
Report To:	Safe, Sustainable Communities Committee	Date: 1 September 2009
Report By:	Corporate Director Environment and Community Protection	Report No: ECP/Plann/RL09/026
Contact Officer:	Ronny Lee	Contact No: 01475 712069
Subject:	River Clyde Homes – Annual Monitoring Return	

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform the Committee with regard to monitoring information in relation to River Clyde Homes (RCH) as agreed in the Stock Transfer Agreement of December 2007.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Inverclyde Council entered into a Stock Transfer Agreement with RCH in 2007 and it was agreed that RCH would complete an Annual Monitoring Return to demonstrate that commitments made to Inverclyde Council and to its former tenants are being honoured. The second of these monitoring returns covering the period from 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009 has now been received and details are provided in Section 4.0 of this report.
- 2.2 The responsibility for reporting on the agreed Performance Monitoring Framework lies with the Strategic Housing Function of the Planning and Housing Service, its Core Activities include: *“Dealing with transitional matters arising out of the stock transfer to RCH and Cloch HA, including administering the Early Action Fund programme for Inverclyde and ensuring that commitments made by Inverclyde Council prior to stock transfer are honoured”*. **[Min Ref 06/03/08; Para 174]**
- 2.3 The Scottish Housing Regulator established by the Scottish Government to take on the regulatory functions formerly administered by Communities Scotland is responsible for ensuring that RCH fully discharges all of its responsibilities towards its tenants and for reviewing the performance of RCH against targets set for service delivery. The Regulator will consult with Inverclyde Council as part of this scrutiny process and it is therefore important that we have a sound, auditable, monitoring framework in place.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Committee:
- (a) note that River Clyde Homes has submitted an Annual Monitoring Return for 2008/09 as set out in the Stock Transfer Agreement of December 2007;
 - (b) note the key points of the second Annual Monitoring Return supplied by River Clyde Homes as detailed in paragraphs 4.1 - 4.11 of this report; and
 - (c) note that River Clyde Homes will be subject to scrutiny by the Scottish Housing Regulator during the 2009/10 reporting period.

4.0 RCH MONITORING RETURN 2008/09

Rights of Tenants

- 4.1 All RCH tenants have security of tenure through a Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement that also sets out their statutory rights. RCH has developed and published a Tenant Participation Strategy through consultation with tenants and representative groups. RCH has also played a leading role in developing an 'umbrella' organisation to represent the interests of all tenants of RSLs operating in the Inverclyde Council area.

Rent Guarantees

- 4.2 The rent structure remained unaltered during 2008/09 and RCH confirmed that the rent increase for 2009/10 was 4.8%, which is in line with their Business Plan (linked to the Retail Price Index as at October 2008). Comparisons of rent levels with other local RSLs will be undertaken during 2009/10 once Scottish Landlord Statistics have been published by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

Board Membership

- 4.3 RCH has confirmed that four (out of a possible six) tenant members and four community members were on the Board of Management as at 31 March 2009. There were four Inverclyde Council members on the Board at the year end. RCH has also confirmed that the Chair of the Board is a tenant, Mr Roy Steel.

Repairs Service

- 4.4 The following table shows RCH performance against the target times set for various categories of repairs and their own, internal performance target for these works:

Type of Repair		Percentage on Time	
Category	Target Time	Target	Actual
Emergency	24 Hours	95%	97.83%
Urgent	4 Days	90%	88.83%
Routine	20 Days	80%	77.13%

The information presented shows that performance on emergency repairs was above the internal target set by RCH while performance on urgent and routine repairs was close to the internal target. Repairs by appointment are being introduced later in 2009 and performance will be reported in the next annual monitoring return. Random sampling of 10% of repairs for tenant satisfaction surveys has been ongoing since 30 June 2008. A total of 2,032 surveys were completed between June 2008 and March 2009 representing 10.2% of all jobs completed during this period. The average satisfaction score was 97.98%.

Anti-Social Behaviour

- 4.5 A total of 291 complaints of anti-social behaviour were actioned up to 31 March 2009. One of these cases resulted in court action being taken and RCH continues to work closely with the Inverclyde Council Social Protection Team on more challenging cases.

Allocations Policy

- 4.6 RCH reviewed its Allocation Policy last year and the new policy was introduced in August 2008. The number of points awarded to facilitate regeneration was subsequently changed following consultation with stakeholders. RCH has entered into a Section 5 Protocol with Inverclyde Council on Homelessness and 291 referrals were received up to 31 March 2009. A total of 125 homeless persons/households received permanent accommodation from RCH up to the year end. A total of 219 offers were made by RCH

to homeless applicants/households during 2008/09 and there were 94 refusals. RCH has introduced voluntary equal opportunities monitoring for applicants for housing and results indicate that Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) applicants make up less than 1% of the total of 4,570. However, completion of the monitoring section of the application is voluntary and around 70% of applicants declined to provide any information in this respect.

Estate Management

- 4.7 RCH has entered into a service level agreement with Inverclyde Council to provide open space maintenance and operational targets were met during the reporting year 2008/09, allowing for periods of inclement weather. A total of 10 tenant-led inspections of estate management standards were completed during 2008/09 and the areas covered were as follows:

Kilmacolm – Glebe Court;
Port Glasgow – Upper Park Farm;
Greenock East – Belville Avenue, Cartsyde Court, Hawick Court, John Street, Melrose Court, and Selkirk Court; and
Greenock West – Cathcart Street, and Wellpark Buildings.

A procedure and timescales for tenant-led inspections was adopted by the RCH Board in May 2008 and this timescale was followed throughout 2008/09.

Void Property Management

- 4.8 Performance against the ten-day target for void repairs was unavailable for 2008/09 due to ICT issues and these will be addressed for the 2009/10 reporting year. All prospective tenants receive an accompanied viewing of vacant properties and all new tenants receive a copy of the RCH Welcome Pack. The Tenants' Handbook is currently being developed. Arrangements are being made for existing tenants to be provided with a copy of the Welcome Pack for their reference and this process is currently ongoing.

Priority Plus

- 4.9 The Handyperson Service is currently under development and it is anticipated that the service will be available later in 2009 following recruitment procedures. The service will initially consist of two handypersons but this may be expanded following evaluation. A total of 283 RCH tenants receive assistance under the Garden Tidy Scheme and £203,870 was spent on equipment and adaptations for tenants with particular needs in 2008/09. Spending on equipment and adaptations forms part of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) and this is monitored by Inverclyde Council and the Scottish Government Housing Investment Division (HID) as part of the SHIP process.

Internal Monitoring and Evaluation

- 4.10 The Annual Performance and Statistical Return (APSR) is the principal means of monitoring and evaluating the overall performance of all RSLs and the RCH APSR for 2008/09 was submitted to the Scottish Government in June 2009. This was the first APSR to cover a full reporting year (the 2007/08 return covered a period of only four months) and this return will be of considerable help to RCH, to Inverclyde Council, and to the Scottish Housing Regulator for monitoring and evaluation purposes. No benchmarking has taken place as yet however RCH is developing a Performance Monitoring Framework and close working relationships will be established with comparable RSLs across Scotland to allow for sharing of benchmarking information.

Business Plan Monitoring

- 4.11 The RCH Annual Accounts for 2008/09 have not been completed and audited, and a copy will be submitted to Inverclyde Council in due course. The demolition programme

is ongoing with 274 demolitions completed by 31 March 2009 and works will continue throughout 2009/10. The RCH Reprovisioning Programme is on schedule with site starts in the Port Glasgow (August 2009) and Greenock East (September 2009) areas. The progress of the Reprovisioning Programme is being monitored through regular meetings with Inverclyde Council and the HID. The rent loss due to voids is high at 8.34% for 2008/09 and RCH is taking steps to address this at an operational level (i.e. at the void repair works and allocation stages). This will also be addressed by the Scottish Housing Regulator in line with their current performance expectations. The delivery of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) is also being monitored and RCH estimate that 5% of stock now meets the SHQS with a further 489 units due to be brought up to standard in 2009/10.

**[Min Ref:
01/05/09;
Para 283]**

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 **Legal:** there are no additional legal implications arising from this report.
- 5.2 **Financial:** there are no financial implications arising from this report.
- 5.3 **Personnel:** there are no personnel implications arising from this report.
- 5.4 **Equalities:** the report has no impact on the Council's Equalities Policy.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 There has been no requirement for the Chief Financial Officer, the Head of Legal and Administrative Services and the Head of Organisational Development and Human Resources to comment on this report. The report has been prepared in consultation with River Clyde Homes (Corporate Resources).

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 River Clyde Homes' has met its stock transfer commitments to its tenants over the reporting year 2008/09 in relation to tenants' rights, rent guarantees, and board membership. The performance of the repairs service is above target for emergency works and is virtually on target for urgent and routine jobs. Indications are that RCH tenants are highly satisfied with the repairs service given the results of the 10% sample survey. Performance on void property management remains of concern with 8.34% rent loss due to voids. However, assurances have been given that operational procedures are being reviewed to improve void turn around times at both the repairs and allocation stages. Performance reporting on the 10 day target for void repairs should be available for the 2009/10 reporting period. The overall performance of RCH and its contractors is therefore generally satisfactory over the reporting period 2008/09 and items of concern to Inverclyde Council should be addressed during 2009/10.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 (1) Strategic Housing Function: Update and Work Programme 2008/09; report to Safe, Sustainable Communities Committee, 6 March 2008.
- (2) River Clyde Homes – Monitoring Framework; report to Safe, Sustainable Communities Committee, 2 September 2008.

**[Min Ref
06/03/08;
Para 174]
[Min Ref
02/09/08;
Para 549]**

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