



Minutes

Meeting name: **Shropshire Towns and Rural Housing Board**

Meeting location: **Sirius, Ptarmigan House, Shrewsbury, SY2 6LG**

Date and time: **Monday 30th March 2026 – 3.30-5.30pm**

Members

Tony Deakin (TD)	Independent Board Member and Chair
Paul Hayward (PH)	Independent Board Member
Becky Royle (BR)	Independent Board Member
Irina Wood (IW)	Independent Board Member (virtual)
Mark Owen (MO)	Councillor Board Member
Richard Amos (RA)	Tenant Board Member
Lynn Fonseca (LF)	Tenant Board Member

Non-Members

Ros Jones (RJ)	Corporate Director
James Wood (JW)	Operations Director
Paula Mawson (PM)	Service Director – Communities and Customer (Shropshire Council)
James Owen (JO)	Housing and Leisure Portfolio Holder (Shropshire Council)
Jenny Daisley (JD)	Strategic Housing and Commissioning Manager (Shropshire Council) (virtual)
Julie Brock (JB)	Client and Strategy Officer (Shropshire Council)
Gemma Griffiths (GG)	Interim Head of Corporate Services
James McGlone (JM)	Governance and Risk Manager
Jo Grivell (JG)	Executive Assistant and Office Manager/Minute Taker

Apologies

Kathy Jones (KJ)	Independent Board Member
Duncan Kerr (DK)	Councillor Board Member
Harpreet Rayet (HR)	Managing Director
Laura Fisher (LF)	Head of Housing, Resettlement and Independent Living

	ITEM	Action Owner	Due By Date
1.	<p>Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest</p> <p>The Chair opened the meeting and confirmed that the purpose of the additional Board meeting was to consider two substantive items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) • Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund (Wave 3) update <p>Apologies were noted.</p>		
2.	<p>2026-27 Key Performance Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TD said there are two parts to the document. First are those KPIs that have been previously used and second a set which are up for discussion. • TD said he is currently preparing for a regulator inspection with another housing organisation. In preparation for the inspection, the organisation reviewed what information and KPIs Board members would need to both manage the organisation and to answer governance and consumer questions during an inspection. • The sorts of topics would be ‘are your customers satisfied? Do they get a quality service? Do your customers live in safe and decent homes? Do we attract best in class people?’ TD suggested that we need to take a step back and have a framework that enables us to have the answer to those questions mapped out. • PM agreed that they had similar conversations, and that it would be the Council who would be inspected and do they have line of sight through the KPIs. They have discussed who would be best Council side to sit on some of the subcommittees. • PM liked the groupings and the thinking and is keen to explore, there still needs to be details but she likes the strategic insight. JD has reached out to other Councils who had been inspected to see how they have done things. JD looked at Barnsley’s as they were the first to get a C1 and she took a copy of their KPIs and their structures. • TD said that the Board would look at the strategic KPIs and the subcommittees would look at the detailed ones. • JW said that as an ALMO we only have to worry about the consumer standard. The regulator is worried that the sector isn’t listening. He said STAR has based the approach around what the consumer standard says and grouping our KPIs so we can tie back what is important for Shropshire Council and also what the regulator wants to see. • PM said there should be a balance, they are strong around the building safety and compliance aspects but there needs to be a focus on the customer and tenant experience. She liked the focus on planning new homes and being financially strong, and use of the HRA. 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JW said it is hard to set KPIs around the customer, but every judgement is made around how you are listening to your customers. It's about having a number of ways to evidence the engagement such as through scrutiny not just hitting the metrics. • RR said she has spoken to some housing associations that had highlighted the need to have a golden thread across the subcommittees. There is a lot about having the culture of doing the right thing to get the right outcomes. JW said they had looked at how other organisations had demonstrated that and there is a big piece of work being done on case studies which highlights exceptional circumstances where people were the differential rather than policy. The case studies will be issued to Board in due course and really tell the story. • PM said it is not just the crossovers between subcommittees but that needs to include the crossover to the Council, and how they play that into the Cabinet to demonstrate that there is member oversight. • TD said we need to recast what we are doing but is conscious that we have to have something in place for the beginning of the year. He suggested that the ones that we had previously had that need to be updated be signed off. The ones which are for discussion, we need to do some more work around them and have them fit within a framework. • GG said the tolerance levels need to be discussed. TD said as part of inspection preparations, what he had seen is that people are asked about tolerances and asked whether they are realistic. You have a target and if you reach the tolerance level then you know you have to do something quickly to fix it, so they are a useful tool. • PM said she has had discussions with HR as it's not something she is used to seeing, it is very housing specific to have tolerances. HR has said the tolerances are in the management agreement and you can't take them out without rewriting the management agreement. PH said the tolerances are helpful for the Boards to know which areas they should be scrutinising in more detail. It's a helpful guide, so it is about making sure they are fit for purpose. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 90: It was agreed that the tolerances would be looked at and agreed what are sensible. • PM said she wants to ensure there is a balance between the building safety type measures and the customer ones. She will take the Board's advice about the regulators views but thinks there needs to be measure around supporting from an antisocial behaviour point of view, people with mental health issues, domestic abuse and those types of vulnerabilities. We need to think how we get oversight on those types of things. • TD said that we should have something around stock condition surveys, which shows that there is good stewardship in play and the other is on sustainability and the EPC rating and how you get to the 100% rating by 2030. • Action 91: It was agreed that we go ahead with the ones we have always used, we continue to have tolerances but they need to be reviewed to ensure they are useful and we have a separate discussion about additional KPIs and how they will be put into a framework which enables 	GG	30 Apr 2026
	JG	30 Apr 2026

	<p>us to answer questions from the regulator. JG to arrange a meeting for after Easter with JW, RJ. HR and GG to draft that out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 92: GG clarified that from the 1st of April she will monitor the first set of KPIs. PM asked for some others to be considered such as major work, or relet KPIs. GG explained that they are in operational metrics, the difference being the management KPIs are ones that can benchmarked against other organisations as they are monitored by Housemark. PM would like to understand which subcommittee monitors the ones that are not in the management agreement but in the operational metrics. GG to provide that overview. • The Board agreed to the metrics that had previously been used being signed off with some tweaks to tolerance and the others for the team to do some more work around them and have them fit within a framework. 	GG	30 Apr 2026
3.	<p>Wave 3 Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JW gave an overview of the paper and explained that the original Wave 3 bid (submitted September 2024) was based on assumptions that are no longer financially viable, particularly around the cost of external wall insulation. Since the bid, STAR has developed greater internal expertise in sustainability, and sector-wide cost inflation has significantly altered the value-for-money position of the original proposal. • A revised proposal was therefore developed, focusing on a more targeted and pragmatic approach. This revised model prioritises up to 543 of STAR's poorest-performing homes, particularly those most affected by fuel poverty, including properties on solid fuel, oil, or air-source heat pumps, alongside the lowest-performing gas-heated homes. The approach also allows complementary improvements aligned with the Decent Homes Standard, such as ventilation upgrades and thermal efficiency measures. • The Board discussed the financial balance of the revised proposal, noting that it now reflects approximately 42% grant funding and 58% HRA match funding, which JW advised represents a value-for-money position for the HRA. • The risks associated with not taking up available grant funding, both financially and reputationally, were also acknowledged. • Significant attention was given to delivery risk, particularly the influence of external retrofit assessors and coordinators on scope and cost and the potential for surveys to drive unnecessary measures. The risk of cost escalation once programmes are fully committed • To mitigate these risks, officers proposed a phased delivery approach, beginning with a pilot of approximately 75 homes. This would allow STAR to tightly control budgets, test assumptions, and confirm value for money before committing to the full programme. • The Board agreed that, due to the complexity of the programme and external volatility, officers would need delegated authority to adjust the approach following the pilot phase, within agreed HRA parameters. It was noted that results would be reported back to the Board, but flexibility would be required between formal Board cycles. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board approved the revised Wave 3 proposal, including the pilot phase and the associated delegated authority, subject to inclusion within the HRA business plan and appropriate governance arrangements with Shropshire Council. 		
<p>4.</p>	<p>AOB</p> <p>JW gave an early briefing on emerging external risks that could impact STAR Housing’s operations, finances and service delivery.</p> <p>Officers outlined that recent global and economic events may lead to increased pressures, particularly in relation to fuel supply and fuel costs, inflationary pressures and supply chain disruption and supplier surcharges. Some suppliers have already indicated the potential introduction of additional charges, although STAR’s main material suppliers had not yet applied these.</p> <p>The purpose of raising the issue was to ensure Board was sighted early, rather than waiting for the next scheduled Board or subcommittee cycle.</p> <p>SMT have developed 10-point action plan following discussions.</p> <p>Key actions being explored include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased communication with tenants, particularly those vulnerable to fuel poverty, to ensure awareness of support routes • Actively prioritising households using solid fuel, oil or air-source heating for inclusion in the Wave 3 programme • Use of hardship funding in exceptional cases • Exploration of forward purchasing and tighter financial controls across the supply chain • Workforce measures aimed at maintaining service delivery, including incentives for car-sharing and promoting electric vehicles, while maintaining STAR’s commitment to office-based working rather than reverting to remote working • The Board was advised that scenario planning had been undertaken to assess potential impacts on the HRA and service delivery, including contingency planning should fuel availability become constrained. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 93: JW will circulate a detailed paper to Board members and bring a fuller update to a future Board meeting. 	<p>JW</p>	<p>30 Apr 2026</p>