


<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Shropshire Towns &amp; Rural Housing Limited Board Meeting</b>	 Shropshire Towns and Rural Housing
<b>Date</b>	<b>Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026</b>	
<b>Time</b>	<b>13:00-18:00</b>	
<b>Location</b>	<b>Ptarmigan House</b>	
<b>Members Present:</b>		
<b>Tony Deakin (TD)</b>	Independent Board Member and Chair	
<b>Lynn Fonseca (LF)</b>	Tenant Board Member	
<b>Kathy Jones (KJ)</b>	Independent Board Member	
<b>Irina Wood (IW)</b>	Independent Board Member	
<b>Rebecca Royle (RR)</b>	Independent Board Member	
<b>Mark Owen (MO)</b>	Council Board Member	
<b>Paul Hayward (PH)</b>	Independent Board Member	
<b>Non-Members Present:</b>		
<b>Harpreet Rayet (HR)</b>	Managing Director	
<b>James Wood (JW)</b>	Operations Director	
<b>Ros Jones (RJ)</b>	Corporate Director	
<b>Joanna Grivell (JG)</b>	Executive Assistant and Office Manager/Minute Taker	
<b>James McGlone (JM)</b>	Governance and Risk Manager	
<b>Paula Mawson (PM)</b>	Service Director – Communities and Customer (Shropshire Council)	
<b>Julie Brock (JB)</b>	Client and Strategy Officer (Shropshire Council)	
<b>Laura Fisher (LaF)</b>	Housing, Resettlement and Independent Living (Shropshire Council)	
<b>Jenny Daisley (JD)</b>	Client Officer (Shropshire Council)	
<b>Apologies:</b>		
<b>Laura Tyler (LT)</b>	Assistant Director – Joint Commissioning (Shropshire Council)	
<b>Duncan Kerr (DK)</b>	Council Board Member	
<b>James Owen (JO)</b>	Housing and Leisure Portfolio Holder	
<b>Richard Amos (RA)</b>	Tenant Board Member	

Agenda Item	Agenda Item	Who	When
1	<p><b>Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies from Duncan Kerr, Rich Amos, James Owen and Laura Tyler.</p> <p>No declarations of interest were raised.</p>		
2	<p><b>Minutes of Last Meeting: 15<sup>th</sup> December 2025</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was agreed that the minutes were a true and accurate record of the last meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2025.</li> </ul>		
3	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update on Action 63: TD said two years ago there was a formal appraisal process which involved external consultants for the Board members. Last year it went back to the arrangements where the Chair has individual discussions with Board members. During this time there had been the elections so there was a lot of change with the Council representatives on the board and there were a couple of new tenant Board Members and also changes amongst Independent Board members too. The Chair will pick up annual reviews before the AGM in October.</li> <li><b>Action 69: TD has picked out the general trends from those discussions rather than having individual forms completed. We will go back to having a more formal process this year. The trends that were picked up from tenant board members was the realisation that there was a lot of reading to do and a lot of acronyms. One suggestion is to avoid the overuse of acronyms and look at where we can develop dashboards rather than having lengthy reports to try and reduce the reading.</b></li> <li>Tenant Board members also flagged the training. TPAS is useful for them. When they had the ALMO conference, they had Tenant Board Members present from other ALMOs and TD is keen we establish those links particularly with the local ones in the Midlands. It would be useful for our tenant board members to exchange ideas.</li> <li>For independent board members, there was an issue around timing of the meetings. It is easier for TD who is retired. A survey was done recently to see what the best times were. There is a clear split in terms of different times when people can attend. For the subcommittees it is doing them early from 8am-11am or early evening from 4pm-6pm or 5pm-7pm. We need to go back out and target either an early session or a late session.</li> <li><b>Action 70: We also need to overlay the Board meeting timings with Council Cabinets and full Council meetings which are generally on a Tuesday and Thursday which was the preference for our Board</b></li> </ul>	<p>RJ/GG</p> <p>JMc</p>	<p>15 Jun 26</p> <p>15 Jun 26</p>

	<p><b>meeting. We will also speak to individual subcommittee members to identify a preferred date for meetings.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR recommended moving all the subcommittee meetings to either early or a late start and to keep the Board Meetings under review as we can't do a Tuesday or a Thursday due to the full Council meetings. suggested that we could have different time periods for the different subcommittees. There needs to be a discussion with the individual Chairs. For the Board meetings for those who have to travel it may not be suitable to be driving later in the evening. In the summer it may not be an issue. This will be kept under review.</li> <li>• HR said it is important that we focus on full board attendance because of some very important decisions being made.</li> <li>• JW expressed how important it is in relation to when the regulator visits and they look at some minutes of the meetings and identify that they've got full attendance for one subcommittee and Board cycle, but the minutes show the previous cycles we had an unbalanced attendance from Executives, Board members, and Council and we need to fix this now and be ready and prepared for the regulator to turn up.</li> <li>• TD agreed it's important and a high priority. They expect the Board to hold Executive Management to account and to challenge which you can't do if you don't attend.</li> <li>• IW asked if we are in line with the regulations at the moment, and that attendance seems even. HR said we have had some inconsistent attendance for some of our subcommittee meetings. CSS &amp; HR&amp;R have been generally strong, DSSI and FAR a bit more inconsistent. The regulator will probably look at over 24 months cycle. We need to be as flexible as possible to allow Board members to attend in person to the main board and the same with our subcommittee meetings.</li> <li>• <b>TD is keen to establish the MS Teams link for meetings so people can attend as would rather they attend online than not attend at all.</b></li> <li>• <b>Action 89: HR said there has been a discussion on doing a performance review for Board members to include which meetings they have attended, e.g. how often they attend over a 12-month cycle and that would be shown to all Board members moving forward. JMc to share the matrix of meeting attendance.</b></li> <li>• Training was flagged in the reviews. TD expressed where we have brief sessions before the Board they seem to work well. They are more informal and we are able to have more in depth discussions. What doesn't work well is when we try and cram in too much in the formal board meetings. For the training of Board members, we do need these continual sessions, and they are more value if we have them pre-Board meeting.</li> <li>• TD mentioned he is glad we are looking at the importance of the risk register. We've had those sessions now. It is key as a company that we're having that analysis of what the registers are. The other aspect is the decisions that we make in the meetings and the cumulative impact of our decisions.</li> <li>• TD confirmed that this year we'll be having more formal sessions and looking at new software to make capturing Board appraisal feedback easier.</li> </ul>	JMc	15 Jun 26
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	<b>Noted those closed and in progress – it was approved</b>		
4	<p><b>Action Tracker Review</b> The action tracker was reviewed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action 49: JD said the Council has drafted the governance structure and it is now being reviewed. This will be shared with STAR Housing once it has been agreed internally by Officers at the council and is put forward for approval.</li> <li>• Action 51/52: Briefing for Councillors with STAR stock in their area, is being arranged by JG to share the changes to the tenancy agreement and complaints.</li> <li>• Action 58: This was covered by the presentation on the projects by GG immediately prior to the Board.</li> <li>• Action 59: Emily Parry has begun reaching out to Board members to do a focus on them in the weekly director update.</li> <li>• Action 67: Visit to the Parish Rooms for a PR event. HR said it will be difficult for us to go inside the Parish Rooms as they are fully occupied now. There would be safeguarding issues associated with that. We are planning a stock tour, so we could pass through there during the stock tour.</li> <li>• There were 14 recommendations that we are proposing to close. The Board agreed with the recommendations to close these actions.</li> <li>• There are 8 actions that are still open, which are still in progress with some specifically discussed under the minutes section.</li> </ul>		<p>April 26</p> <p>March 26</p>
5	<p><b>Health and Safety Update</b> HR gave an update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have completed a health and safety tender and decided to move forward with Safety For. We are in pre-contract negotiations now. Once this has been finalised, we'll look to enter into contract with them.</li> <li>• Within the report there is a lot of detail in relation to the number of external audits that have been undertaken by Safety For colleagues and how we are looking to implement the SHE policy across the organisation. There is an update on the E-learning courses on health and safety.</li> <li>• HR stated the key concern in relation to health and safety is incident reporting. There is a lot of working currently going on with our operatives to make sure they are reporting incidents and making sure that is it recorded appropriately on the system, making sure that they are taking action against any patterns that are emerging. This is being emphasised in the directors update and through our toolbox talks.</li> <li>• In terms of where we started at a low base and where we have got to during the last 12 months, we have seen a marked improvement.</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The area for reflection and learning remains around reporting and cultural issues that we need to focus on moving forward.</li> <li>• JW has done a lot of work with our contractors through all the tenders that have been undertaken. SafetyFor is now reviewing all the tenders as part of the tender process and making sure that when we bring people in to work with us, they've got the highest requirements in relation to health and safety.</li> <li>• The focus will be on our three main areas which are our operatives, our frontline support such as housing management team and our main contractors working in our properties.</li> <li>• <b>Action 71: PH asked about the cause for concern form. HR said the cause for concern form is when one of our operatives or somebody raises a concern about a property or an individual, and making sure that information is being passed correctly within the organisation and people are working together to get this resolved. HR said we will report the cause for concern in more detail going forward. The forms would go to HR, RJ, JW and SMT members.</b></li> <li>• PH asked about the training compliance, most of them are at 50%-60%. Is that where we'd expect it to be at this point in the year? HR said we would expect them to be at 60%-80% with everyone having to complete their training by 30<sup>th</sup> June. There is bit of a push on that at the moment. If they don't complete the courses by that date, we will be communicating to our staff that they need to complete these courses to work safely.</li> <li>• PH asked the Employee Forum what the health and safety issues are for staff and for information on the solo protect devices. HR said we're doing quite well with the solo protect compared to historically where we have been. We have got some statistic on this. In terms of the strategic and operational health and safety meetings, a lot of the issues at the moment are around training and having the right equipment. Operatives are being made aware what the expectation is in relation to workwear and safety equipment. Previously this hasn't been enforced but we will now.</li> <li>• JW said we have got a very productive DLO, they are doing over 300 repairs a week and WIP is around 9 days. We suffer from the team just wanting to get on and do the job so the constant educational piece around we are here to keep you and our tenants safe never stops. We had four new team members about three months ago, and two haven't made it and they were the ones that came from the private sector. People can't adjust to the controls we've got in place. This has been an interesting bit of learning for us and helped with the recruitment process in the future, as we need people who are proactive. We have some assistant supervisors that support the two supervisors that are more office based to makes sure we have got additional spot checks being done.</li> <li>• <b>PM agrees with the points about how this has been embedded into working practice and make that cultural change. It's important the work JW is doing with the team. PM asked if it would be worth having some clear targets around the training, particularly for those staff where it's deemed an essential mandatory part of their role. Action 72: Include targets for H&amp;S training as part of staff's</b></li> </ul>	KB	15 Jun 26
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	<p>objectives. KB to include in the objectives and for progress to be reported back to Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Action 73: PM asked about section 5.2 and the issues with the SLA with the Council in terms of the reporting around incidents and why that didn't get resolved. PM said she can pick this up offline with HR. HR explained for the benefit of the other members that previously all the H&amp;S reporting was through ERP but the only people who could access the information completely was the health and safety team within the Council. They advised us that they didn't have the capacity to get the information out and send on to us. HR and PM to explore this further offline.</b></li> <li>● MO asked how the 9 employees found the mental health training course. HR said one of the key recommendations we had from the staff survey and through the SHE was to have more mental health first aiders on the floor. One of the key issues which the Board have discussed previously was the number of absences we had due to long term mental health challenges. What we found worked successfully elsewhere is having people on site where they can have a conversation with a member of staff. The feedback we've had anecdotally is it was really useful and hopefully it will help them to have more a structured conversation.</li> <li>● HR said it's good we've got the people who have that training within the business but it's instant support. Where people need more support, we have got OT referrals and referrals to counselling. It is an initial door open, and we will monitor whether it leads to less absences especially long-term absences.</li> <li>● <b>Action 74: RR asked about the Safety for Housing award. The weighting is interesting – the 60/40 split and then for them to be the highest awarded in terms of quality. RR would like to know more about the decision-making process. HR confirmed it is probably for Gary Stephens to talk through the tender process. HR suggested to put RR in contact with the procurement manager. RR agreed as would like more assurance on that. JW explained our procurement lead is a third-party company with a lot of experience. We've found it quite useful having this as external particularly having to navigate the new procurement act rules and so every step we take with a procurement is overseen by a third party.</b></li> <li>● JD asked if they are going to start looking at near misses and RIDDOR. JW confirmed yes. TD said it's important even if there are no incidents, it's recorded. JD said it's the same for near misses as it shows the themes that come from near misses.</li> <li>● TD asked about the training percentages, board is at 20%. Is there training that the board are missing? RJ confirmed that she has checked with the HR department, they're under the impression that they have sent out notifications to do the training but clearly there is a discrepancy. RJ to ask Human Resources to send them again today, both the links to Kallidus for the training and for access to People First.</li> <li>● <b>Action 75: TD said he was aware that there was an agreed training programme for Board Members, and have discussed having the sessions before the board meetings. Some of the training like data security and EDI etc., there are training modules but we need to flag</b></li> </ul>	<p>KB</p> <p>HR/PM</p> <p>HR/GS</p>	<p>15 Jun 26</p> <p>15 Jun 26</p> <p>15 Jun 26</p>
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	<p>that during the year we will expect you to do this. TD wasn't aware there was certain timescales. RJ confirmed that in the induction policy that was approved in December, there are six mandatory courses listed and this is what is on Kallidus. HR said we need to be clear with Board members what courses they need to complete and also looking at people on the board who have completed similar courses elsewhere to count for training so not doing it multiple times. There are gaps in information being sent to all Board members. This will be clarified.</p> <p><b>The Board noted the contents of the report.</b></p>	KB	15 Jun 26
6	<p><b>Building Safety Update</b></p> <p>JW gave the following update and the report was taken as read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We've got 152 oil appliances and 50 LPGs. We've identified there is a high chance of high fuel poverty in those households because of events around the world. Building Safety is triggering this from an asset point of view that these people need visiting, we need a neighbourhood officer there and somebody from Assets to try and convince the tenants to go onto an air source heat pump. This shows as an organisation that we are responding to emerging threats, and we have a deep level of understanding of our stock.</li> <li>• We've got 411 air source heat pumps. Over the last eight years, STAR have had a number of funding programmes which has helped us get air source heat pumps installed. The remaining oil sources in the stock are people who have rejected the opportunity to have an air source heat pump on a few occasions. They are generally people who are living in more remote places. It's about understanding our stock and going out to revisit these peoples and get them on air source heat pumps.</li> <li>• We are behind with air source heat pump servicing as of the end of February 2026. The reason for this where our air source heat pumps approach the end of their natural lives, generally we would expect 8 to 10 years out of an air source heat pump compared to 15 years out of a gas boiler, as we have been servicing them we are finding a few more issues than we would like. The team have appointed a new contractor and now we undertake an in depth condition report, as well as the service. That looks at the overall installation to see how we can extend its lifecycle, reduce breakdowns and any periods of out of service and then undertake any of the rectification work. The deeper dive has stretched resources, but we will be back up to date by the end of March. It's not ideal that it is out of date but it's not the risk of any other type of heat source.</li> <li>• TD raised about our teams making tenants aware of the assistance from the government in relation to the oil situation. JW confirmed we have got a little bit remaining in the hardship fund for this financial year so we're reaching out to customers that we know have been struggling to see if there is anything we can do to help. Hopefully this announcement from the government will help bridge the gap. The real solution is proper engagement, selling the benefits of transferring onto air source heat pump combined with thermal improvements such as</li> </ul>		

	<p>triple glazing and solar panels. We would like to see this number reduce.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JW said at the end of last year, before the cost of oil increased, we had two formal complaints because people felt that we were trying too hard to get them away from oil.</li> <li>• MO asked about the repair problems with the air source heat pumps, was this a batch issue or a manufacturing issue on the type of pump. JW confirmed it's a mixture of a few things. Standards around the installation of an air source heat pump seven years ago are different compared to today. A lot of lessons have been learned as this was a very new technology then. There are some defective install issues that we are having to rectify but it's generally down to an aging stock of air source heat pumps.</li> <li>• <b>Action 76: MO asked for a glossary of acronyms that are used at the top of the report. JMc confirmed he would add that to future reports.</b></li> <li>• The regulator is getting more concerned about No Access. We have drawn a line in the sand for no access within Ops and the policy we need to follow, and benchmark is our gas policy. We know we get into every property with gas, or it is capped. The assurances for Board members is we know our no accesses. If we can't get in, we need to understand why we can't get in, what methods have we tried to get in. We are putting a lot of effort to triangulate several approaches. The report shows how few properties we are now not able to get access to.</li> <li>• IW asked how visits are adjusted if people are working. JW confirmed that certainly from our servicing point of view, we have evening appointments available, we have cover 24/7. JW confirmed there is no extra cost for this. There is a relatively finite number of slots for evenings and weekends but it is no costs. No access generally comes back to the sector being a bit ignorant around how much we go into our tenant's homes with all the checks, inspection and stock condition surveys. Lots of people don't want that and deliberately avoid us even though they don't really know what we want. What it generally means if we can't get in through the front door is there is something going on that we need to know about.</li> <li>• IW asked if it possible to try to reduce the number of visits by combining them in one especially if we can cover a few areas. JW explained that we try our best, but it can be difficult because of the timing of visits and we can't pull forward one test certificate to match in with another. We do remind the team frequently about being sensitive that we are going into people's homes.</li> <li>• STAR has had some issues with our core servicing contractor Liberty Group. Liberty was acquired by WPS Group, a private entity, at the end of 2024. The integration into their core business happened during mid-2025. They've introduced new software which has led to some reporting challenges. Liberty Group went from being owned by a housing association to being owned by a big corporate company. We have had a couple occasions where CAT 1 attends have been missed. We have had to introduce daily calls which has been happening up to three times a day to make sure we have a clear picture as to what's going on. There is always a risk with such a key service being outsourced. HR and JW have been discussing that we would like to</li> </ul>	JMc	15 Jun 26
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	<p>bring an element of servicing in house to give us a bit more control. We may have to advance those conversations because we do have reservations concerning our contractor. This is a make-or-break period for this relationship that if it turns around and we can see that it was just a bump in the road and that our team hand holding them has got them over that bump. If we don't see an improvement, we are going to need to think outside the box to make sure we've got assurance the key services are always there for STAR tenants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Action 77: HR said that STAR is not the only customer having issues with Liberty Gas. TD is concerned over the risks around bringing the service in house. He would like some assurance about the overall strategy, what are the pitfalls around bringing the service in house and what to avoid. JW said it is a long-term approach. We needed to put some measures in place but any exit or change in direction is long term.</b></li> <li>● PH said it is positive to see the reduction in the capped gas. Well done to the team on getting those numbers down.</li> <li>● PH asked about the gas numbers in the report. It has zero overdue but our figures are still showing 99%. JW confirmed it's a property that we've brought back that has come in with the same UPRN. It is currently still a void as it is having works undertaken on it to make it ready to let again but it shows on the dashboard. JW confirmed again there in nothing overdue. PH said it should show that the gas safety check is at 100%.</li> <li>● LF asked what the timeframe is for getting the air source heat pumps back on track. JW confirmed that by the end of March everything will be serviced.</li> <li>● LF asked with the cap, is there a way of understanding which ones are the void properties and which ones are tenanted. JW said what's quoted as capped there, is our occupied properties on gas that are capped. They are all complicated tenancies. If someone tells us they don't want gas, we revisit it a year later.</li> <li>● PM asked to clarify the timeline in the report for damp and mould cases. JW confirmed the data on the damp and mould was up to 4<sup>th</sup> February 2026. We have had a bit of a spike throughout February. In late February we have had two CAT 1s and two decants, which will be reported in the next period but they have hit the reporting timelines.</li> <li>● <b>Action 78: PM asked has there been any lessons learned from the Manor House in Much Wenlock. We went in thinking it was one thing, but it needed much more significant work. JW said there has been a number of cases this winter that have not been what they appeared on the surface. The Strategic Asset Management Committee have discussed this. We will be bringing an end of season wash up to the next Board. It will be our first year of reporting against Awaab's Law. We've got new elements of Awaab's Law coming in this October. JW will present how we are prepared, what we thought Awaab's Law would look like, this is the reality and this is our response 2026/2027.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>The Board noted the contents of the report and approved the new format of report.</b></p>	<p>JW</p> <p>JW</p>	<p>15 Jun 26</p> <p>15 Jun 26</p>
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7	<p><b>New Decent Homes Standard</b></p> <p>JW gave the following overview and the report was taken as read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We felt this is the right time to bring this forward to show this is our understanding and approach to the new standard.</li> <li>• As of 16<sup>th</sup> March, there were 29 non-decent – 11 were HHSRS failures, 7 were condition that was not a component, 9 were component related and they are all in programmes. That leaves 2 properties that we are proposing to divest.</li> <li>• IW asked what happened to the two divestment properties. JW confirmed these are properties we are looking to take out of the stock. These two are part of the regeneration of Castlefield in Oswestry. Through stock condition surveys we've identified these failures but they are being regenerated.</li> <li>• <b>Kathy Jones joined the meeting 3.10pm.</b></li> <li>• PH asked what the impact of the standard was for STAR. TD said we have ever ageing stock and we're being asked by successive governments to do more, how much more is that going to cost? HR said that every three years we validate our stock condition survey  <b>Action 79: One thing we plan to do as part of the review in the summer is to go out to market, do that 3 years testing of our stock condition and ask what the best practice is. There is a lot of legislation that is not being introduced until 2030, and the new decent homes standard isn't being introduced until 2035. That's a period of 9 years for us to gather data. We will go through two cycles of stock validation before the new legislation fully emerges. This is why our data is going to be so important now because we can't just do it on the install date, it will be about how long it practically lasts us. The assurance given to the board is that a test of our stock will be commissioned in the summer, and something will be brought forward in October/November.</b></li> <li>• JW raised the stock condition and understanding our stock is a paper brought forward from the DSSI subcommittee for discussion today. The focus is on understanding our assets.</li> <li>• The criterion D is the risky one for most organisations, so this is around the minimum energy efficiency standard (MEES). That dovetails very well with our sustainability and retrofit plan.</li> <li>• LF said she had an air source heat pump put in 3-4 years ago and it is cheaper than running electric heating. Also, she recently had new windows put in and LF and all the other 27 residents have noticed the difference. They are less draughty and it is money well spent and it'll take us from an EPC D to B.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Board noted the contents in the report and to come back to Board for review in October.</b></p>	HR/JW	14 Dec 26
8	<p><b>STAR &amp; HRA 2025-26 Budget Monitoring Update (P9/Q3)</b></p> <p>RJ gave the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• STAR is reporting a small pressure as at Q2 we were £49K over. We still do have a pressure, and the Period 11 position is £30k overspent but we are doing all we can to bring it into a balanced budget.</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the report there is some information on unit costs and on the back of the recently published Regulator of Social Housing report, STAR performs well in terms of comparables. Everyone is in the same boat with the rising cost challenges across the sector.</li> <li>• HR said if you look what has come out of the RSH report, the organisations which have got the highest cost base in relation to social housing at the moment are RPs and organisations between 1000 and 5000 units. There is a common theme developing that a lot of people are thinking we can't make this work because of the number of units we are managing. We are seeing more mergers as a result of this.</li> <li>• Given where we are in terms of our peer group and the transformation we have gone through in the majority of instances, we are in either top or medium quartile.</li> <li>• TD said we are being asked to do all the extra things on compliance, which requires extra people. The analogy is a pilot; whether you have a plane with 2 people in or 200 people, you still need the pilot. What would be useful is to make sure we are comparing apples with apples and comparing with similarly sized organisations. The problem with the Housemark information is the delay in getting the benchmark information for VFM as sometimes it can be 18 months out of date.</li> <li>• HR said where we sit with our peer group, our cost position seems to be improving.</li> <li>• RJ gave a summary on the HRA position too which is similar to quarter 2. We are not expecting to generate the surplus at the level we budgeted because of rent assumption and delays in units coming on stream, and capital remains underspent for development and major repairs is not going to come in against budget but is where we were forecasting as at period 2.</li> <li>• In terms of KPIs, the two that were underperforming are related to budgeted numbers and in terms of rent collection, that continues to be very good. We are collecting the rents where they are available.</li> <li>• TD said that we should be looking at the finances over more long-term as it is a 30-year plan. RJ said there is still work to do to move away from the short-term position.</li> <li>• MO asked how much reserve there is in the HRA. RJ said she would provide a breakdown as there are different reserves, for example major repairs reserves, right to buy receipts, revenue reserves and other capital reserves. The reserves can only be used for specific purposes. RJ confirmed that in Appendix B, in the year to date forecast outcome, it has all the reserves listed.</li> <li>• PM said that the Council is commissioning an independent review of the HRA; that will help the Council think about how it wants to work with STAR moving forward continuing the focus on the HRA.</li> <li>• PM said she understood the points around the HRA being the 30 year business plan and that we need to have a longer-term lens to it and wants to get to that position too, but in the context of the Council's financial position, there are short-term fluctuations and they will always happen, and we need to have a shared understanding of what's happened, where we can mitigate them, so that both STAR side and Council side, we're not just monitoring but making sure we can mitigate them. We're not just focusing Council side on revenue funds.</li> </ul>		
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	<p>This is about us making sure that all of our spend is essential spend whilst we're moving our way through the financial difficulties we're facing.</p> <p><b>The Board noted the contents of the report.</b></p>		
9	<p><b>STAR Budget Approval 2026/27</b> RJ gave the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is requesting board approval to the settlement of the STAR budget for next year. We have worked with budget holders to review their existing budgets. The budget movements are included. We are looking to be able to make a contribution back to reserves this year and that's primarily as a result of the favourable movement on the pension contribution, which is reduced from 19.2% to 11.3%.</li> <li>• There's a five-year outlook included which shows we can sustain that surplus for the next five years based on the assumptions that are also set out at the beginning of that report.</li> <li>• FAR considered version 4 of the HRA budget prior to submitting that into the Council processes for February Council approval, but there were some last-minute changes made so that version 4 was withdrawn. In agreement with the Deputy Section 151 Officer at the time, we put forward a version which didn't have any development programme in it, which was allowing the Council to demonstrate sustainability of the existing stock and what the position was around just the existing stock at that time.</li> <li>• There was an agreement in that report that we would bring forward a version with development in it for the May Council and that will set up our operation budgets for the HRA at that point. We are working on that at the moment and expect to complete that at the end of next week. We need to submit it into Council, so we'll send it virtually to Board prior to that.</li> <li>• PH said he welcomed the approach to the reserves and trying to build them up. On the 5-year outlook, do they include the rent convergence uplift. RJ clarified that this is just for STAR not the HRA budget. The HRA budget will include rent convergence assumptions.</li> <li>• HR said that the budget is a snapshot in time and what we are seeing now with the war in the Middle East may result in some real challenges. It was the same with the war in Ukraine which resulted in high inflation. None of expected stagflation during Covid. We will be looking at some of the key issues associated with the budget, like fuel costs so we need to give thought if fuel goes from £1.30 a litre to £2.30 a litre what does that do to the budget.</li> <li>• <b>Action 80: TD asked about the consultant costs. He asked can we do a post project review which shows how much they cost and how much benefit they brought? This is so we can justify whether the amount we paid is justified and proportionate to the benefit. RJ said that we can do that and highlighted for example Gemma Griffiths and the work she did on the service charges and Mara Hargreaves and the website implementation. A report will be brought back to FAR.</b></li> <li>• HR said the general approach is not to use a consultant unless there is a start and end to the project.</li> </ul>	RJ	15 Jun 26

	<p><b>The Board approved the STAR Housing budget for 2026/27 as detailed within the paper and noted the direction of travel for the HRA Budget 2026/27 as reported to FAR on 09/03/2026.</b></p>		
10	<p><b>Performance Update (P8-10/Q3 Update)</b>  RJ gave the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is STAR’s performance against the management agreement KPIs.</li> <li>• At period 10 we’re at 73% that are in target or tolerance and that's an increase from Quarter 2.</li> </ul> <p>There are 4 that are unreportable at the moment due to data issues and changes within teams just requiring us to revisit some of that work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are 5 that are currently out of target; a couple of which are around customer satisfaction. The numbers are very low in this area so the figures can be quite skewed. We are doing a bit of work with Acuity to drill into that.</li> <li>• There are a couple that we wouldn't be able to turn around, for example rent lost, which is due to the new approach on asbestos around void properties.</li> <li>• The report details the Wave 2 tenant satisfaction measures. We did two surveys in May and February and are holding overall satisfaction rate at 84%, which is fantastic news.</li> <li>• There has been a huge uptick in our complaint handling to 13% above what it was at the Wave 1 point, which is absolutely testament to the work that's going on with Rebecca Jones and the team.</li> <li>• We're still really strong on a range of those TSM metrics and will bring back the full benchmark report later on when all organisations have reported their results.</li> <li>• In terms of the initial 26/27 KPIs we have shared an initial draft with Board and shared that with Council and we now have a range of additional proposed metrics to look at. We need to have a more detailed discussion on that.</li> <li>• <b>Action 81: TD said he felt that the discussion needed to be a separate session to be able to give it the time it required. It was agreed that the Board would have a separate session to agree what the KPIs are and agreeing any process of the amendment to the KPIs to recognise that sometimes they need to change where there has been a change of policy. It was agreed it would be a joint session with the Council.</b></li> <li>• LF highlighted that it needed to include a discussion on tolerances. She asked where it shows red that the KPIs are outside the tolerances. Amber is within tolerance.</li> <li>• HR highlighted that these are the targets that have been benchmarked with Housemark.</li> <li>• PH said he was concerned about the unreportable ones and wanted some clarity on them. RJ said on the average time to relet the reporting in the current month is fine but they are going back to previous months; that will be done by year end. Appointments kept as a percent of the appointments made is related to the issues we are having with Optimise and the MRI system.</li> </ul>	JMc	5 Apr 26

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR clarified that there is a lot of work going on with MRI at the moment. We want to get to a point where we can report performance before the end of May and by the next board meeting. If there are any items where there is any uncertainty, we will come back with our performance position and where there are still some data issues, either ask for an extension or give the reason and we'll just cut it off. That would need to be a Board decision.</li> <li>• PH also asked if there has been a sense check by someone else on the metrics that we are using. HR said that it has all come from Housemark and the recommended KPIs.</li> <li>• JW highlighted that the 84% achievement needs to be recognised. TD said he agreed that we have fallen into a trap that you focus on what is going wrong and not on the achievements. PH said it would have been better to see what we ended the previous year.</li> <li>• HR said we would be top quartile for everything except complaints and would only be 1% off.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Board noted the performance of the organisation and the setting of the new KPIs.</b></p>		
11	<p><b>Voice of the Customer</b> RJ gave the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report provides an update on the three reviews conducted by the Scrutiny Panel.</li> <li>• Satisfaction measures are improving and hoping to demonstrate that customer influence is helping to maintain strong performance.</li> <li>• We are exceeding targets for collection of customer profiling data. There are seven agreed reporting fields. We have a team working on creating a customer profiling dashboard and we can start to show some information on demographics.</li> <li>• There is also an update on the complaints position, we have delivered 50 quick resolutions through the new triage stage evidently to customer satisfaction.</li> <li>• We have had 190 Stage 1 complaints and 31 Stage 2 with only one of those out of time scale much earlier in the year.</li> <li>• In terms of root causes JW and RJ have a regular meeting to look at themes. There was one around Orbis and communication in general is a common theme.</li> <li>• The business improvement consultant is working with teams to update their processes and hand-off between teams. It is really important that we get that right.</li> <li>• The report includes a first draft of EDI analysis. We will be looking at the data to see if there is a theme of where the complaints are coming from, for example 20% of our complaints come from people who have difficulty with their mobility.</li> <li>• There are 12 Disrepair cases ongoing and there is a concentration of cases in Oswestry but none that have substantive grounds.</li> <li>• We have had 4 Ombudsmen cases this year; 2 have been determined and maladministration was found and we are waiting for the other two to be allocated to a case worker.</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Action 82:</b> LF said she would like to have the Acuity report to take back to the panel to show the positive feedback from an external perspective. RJ to provide.</li> <li>• <b>Action 83:</b> TD said the Customer scrutiny panel seem to be doing some very good work. He would like the panel to present to the Board to give an outline of their experience and how the programme is going and what benefits they brought. RJ/EJ to arrange for the panel to attend pre the Board and have some lunch with the Board and talk through what they have been doing.</li> <li>• LF said that the Council has determined they need to be far more involved with our tenants and have more oversight. Is there something that the Leadership Board at the Council could be part of? PM said if it can be a slightly broader invitation. STAR to speak to the Scrutiny panel to ask what format they would be comfortable with.</li> <li>• PM said when they met with the regulator before Christmas, one of the things that stood out was the focus around equality and inclusion and diversity. It was great to see that in the report and she is keen to understand more about how as a business you are focusing on that and how we can then pull some of that through council side as well so that there's a focus on that. I suspect that will be a focus when the regulator comes in.</li> <li>• HR highlighted the issue with Orbis and, having investigated it, STAR is no longer working with Orbis. If we find a systemic issue with a supplier we will take decisive action.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Board was asked to note the contents of the report.</b></p>	RJ	15 Jun 26
12	<p><b>Policies Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board Code of Conduct, Policy Development Framework and Governance Guide are being asked to be approved, in addition to the three-year plan.</li> <li>• RR asked how the Board Code of Conduct differs from the previous version. RJ said that all the policies are mainly cosmetic changes like changes to job titles.</li> <li>• RR said we have had a raft of policies coming through and doesn't know what level of scrutiny and debate there is on each. Some have come through by email and these have come to Board so what is the difference.</li> <li>• JMc said the Damp and Mould policy is also to be approved which was reviewed at the DSSI subcommittee.</li> <li>• TD queried that the ones that have gone to subcommittees have more fundamental changes and need the debate, the ones that are just cosmetic can be approved virtually.</li> <li>• JMc said each policy has its own course. RJ said we agreed that we would do the virtual approval to get through all the policies.</li> <li>• RR said that if the Code of Conduct is aligned with sector best practice, then it should be relatively straightforward and small tweaks.</li> <li>• JMc said this time have printed out the induction pack so everyone has a copy. The induction papers will be provided to those who had joined online after the meeting. The document outlines what we want to do over the next few months to get everybody up to the same level in terms of induction and training, so that everybody is on the same page.</li> </ul>		



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In terms of the HRA business plan update, there was a proposal for a revision to remove reference to the housing development programme following scrutiny by the council's Deputy Section 151 Officer. This was discussed and we noted the recommendations and the proposed revision within that.</li> <li>• In terms of the LGPS valuation update, we discussed the outcome of the triennial valuation which was a substantial reduction in terms of employer's contributions. There were some proposals within the report for how those savings would be best used. The subcommittee discussed those and noted the contents of the report.</li> <li>• The subcommittee discussed the Smart pension proposal update. We approved the recommendations, but one of those was about doing some actuarial modelling work and we just discussed to start that after take-up of the scheme and not doing it too early with limited take up. The recommendations were approved.</li> <li>• The STAR data strategy and the subcommittee discussed the importance of good data in terms of that. The subcommittee was happy with the report.</li> <li>• We talked about the policies. RJ has picked up on those in this meeting as well. The report was noted.</li> <li>• In terms of the operational risk register, we noted the updates and we agreed the recommendation that risk number 10 on the finance risk register be escalated to the strategic risk register, given the importance of it.</li> <li>• We also discussed the internal audit programme and there was some recommendations in there to approve closure of a number of audit recommendations. We did have some conversation around this all of those for closure and that they would be checked in follow up audits.</li> <li>• The subcommittee agreed the recommendations on the Grant Thornton audit findings.</li> </ul>		
15	<p><b>Subcommittee Update (CSS)</b> PH gave the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no items for approval or recommended to escalate to Board. We had the updates on policies. There are a number of customer-facing policies that are still outstanding, but we had reassurance related to internal procedures.</li> <li>• JW updated on the operational risk register and there was nothing that required escalation through into the strategic risk register.</li> <li>• There was a report from MC on repairs and maintenance update and he went through the void improvements, grounds maintenance and we recommended some future performance information for that report.</li> <li>• We had a really good update around neighbourhood management.</li> <li>• EJ gave an update on the scrutiny panel work.</li> <li>• A key area was the contact centre. We had an update in terms of the customer contact centre which is an area that the subcommittee has been particularly interested in given some of the performance around call handling and abandonments. MH gave a good update on the project.</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was suggested that there needs to be customer involvement as part of that contact centre review. We want residents to be involved in that.</li> <li>• JW gave an update and more detail of the maladministration case and some learning from that around culture.</li> <li>• The meeting was cut short due to an IT issue and there were a couple of questions to be followed up on aids and adaptations.</li> </ul>		
16	<b>Exempt items not for public discussion</b>		
20	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Action 88: HR has sent an email to everyone regarding the cost associated with the Ombudsman. If you are a well performing RP with a low level of complaints and referrals you will be penalised under the current regime. If you are poor performing you are not penalised financially. STAR will be putting that forward through the NFA to include in the consultation around the fee increase. HR will send the comments to KJ who sits on the Director of Housing Board to feed that it in there too.</b></li> <li>• HR said that there is work being done on tenancy fraud and a report will be brought to Board in May.</li> <li>• JW said that while we have been sat in the meeting that the Government has delayed the EPC reform until the end of 2027.</li> <li>• HR advised that he and JW are both going to be out of the business for a period due to paternity leave in April and May.</li> </ul>	HR	15 Jun 26