are refurbishment programmes. • Have now got approval to enter into a JCT to complete the works at Parish Rooms. • Coton Hill has already been approved but will need to be taken back to Council to approve because of an additional £600k costs that will be required. This is to address a well that has been discovered under the site, amongst other technical issues. • There is a letter of intent for Racecourse to recommence the work. There has been some delay with this also, because of the challenges with warranty and insurance of existing works. The original contractor went into liquidation, and it was a challenge for any company to take on the works from a previous contractor. It is hoped to complete in the Summer 2025. • We will need to change the shared ownership properties at Racecourse to affordable rental as there is a mortgageability problem meaning lenders will not lend against the properties. Have spoken to Homes England about the change of tenure. • Weston Court is in for planning and there is talk of using LAHF 3 funding if forthcoming. • The development team is working through the acquisition of Section 106 properties at Ellesmere and Oaklands and in the process of getting approval to do the same with S106 at London Road. • Also working on acquiring S106 at Albrighton but through another developer Boningdale. • Have had to hand back some grant money. This has been reported to STAR Board already as the schemes at Russell Close and Fairfields did not work in their current format. In the process of getting the sites ready and awaiting Homes England announcement of funding available to progress. • The team continues to work on the development pipeline for STAR and have some other land additionality through the CDL pipeline. <p>Questions and Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RA asked as there is quite a new scheme, how it ties up with the people on the housing list. What is the process? EW advised the triage process enables properties to fit to the housing waiting list. One of the first things done is to ensure that we can rent the properties. Lauren Woods assesses all opportunities with the development team to ensure we have the right location and tenure type and specification to meet housing needs. • RA asked how the new properties are integrated into the community. EW explained that the development team essentially provide a service to STAR and will work closely with the housing management team to ensure the properties are handed over as per the programme and Housing management will work with the community once they are handed over. • SR asked if there are any lessons learned being applied. HR stated that one is to ensure that the development team are involved before purchase is made to mitigate some of the risk and costs on these new development site. New Action #18 Simon Hodgetts from CDL has been asked to do a lesson learned report which will be brought back to the committee in Q3 once all the refurbishment projects have been completed. 	EW/SH
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SR asked what the risk is of not getting funding. HR advised there is a massive influx of Right to Buy claims and STAR needs to use the receipts within 5 years. As there is currently no clarity on spending from government STAR could use the RTB money. The preference is for Homes England funding, so RTB is used to fund any specialist housing. SR asked what STAR's shared ownership market is like. EW advised all properties have been sold. HR advised that Wrekin and Connexus are retreating from shared ownership market so STAR will be the only option within Shropshire and strategically it is really important that we can offer SO and need to keep the supply coming through. EW will focus on increasing the Shared Ownership portfolio. AM asked if there is a process that if you can't sell shared ownership can they go back to rental. There are some further conversations to be had in this area but selling them generally isn't a problem. AM highlighted that the programme is very heavily waited to North Shropshire. This is a known challenge. AM asked if anything is being done to look at void rates for new properties as tenant can experience some issues with the new builds, such as lack of parking and having to pay management fees for POS, so might lead to people wanting to switch back to older stock. Are STAR keeping a track on the voids across the business. New Action # 21 HR stated that have not got insight on internal transfers but will ask Lauren Woods to look into this and report back during Q3. RA asked what specialist housing is being delivered. HR advised about the Housing LIN report that has been commissioned to look at this. There is a meeting on 13/ Feb 2025 to discuss and once the work is completed the team will be developing a business plan to address it. JD advised the Housing LIN report focussed on older people, sheltered and nursing and community care because of the aging population. It also focusses on learning disability and mental health and have been working with different providers to understand need. It also looks at adapted accommodation for wheelchair and adaptation for people who foster, so that children don't need to move into care. There is also focus on people with autism or more complex needs but who want to live independently. New Action #19 HR advised when the final draft report is completed it will be shared. CDL will be looking at strategic planning for building but need to understand the demand and what the future demand is and how to turn that into delivery. <p>The committee noted the contents of the report.</p>	HR
<u>5.</u>	<p><u>Sustainability and Strategic Investment Update</u></p> <p>The report was taken as read. Alex Hawley and James Wood gave the following update, both who have only just joined the organisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AH stated on target to deliver all of the properties identified in Wave 2.2. There are 111 properties, and they are more than half way. That will mean that 111 properties will have gone up to a comfortable SAP C score, 	

by doing various energy measures.i.e., fitting solar panels, new doors, windows, insulation top ups. Wave 2.22 is coming to an.

- Waiting for the outcome of the funding bid for Wave 3. Everything is being prepared, have tendered for partners to do the work and can mobilise when ready.
- From a sustainability perspective it is all quite positive and some of the feedback from customers is that they are receiving the benefit of solar panels for example.
- JW has only just started with the business. Have been looking closely at the PIP. The current forecast is a small underspend for this year but are looking at some short-term options of redirecting some of those savings to a roof improvement programme to spend the money before the financial year.
- It was made clear any funds that are reinvested will be genuine savings and not an underspend from components that have not been delivered.
- For future years the team will be looking to mature thinking on PIP to make sure we are clear that the investment figures match the 30-year plan, spending money appropriately and listening to feedback from customers. One example is the rewire programme where we are taking a different approach. Trying to rewire with people in situ is not ideal and it leads to complaints and resident dissatisfaction. We are looking to make some minor changes to the PIP as a result.
- HR highlighted some of the legislative changes. Awaab's law is going to be implemented in October. James has started to do some work on Health and Safety rating system with Helen Williams. There is the damp and mould working group, and there is a lot of work going on within the asset space to make sure we can get them up to the standard. There will be a lot of change in the next 12-18 months.
- STAR is also capitalising the staffing costs within the investment and sustainability programme to ensure we can afford to deliver these large scale delivery programmes.

Questions and Comments

- SR commented that underspend is an issue, but he was relatively comfortable with it. He stated that what is missing from the report is the areas we should be concerned about. Decent home compliance is mentioned but he didn't get a sense of where the Board should be concerned.
- AM commented on the stock data. 43% of the surveys were completed by end of December. She asked if there is a different way to do that to get more data. STAR has a lot of staff interacting with tenants and visiting their properties and asked could they collect the data.
- HR stated would be at 80% complete by the end of the year. The focus will be on how to pick up the backlog. There is now a bigger ask of our stock condition surveyors. They are doing Decent Homes and EPC's. Sustainable measures will now take priority over gas boilers etc. We need to clear the backlog and capitalise the costs which result in work. All staff have had training on the Health and Safety rating system, and as part of

	<p>the new Housing Management system implementation there is an opportunity to do that assessment if they are on site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JW added that if we listen to tenants, they get fed up with the number of times we go into their homes. The difficulty with asking people to report is that it is subjective, and this leads to inconsistency in the data. Having our own stock condition surveyors means they have a finite view of each property. Using the expertise to do this becomes more important with EPC. We need to get on top of the backlog. • HR suggested having a simple process of how we do the surveys. Regulators will be looking at whether we are going out, and understanding the issues, are we resolving and getting them externally verified and are we picking up all the issues. There is a need to get the different data sets and validate them so there is one version of the truth. <p>New Action # 20 The team will bring a position paper in relation to this, stating this is the surveys we're doing, this is the programme, this is what we're doing during the next 12 months. This is some of the training we are doing and how we're going to make sure we have data integrity. We might get it validated. Normally you get it validated every three years.</p> <p>The Committee noted the contents of the report.</p>	JW/AH
<u>6.</u>	<p><u>Development/Strategic Investment Approvals – Parish Rooms</u></p> <p>The report was taken as read.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SR asked for clarity on whether approval was required. • HR clarified it has been approved by SMT, and by the Board. There is an update on the costs, and it is still within the cash envelope and in the business plan. It is just an update on the details not for a decision. • EW stated that it was important there was an audit trail to show the changes and the acknowledgement that we will be entering into a JCT for the Parish Rooms. <p>Content of the report and update were noted.</p>	
<u>7.</u>	<p><u>Forward Plan Review</u></p>	
	<p>This item was to highlight the changes that had been made to the DSSI committee membership and that Kathy Jones would be taking the Chair position going forward.</p> <p>There will need to be some onboarding for Kathy. HR asked that JW and SR support her with the first meeting on April 17th. If there could be a meeting between JW, KJ and SR in particular to share some of the strategic background of the meeting and how it has evolved.</p> <p>There will still be four meetings each year. The scheduled dates remaining are:</p>	

	<p>April 17th July 14th October 29th</p> <p>Laura Fisher from the Council has been invited to the meetings as she is providing support with JD on the development activity. From an officer perspective HR suggested Helen Williams should attend meetings as well as Alex Hawley. HR also suggested possibly inviting Simon Hodgetts for technical updates if needed. New Action # 22 James McGlone to work with the team to ensure the relevant people attend the meetings going forward.</p>	
<u>8.</u>	<u>AOB</u>	
	None.	

Action Tracker:

Below is a snapshot of the new DSSI action tracker. Any closed items are filtered out once meeting minutes are signed off but are still available on the main action tracker if required.

Action #	Date of DSSI Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Status	Action Owner	Action Due By	Updates
10	24-Apr-24	Abovo Training	Abovo training session to be carried forward to the Spring	Ongoing	EW	17 Mar 2025	Update 12/2 Agreed that would do a 30-minute session on Abovo at the STAR Away Day on 17 March 2025.
12	26/11/24	Development	Provide the committee with update on the impact of switch of tenure at Racecourse.	New	EW	17 Apr 2025	Update 12/2 The appraisal is now with Finance as there is some changes to the contract value. Have spoken to Homes England about the change in tenure and there is an increase in insurance and warranty cost. An updated paper will be provided to the next committee.
13	26/11/24	Development	EW to include the issue with delays being caused by lack of resources in the legal services department within the Council, in report to the Board.	New	EW	17 Mar 2025	Update 12/2 There has been a number of conversations with the Council, and it was a topic at the CDL Away Day. JD is now working on a revised process for the decisions delegation and reviewing local government rules around delegation of authority. The overall process will be looked at to streamline where possible for example where CDL has offered to underwrite the legal costs to ease burden on the legal team. Action Ongoing.
14	26/11/24	Development	HR to raise delays being caused by lack of resources in the legal services department within the Council with Dean Carroll and Jane Trethewey.	New	HR	9-Dec-24	Update 12/2 There has been a number of conversations with the Council, and it was a topic at the CDL Away Day. Action Closed.
15	26/11/24	Development	To raise the issues on delays caused by Shropshire Council at the next Asset and Assurance Board.	New	EW	29-Jan-25	Update 12/2 There has been a number of conversations with the Council, and it was a topic at

							the CDL Away Day and highlighted at the AAB. Action Closed.
16	26/11/24	Strategic Investment	LC to plan for an external assessment in Q2 2025 and plan into the budget.	New	LC	17 Apr 2025	Action ongoing
17	26/11/24	Strategic Investment	LC suggested a spot check of data and provide a sample to the Committee at the next meeting.	New	LC	17 Apr 2025	12/2 This action is ongoing.
18	12/02/25	Development	Simon Hodgetts from CDL has been asked to do a lesson learned report on delays for TA and other programmes which will be brought back to the committee in due course.	New	EW/SH	17 Apr 2025	
19	12/02/25	Development	HR advised when the final draft report of the Housing LIN is completed it will be shared. CDL will be looking at strategic planning for building but need to understand the demand and what the future demand is and how to turn that into delivery.	New	HR	17 Apr 2025	
20	12/02/25	Sustainability and Strategic Investment	The team will bring a position paper in relation to stock condition surveys, stating this is the surveys we're doing, this is the programme, this is what we're doing during the next 12 months. This is some of the training we are doing and how we're going to make sure we have data integrity, and it might be we get it validated. Normally you get it validated every three years.	New	JW/AH	14 Jul 2025	
21	12/02/25	Development	HR stated that have not got insight on internal transfers but will ask Lauren Woods to look into this and report back in due course.	New	EW/LW	14 Jul 2025	
22	12/02/25	Forward Plan	Laura Fisher from the Council has been invited to the meetings as she is providing support with JD on the development activity.	New	JM	17 Apr 2025	

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