



Improving Services - Involving Tenants



Improving Services - Involving Tenants

Chairperson's Report

I am very pleased to present the 2005/6 Annual Report which contains a summary of activities carried out by Clydesdale Housing Association over the past year. The work to improve the services and performance of the Association is now well established following our disappointing Inspection Report in 2005 and, as the main body of this report will demonstrate, advances in our effectiveness have been significant.



Our Membership approved a Rule change in 2005 which extended the maximum term of continuous office for the Chairperson from three years to five years. The drivers for this change were a wish to retain the Chairperson's skills for a longer period and to achieve greater consistency in leadership. I am honoured that Clydesdale's Management Committee chose to re-elect me as Chairperson following our AGM in 2005 which will take my particular term of office to four years when the 2006 AGM takes place in September.

Aside from the considerable performance improvements achieved over the past year, I was personally delighted with the success achieved in engaging with our tenants. The 2005 AGM was paired with Clydesdale's first ever Tenant Conference. Attended by almost 70 tenants from all over Clydesdale, the event was an opportunity for people to hear more about and provide comment on our proposals for our first 5 Year Service Plan which had been developed in consultation with tenant focus groups. Those in attendance used an electronic voting system to provide comment on the proposals and a 'question time' session at the end of the conference provided an opportunity for tenants to ask specific questions of our Chief Executive. Tenant feedback on the event was very positive and a further event is planned for our 2006 AGM when progress against the Service Plan will be reported on.

I am further pleased to report that the Association has assisted interested tenants in establishing a Clydesdale Housing Association Tenants' Group Steering Committee. We are supporting the Steering Committee to develop a constitution and look forward to providing further support to establish a membership and management committee.

Regretfully, one of our most valued former Committee Members, Tom McAlpine, passed away last year. Tom, who was a South Lanarkshire Councillor, helped to establish the Association almost 20 years ago during our Steering Group days and remained with us as a committee member up until 2004 when the pressure of Council workload led to his resignation. A man who spoke directly and with a great deal of sense, Tom represented his Biggar constituency up until his sudden passing. Tom remained a trusted friend of Clydesdale after his resignation and I am sure is sadly missed by those who had the opportunity to know him.

Jean Ramage, Chairperson



Improving Services - Involving Tenants

Improving Services: Involving Tenants

2005 Tenant Conference

Tenants played their part in making Clydesdale's first ever Tenant Conference a great success by turning out in big numbers at New Lanark in September 2005. A total of 69 tenants from across the Clydesdale area accepted the invitation to attend the event in order to find out more about plans for future services.



Following a presentation by Chief Executive Joe Gorman, tenants took part in an electronic voting event which was facilitated by *FMR Research Ltd* in order to provide feedback on how they felt about current services and plans for improving services over the next five years.

The Service Plan was developed over July 2005 through working with four geographical tenant focus groups. The Service Plan covers:

- Customer focus & involvement
- Dealing with anti-social behaviour & managing estates
- Reactive, planned & cyclical maintenance
- Financial management
- Access to housing & allocations
- New housing & design

High levels of agreement with the Service Plan proposals were displayed by tenants at the conference - 99% said that they were happy for the Association to move forward with the measures contained within the Service Plan. The Association is now implementing the Plan and will feedback to tenants in 2006 on the excellent progress that has been made.

The feedback obtained from tenants regarding satisfaction with current services will influence the intensity of tenant consultation in improving grounds maintenance services and how Clydesdale deals with anti-social behaviour which both scored poorly in terms of satisfaction.

94% of those who attended the conference found the event useful and great interest was expressed in attending a similar event in 2006. Transport and children's crèche facilities were provided to tenants.

Future Tenant Consultation

Tenant Focus Groups will take place in the early course of 2006/7 in order to consult with tenants over plans to review: the Tenant Handbook; our Re-let Standard; the Estate Management and Anti-Social Behaviour Policy; and our approach to Rechargeable Repairs.

Tenants' Association Development Support

Work to support a small group of tenants interested in forming a tenants' group started last year. A Steering Committee was formed by tenants in order to develop a constitution and arrangements for forming a Management Committee and recruiting members. Once the group is established, the Association intends to meet regularly with its representatives to discuss tenant issues and consult on service development and improvement.

Customer Complaints

Clydesdale reviewed its approach to dealing with customer complaints in 2005. Following a consultation process involving tenants and other stakeholders, including the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, our new approach which was introduced in July 2005 has the following as its main objectives:

- deal fairly and effectively with anyone wanting to complain or make an appeal.
- empower staff to resolve complaints and appeals, especially in the early stages of the process.
- make it clear that people can complain about us to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.
- use customer feedback from complaints to positively influence the development of services.

The new system also seeks to resolve matters as quickly as possible in the first instance through an *informal* process which is reported verbally by the customer. An appeal against the Association's response to an *informal complaint* or complaints of a more serious nature are treated as *formal complaints*.

Over 2005/6 we received 17 informal and 4 formal complaints. These can be categorised as follows:

Complaint Category		Informal Complaints	Formal Complaints
Reactive Maintenance	<i>(late repairs, quality of repairs, contractor responsiveness)</i>	10	0
Landscape Maintenance	<i>(path sweeping, garden conditions)</i>	3	1
Planned or Cyclic Maintenance	<i>(contractor/consultant responsiveness, quality of installation)</i>	3	1
Estate Management	<i>(contractor responsiveness, abandonment procedures)</i>	0	2
Information & Advice	<i>(objection to receiving service promotion flyer)</i>	1	0
Total		17	4

All informal and formal complaints were resolved at those stages and within the 10 working day target timescale. All formal complaints were made by tenants that wished to by-pass the initial informal stage.

It was not deemed necessary to accelerate the review of operational procedures or corporate policy as a result of complaints received over 2005/6.

Customer Feedback

Work was commenced in the latter part of the year to develop a customer feedback system on the quality of services provided. When complete, this system will collect and analyse customer feedback on the quality of key service areas such as repairs and maintenance, applying for housing, using the complaints system, rent arrears prevention, tenant participation, customer care and the new tenant settling-in process. Feedback results and outcomes will be shared with tenants via our quarterly newsletter.





Improving Services - Involving Tenants

Housing Management

Empty House Management

The table below summarises Clydesdale's performance improvements achieved in managing empty houses:

Year	Average time taken to let an empty house (2005/6 target = 17 days)	2004/5 Peer Group Average time taken to let an empty house	Rent loss through empty houses as a % of gross receivable rent (2005/6 target = 17 days)	2004/5 Peer Group Average rent loss %
2004/2005	36 days	26 days	1.2%	0.98%
2005/2006	14 days		0.53%	
Clydesdale's Improvement margin	22 days		0.67%	

(Peer Group = Rural RSLs with >150 houses. Source: Communities Scotland APSR Tables 2004/5)

Performance tables for 2006/7 have not yet been published by Communities Scotland which prevents Clydesdale from comparing performance against peer group averages for that period.

Empty house performance improvements have resulted from a review of Clydesdale's procedures, improved communication between the Association's Technical Services and Housing Management Teams, improved contractor performance on empty house repair work and the introduction of pre-selections by Housing Officers.

End of tenancy visits are now also carried out by Housing Officers in order to offer advice on moving out and discuss the outgoing tenant's responsibilities regarding the condition of the property as well as identifying rechargeable repair items and discussing the payment of rent balances which may be due.

A review of our Allocation Procedure has also been completed in order to provide more clarity to staff involved in the process.

Regular meetings with South Lanarkshire Council have been established in order to monitor performance against target timescales and take-up of nominations.



Housing List

Last year Clydesdale introduced a new system for dealing with new housing applicants which provides applicants with face-to-face interviews and assistance with completing application forms. As well as providing an opportunity to offer a wider choice of housing prospects advice and signposting applicants to other housing providers, this system has improved the quality of assessment information recorded for applicants, thus reducing the time taken to add cases to the housing list. The table below illustrates the improvements made over the last year:

Year	Target	Actual
2004/5	28 days	40 days
2005/6	3 days	1 day
Clydesdale's Improvement Margin	25 days	39 days



The Association has recently completed its second housing list review within a twelve month period and has established an annual review routine. This has improved the quality of our housing lists and reduced the number of refusals on empty properties that were previously due to out of date applications being retained on the list.

Clydesdale is also working with South Lanarkshire Council and other local Registered Social Landlords to develop a Common Housing Register (CHR). When launched, the CHR will enable applicants to apply for housing with multiple landlords by completing just one application form providing a simple and fair access route to housing. It is aimed that the CHR will be implemented in 2007.

Rent & Arrears

Clydesdale's rent increase policy has traditionally been set at inflation plus 1%. The rent increase introduced for 2005/6 adhered to this policy for all non-stock transfer tenancies and complied with rent guarantees previously issued for houses that transferred to the Association from Scottish Homes.

However, long term financial modeling carried out by Clydesdale over 2005/6 projected that the inflation plus 1% rent increase policy would not generate enough income in the longer term to meet the cost of maintaining properties. For this reason, a revised policy of inflation plus 2% for a five year period starting 2006/7 (excluding stock transfer properties with current rent guarantees) was included in the Association's Service Plan which was approved following intensive tenant consultation.

The table below summarises the improvements made by the Association in arrears recovery:

Year Ending	Gross Arrears as % of Gross Receivable Rent (2005/6 target = 5.6%)	2004/5 Peer Group Average – Gross Arrears	Non-technical arrears as % of Gross Receivable Rent (2005/6 target = 3%)	2004/5 Peer Group Average – Non-Technical Arrears
2004/2005	7.1%	5.5%	4.5%	4.3%
2005/2006	5.7%		3.2%	
Clydesdale's Improvement margin	1.4%		1.3%	

(Peer Group = Rural RSLs with >150 houses. Source: Communities Scotland APSR Tables 2004/5)

Arrears performance improvements have resulted from a review of Clydesdale's policy and procedure which has introduced early personal contact with tenants and a referral system to South Lanarkshire Council's Money Matters Service for tenants experiencing money problems. The revised procedure ensures that tenants are treated consistently by the Association in this area.

The Association's new focus on arrears prevention is displayed through providing support and guidance to new tenants on the Housing Benefit application process and rent payment methods at sign-up stage. The introduction of new tenant visits within one month of entry which provide an opportunity for Housing Officers to discuss rent payment issues with tenants at an early stage as well as offer general advice on other tenancy and property matters have assisted arrears prevention work.

Maintenance

Contractor Performance

Clydesdale's performance on completing repairs on time shows improvement across every category when compared to the previous year and favorable comparison with peer group averages for 2004/5:

Year Ending	Emergency repairs (24 hours) – 2005/6 target = 97.7%	Urgent repairs (2 working days) – 2005/6 target = 95.8%	Routine repairs (10 working days) – 2005/6 target = 94.4%
Peer Group Average for 2004/2005	97.4%	88.8%	90.5%
Clydesdale 2004/2005	93.8%	86.9%	87.3%
Clydesdale 2005/2006	100%	96.7%	95%
Clydesdale's Improvement margin	6.2%	9.8%	7.7%

The Association has significantly improved its performance on completing reactive repairs on time. A review of the trade specific contracts, improved communication with our contractors and monthly performance monitoring have contributed to this success.

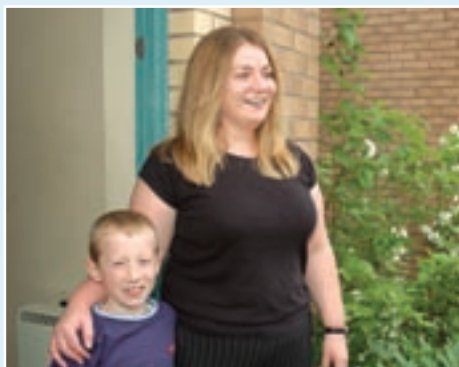
In addition to the above, the Association now closely monitors the use of its out of hours service, meets monthly with the contractor that provides this service and has extended the Right to Repair to cover this activity.

Pre and post inspections are now routinely carried out as part of the Association's approach to managing the performance of contractors and a more focused approach on the use of inspections has recently been implemented in order to obtain maximum benefit from this activity.

Tenant Feedback on Reactive Repairs

The Association has established a system for obtaining regular tenant feedback on the reactive repairs service. Sample surveys are carried out on an ongoing basis of tenants that have recently used the service. Year end results for 2005/6 are provided below along with a comparison with the results of a comprehensive Tenants' Satisfaction Survey (T.S.S.) which was carried out in 2004 and Clydesdale's tenant feedback results for 2004/5:

Question	2004 T.S.S. Results	% Satisfied 2004/5	% Satisfied 2005/6
Length of time taken to attend to repair	87%	93%	99%
Length of time taken to carry out repair	90%	95%	97%
Attitude of Tradesmen	93%	100%	99%
Quality of Repairs	84%	93%	96%



Gas Safety

The safety of tenants is paramount to Clydesdale and as such great importance is attached to ensuring that gas appliances installed in houses are in a safe and proper condition for use. Clydesdale operates a ten month gas safety inspection programme in order to ensure that every appliance is checked for safety and serviced to ensure efficient running of heating and hot water systems. The table below summarises the Association's most recent performance on gas safety:

Total Number of Properties with Gas Appliances	No of Gas Safety Certificates held	Certificates obtained by due date	Certificates obtained within 1 week after due date	Quality Control by Contractor	Quality Control by Clydesdale's Consultant
217	217 100%	216 99.5%	1 0.5%	34 16%	20 9%

Clydesdale's Gas Safety Procedure is reviewed in consultation with the contractor following the completion of each programme and improvements are incorporated into the next programme. The ten month gas safety inspection programme ensures that the impact of access difficulties is minimised.

The programme summarised above incorporated the use of a quality control consultant by the Association in order to ensure that the contractor's engineers were competent, that the quality of workmanship was high and that the certification provided by the contractor was valid.

Planned Maintenance

A contract for replacing windows in 115 stock transfer properties in Carluke and Lanark was the Association's most significant contract of 2005/6. The contract, costing almost £350,000, was subject to delays which caused a six week over-run of the completion date which was finally achieved in mid-May 2006.



Other contracts completed included, replacement of 136 smoke detectors, replacement of ventilation systems to 9 properties and periodical electrical safety checks to 107 houses.

Stock Condition Survey

Work started on carrying out a comprehensive house condition survey on Clydesdale's stock in March 2006. Targeting housing stock sample of over 30%, the survey will produce vital information that will be used to plan Clydesdale's maintenance investment programme and measure the Association's compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. Detailed tenant consultation on the investment programme will be carried out in the first instance with the Tenants' Group which is being developed before widening consultation to include all tenants.

Clydesdale is currently researching options for the effective storage, maintenance and retrieval of stock condition information.



Improving Services - Involving Tenants

Development



Clydesdale has recently started construction work on a 25 unit new build development at Carnwath Road, Carluke. The properties being constructed on the Association's behalf by Highline Construction Ltd will provide:

- 10 mainstream cottage flats through a combination of one and two bedroom properties.
- 4 two bedroom mainstream terraced houses.
- 4 three bedroom mainstream semi-detached houses.
- 1 three bedroom adapted ground floor cottage flat.

Completion of the development is anticipated in November 2007.

Project Costs for Carnwath Road:	
Approved Contract Costs	£2,677,681
Housing Association Grant	£2,147,193
Private Finance	£530,488

Medical Adaptations

Clydesdale obtains grant funding from Communities Scotland for the purposes of adapting existing tenanted properties to suit the changing physical needs of elderly and disabled tenants. Over 2005/6 Clydesdale adapted 30 properties at a total cost of £75,117.

Clydesdale out performed its target of completing adaptations within 38 days by 14 days (achieving an average timescale of 24 days). This timescale measures the time taken from the point of receiving an occupational therapist referral to completing the adaptation works.

Adaptations completed ranged from the installation of external handrails to installing wet floor showers for those with more severe mobility difficulties.



Tenant feedback results showed 100% satisfaction against all of the following criteria:

- service & support from Clydesdale staff before and during works.
- contractor performance.
- the quality of finish.
- the end result meeting the needs of the user.
- time taken by the occupational therapist to assess the user's needs.

Clydesdale would like to thank both Community Scotland's Investment Team and South Lanarkshire Council's Occupational Therapists for their co-operation and assistance in achieving last year's performance.

Clydesdale

HOUSING ASSOCIATION



Office Matters

Staff

Clydesdale's Maintenance Manager, Willie Wood, left the Association in late 2005.

A restructure of the Property Maintenance and Development functions with the organisation resulted in these two departments merging into a single Technical Services Department. This team, which is managed by Vicky McGilvary, Technical Services Manager will make sure that lessons learned through repairs and maintenance experience are incorporated into future design and specification details.

Eileen Wilson, Finance Manager has been on maternity leave since July 2005 – congratulations on the birth of baby Liam. Thank you to Rhona Joss of FMD Financial Services for providing cover during Eileen's absence.

Committee

The Association would like to thank David Shearer, who resigned in October 2005, for his contribution to the organisation over his 9 year term as a Committee member.

John MacMillan joined the Clydesdale Management Committee in December 2005 following a two month period as an observer at Committee meetings. John is a quantity surveyor who lives locally and will provide valuable skills to the Management Committee particularly in maintenance and development activities.

Hugh McDougall, a tenant from Thankerton, joined the Management Committee as an observer in January 2006.

Refinancing

Following a process of competitive tendering, the Association, assisted by financial consultants HR+, re-financed all existing borrowings into one consolidated loan with the Royal Bank of Scotland in March 2006. The structure of this loan and the improved terms will assist Clydesdale in delivering both its risk management strategy and financial performance plans.

Clydesdale Housing Association Limited Finance Highlights

Income & Expenditure Account Year ended 31 March 2006

	31/3/06	31/3/05	
	£	£	
Turnover	1,744,556	1,612,635	Rental income and factoring income.
Operating Costs	(1,656,381)	(1,311,084)	Cost of managing and maintaining rented and factored properties.
Operating Surplus	88,175	301,551	
Gain On Sale of Fixed Assets	191,632	194,327	Amounts due from Shared Ownership Tranche Up Sales & RTB Sales
Interest Receivable	17,933	32,513	Interest earned on money invested
Interest Payable	(250,301)	(285,538)	Interest payments on money borrowed (loans)
Surplus before Taxation	47,439	242,853	Amount left from income after deducting all expenses
Taxation	0	0	Tax payable on the surplus
Grant receivable against taxation	0	0	Grant receivable to cover taxation
Surplus for year	47,439	242,853	Amount left from income after deducting all expenses & taxation
Transfer to Reserves	(37,951)	(148,764)	Amount set aside for future repairs to the Association's properties
Retained in Revenue Reserve	9,488	94,089	Surplus in Revenue Reserve after setting aside money for future repairs
Revenue Reserve brought forward	277,899	183,810	Amount in Revenue Reserves at the end of last year
Revenue Reserve carried forward	287,387	277,899	Revenue Reserves on Balance Sheet

This year's surplus has been affected by higher reactive maintenance costs, higher salary costs and increased property depreciation charges. This is mainly due to the stock additions and the planned programme of cyclical and major repair works carried out in the year.

Balance Sheet Year ended 31 March 2006

	31/3/06	31/3/05	
	£	£	
Tangible Fixed Assets			
Housing Properties - Cost less Depreciation	30,091,159	29,733,739	How much the properties owned by the Association are worth - based on the cost of building them
Less: SHG & Other Grants	(23,962,253)	(23,790,482)	Grants received towards the cost of building properties
	6,128,906	5,943,257	
Other Fixed Assets	97,600	104,160	How much the office premises, office equipment and motor vehicles owned by the association are worth - based on the cost of buying them
	6,226,506	6,047,417	
Current Assets			
Debtors	183,296	304,985	Money owed to the Association
Cash at Bank & in Hand	610,536	889,994	Money in the bank
TOTAL ASSETS	7,020,338	7,242,396	
Creditors due within one year	(420,375)	(693,107)	Money the Association owes to others
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	6,599,963	6,549,289	
Creditors due after more than one year	(4,593,922)	(4,590,680)	Amount of loans still to be repaid by the Association
NET ASSETS	2,006,041	1,958,609	
Capital & Reserves			
Share Capital	169	176	Shares of £1 each issued and fully paid
Designated Reserves	1,718,485	1,680,534	Amount set aside for future repairs to the Association's properties
Revenue Reserves	287,387	277,899	Amount built up from surpluses since the Association began
	2,006,041	1,958,609	

The balance sheet reflects the start of the new development at Carnwath Road, Carlisle. The "net cash" position may appear to have reduced in the year, but overall the balance sheet demonstrates an increase in net assets of almost £47,000 since the previous year.

Management Committee

Mrs Jean Ramage	<i>Chairperson</i>
Mr John Wilson	<i>Secretary</i>
Mr Don Anderson	<i>Treasurer</i>
Mr William Kirkhope	
Mr Robert Anderson	
Mr John Macmillan	
Mr Jack Currie	
Mrs Christine Shookhye	
Mr Alex Barrie	
Cllr Mary McNeill	<i>(S. Lanarkshire Council Rep)</i>
Mr Ian Wallace	

Staff of Clydesdale Housing Association

Mr Joe Gorman	<i>Chief Executive</i>
Mrs Jane Guthrie	<i>Depute Chief Executive</i>
Mrs Eileen Wilson	<i>Finance Manager</i>
Mr Stewart Williamson	<i>Housing Manager</i>
Miss Vicky McGilvary	<i>Technical Services Manager</i>
Mr Paul Agnew	<i>Housing Officer</i>
Mrs Wilma Stalker	<i>Housing Officer</i>
Mr Alex Knox	<i>Maintenance Officer</i>
Mrs Joyce Watson	<i>Corporate Services Assistant</i>
Miss Michelle McManus	<i>Corporate Services Assistant</i>
Miss Joan Docherty	<i>Corporate Services Assistant</i>
Miss Olivia MacLennan	<i>Secretary/Receptionist</i>
Mrs Irene Nimmo	<i>Office Cleaner</i>

Consultants and Other Services

Auditors:

Alexander Sloan & Company, Glasgow

Internal Auditors:

Alexander Sloan & Company, Glasgow

Solicitors:

Criggies, Lanark; T.C. Young, Glasgow;
Hay Cassells, Hamilton

Bank:

Royal Bank of Scotland, Lanark

Architects:

Assist, Glasgow: D.S. Toy, Lanark;
Craig & Struthers, Glasgow;
Dalziel Design Partnership, Motherwell

Quantity Surveyors:

Towler & Hyslop, Glasgow;
Martin Aitken Associates, Rutherglen;
Munro Surveyors, Granton on Spey

Structural Engineers:

The Adams Partnership, Irvine

Engineers:

R.J. Leggate Associates, Lanark

Planning Supervisors:

CDM (Scotland) Ltd, Ayr
Carr McLean & Watson, East Kilbride

Clerk of Works:

D.A. Gilmour Ltd, Falkirk

Contractors:

RD Hogg Construction, Carluke
Highline Construction, Glasgow
E & L Building Contractors, Coatbridge
Laidlaw Scott, Glasgow

Others:

McKenzie Design, Edinburgh
FMD Financial Services, Glasgow
CES Services, Edinburgh
ACS Consultants, Glasgow;
Sabre Systems, Lanark
HR+, Glasgow;
FMR Research, Glasgow
Gas Consultancy Group, Shotts



Registered Office

St. Kentigern's Church
St. Kentigern's Court
15 Hope Street
Lanark
ML11 7LZ

Tel: 01555 665316

Fax: 01555 666144

E-mail: mail@clydesdale-housing-org.uk

Web: www.clydesdale-housing.org.uk

Opening Hours

9.00am – 1.00pm
2.00pm – 5.00pm Monday to Thursday

9.00am – 1.00pm
2.00pm – 4.00pm Friday

Office is closed from 12.00 to 1.00pm every Tuesday
for staff training