

ON A mission

NEW CHARTER HOUSING TRUST GROUP : ANNUAL REPORT 2004-2005





New Charter Housing Trust Group exists to build and support communities in the provision of safe, comfortable, secure and affordable homes through partnership with customers and others



THE front BIT

An Annual Report is always going to focus on the past year, but New Charter was five years old at the end of March 2005. Allow us to reflect back a little longer.

Much has happened in the housing sector, and it's true that change is the only constant. Rent reform, iN business, Audit Commission inspection, operating costs indices - none of these were on our minds as we took the step out of the local authority on 27th March 2000. But some things have been with us from the start –

customer focus, continual improvement, performance measurement and recognition - and our mission statement had to be time-proof. Our values haven't changed either so we've used our mission to structure this review.

We take this annual opportunity to thank our Board members and staff for their efforts on behalf of our customers. We also appreciate the work of our many partners in what we have achieved so far. Our mission is to be in business for neighbourhoods. It's a long term aim and we have had five years of continual improvement.

Ian Munro
GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Ged Cooney
CHAIR, NEW CHARTER HOUSING TRUST LIMITED

این گزارش سالانه ما در آخرین سال مالی است. ما نسخه ترجمه شده ای را در دسترس قرار نمیدهیم ولی میتوانیم کمکتان کنیم تا از مضمون آن آگاه شوید. شما میتوانید از دوست یا کسی که با شما نسیتی دارد بخواهید که به ما به شماره ۰۱۶۱ ۳۳۱ ۲۱۳۱ تلفن بزند و یا اگر به ما بگویید که به چه زبانی تکلم میکنید ما میتوانیم ترتیب یک مترجم را بدهیم.

C'est notre rapport annuel pour la dernière année fiscale. Nous ne disposons pas d'une version traduite mais nous pouvons vous aider à en comprendre le contenu. Vous pouvez demander à un ami ou un parent de nous téléphoner au 0161 331 2131, ou alors si vous indiquez quelle langue vous parlez, nous demanderons les services d'un interprète pour vous aider.

Este é o mais recente Relatório Financeiro Anual. Nós não fornecemos cópias traduzidas, mas podemos ajudar-lhe a entender o conteúdo. Você pode pedir a um amigo ou familiar que nos contacte no telefone 0161 331 2131, ou pode nos informar qual é sua língua pra que possamos providenciar um intérprete.



The most notable single event for the Group was the completion of a new headquarters building, Cavendish 249 using a brownfield site in the Ashton Renewal area. With almost 50,000 sq ft of space housing over 370 staff, the move from ten locations across Tameside was accomplished without any disruption to service. The building is environmentally friendly and we are now able to provide good working conditions for all our employees, and dedicated space and facilities for our tenants.

exists

But building a headquarters is a means and not an end. We expect to develop further economies and efficiencies from this move, some significant enough to feature in our Efficiency Statement now required of all Registered Social Landlords.

The real proof of our existence is the verdicts of our customers. We are delighted that the independent annual survey of our tenants' perception showed further significant gains over the previous year. In January 2005, the survey recorded 87% satisfaction with our performance as a landlord – and almost half these said they were "very satisfied". This is better than the sector average of 79%. Satisfaction with opportunities for participation has increased to 87%, up from 73.6%.

But we're not planning to just exist - our innovation this past year has included top level recognition for Document Management (IMO 2004 Premier Project Award), our employee benefits (iN Biz employer of the year shortlist), the Investor in People accreditation, and our new loyalty award scheme for tenants, *thancs!* We were again active in tackling nuisance and were the first Registered Social Landlord to apply to demote a tenancy.



We were 'iN at the Start' of the National Housing Federation's **iN business for neighbourhoods** agenda. This fitted well with our status as transfer landlord, yet there's been much we've done to develop our wider role in the communities where we have stock.

Our ability to address much wider regeneration issues increased as our investment work proceeded apace. This last year particularly, we've advanced from financial and staff support for tenants groups to a wider involvement in community development. This includes training and financial inclusion; active partnership with agencies such as SureStart; and some of the fun things which cement good community relations, such as the Mossley Mini-Olympics and local carnivals.

The physical works also help. We completed and invited the Housing Minister to open our refurbished homeless persons reception centre at Gibson Terrace, Ashton-under-Lyne. Our development of new flats at Wellington Court was awarded "Building of the Year 2004" by the Ashton Civic Society.

Our Building Company had a particularly strong year. Day to day repairs remained one of the best performances in the country, with other interested landlords keen to attract us to their work. Voids works beat our Business Plan target of 3.25% at year end, and an increased number of appointments were made – and kept.

Across the investment work, we completed almost 22,500 individual improvements, which represents an average of over 1.5 per home.

BUILD AND Support COMMUNITIES



More money from our refinancing in March 2004 has meant more protected spaces for many residents. We're addressing a key tenant priority missed from many traditional Stock Condition Surveys – fencing and private space.

Designed for low maintenance, we're also using many local companies and agencies such as Groundwork Tameside and Greenscape to improve the feeling of safety and security.

Our work with the Greater Manchester Police pays dividends to customers. We've concentrated on protecting the vulnerable from distraction burglary, provided more help for victims of domestic violence and even improved security for tenants' garden sheds and outbuildings in crime hotspots.

safe

Our performance on gas safety increased still further in 2004-05. Systems improvement and a determination to get sector-leading safety standards meant we had 99.89% of homes with a 12 months safety certificate.

We've increased technology to improve our knowledge, and become more efficient with safety notification as well. **See the DVD contained at the back of our Report.**



comfortable

It's probably the biggest change we're making to tenants' lives. We've combined our Building Company's expertise and capacity with selected local contractors to speed up investment within the homes we own.

Improved efficient central heating exclusively installed by New Charter Building is done in a day – reducing inconvenience to customers. We've backed this up by our work with British Gas Here to Help programme, which delivered insulation improvements to half our stock quicker and at less cost than we could do ourselves.

The old adage may be that 'kitchens and bathrooms sell houses', but more of our tenants have got their promised improvements than ever before.





secure

Secure homes were our tenants' priority as we started our investment programme – that's why we will complete all window and door replacement three years ahead of promise in 2007.

High security windows are made by our Building Company at its ISO 9002 PVCu factory. We're making other landlords' homes secure as well.

We're the main landlord in the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. Data sharing with the Greater Manchester Police has produced successful court actions to detect crime, from ASBO's through to race hate crime.

Mediation continues to be a useful and successful method of addressing low-level disputes, but our in-house nuisance team has been busy and has done everything from establishing case law precedents in *New Charter Housing (North) v Ashcroft* to appearing on Channel 4 news.



It was the last year of setting rents in line with the 5 year rent guarantee to transferring tenants. Looking back, we are proud that our increases have been LESS in cash terms than those are illustrated in the Offer to tenants way back in 1999.

When our tenants voted to leave the Council and join New Charter, they did so with the benefit of a five-year guarantee that rents would only rise by inflation + 1% each year to September 2005.

Figures released by the Housing Corporation last year showed New Charter charge almost £8 a week less than other landlords in the area.

With the end of the guarantee, New Charter rents – like every other social landlord in England – have to conform to the government's wishes to converge rent levels by 2012.

Our aim will be to maintain the affordability of our rents for our communities. At the same time, we are confidently delivering an improved product, with the level of extra investment from refinancing set to make a bigger difference.

AFFORDABLE homes



Listening to our customers and improving how we perform are at the heart of what we do best.

This year our 87% satisfaction rating as a landlord comfortably outstripped the sector average and we overtook the transfer landlord average rating. Particularly satisfying was that 40% of our tenants pronounced themselves “very satisfied” – and we aim to improve still further. Our efforts to provide opportunities to participate in our business was also way over the sector average, and at 87% was one of the best ratings of any general needs landlord.

We’ve also been able to improve by acting on results of more specific surveys – on homes relet to new tenants, gas servicing, the customers of our Housing Options Centre, and on our repairs and maintenance.

PARTNERSHIP WITH customers

We’ve been considerably helped by those tenants who give up their time to improve New Charter. The individual groups and our Federation have been invaluable in monitoring, questioning, suggesting improvements – and keeping us on our toes! We’re grateful to them all.

We’ve tried to show our gratitude, as well as focusing our culture on the vast majority of good customers. The social rented business is unusual in that we traditionally spend all our time with the small minority of ‘bad’ customers – through arrears recovery, nuisance behaviour and other tenancy compliance problems. Our rewards scheme, *thanks!*, was introduced to reward our many excellent customers and is a reminder of how important they are to our success. We’ve been able to reward and surprise tenants individually and by neighbourhood.





We never thought we could do it all by ourselves!

As well as our customers, our involvement with others explains our success.

Our work with Greater Manchester Police has been mentioned elsewhere, and we are also proud of our links with Tameside Strategic Partnership, Tameside Council, British Gas (Here to Help) and the National Housing Federation among others.

Some alliances are to deliver the business – we renewed our contract with grounds maintenance contractors, Serviceteam at the beginning of 2004/05. Our help for vulnerable tenants has been boosted by our partnership with People First, which extends ‘floating support’ to those needing help to make their tenancy a success. And it’s not all on a large scale – we’re proud of our small local enterprises who help us, for example, produce our talking tapes for blind customers or the site signboards for our many investment schemes.

Others help our wider role as ‘more than just housing’, and we now work with several agencies to engage our younger residents in leisure and training opportunities.

Our future growth may depend on our skills in establishing partners to improve and open up new markets. Our proposed alliance with Aksa Housing Association based in Oldham is one we announced as our working year came to an end.

PARTNERSHIP WITH others

And our work to promote financial inclusion led to the establishment of a Money Information Network Tameside (MiNT), in which we play a leading role. Only by helping residents improve their financial skills and money management can we claim to be tackling poverty. Our role is much more than collecting rent due, and we hope to be persuasive on a national scale in the future.

FIGURES AND stuff

Our Performance in 2004-05 : New Charter Housing NORTH

Renting **7,747** properties in Ashton, Droylsden, Mossley and Stalybridge

INVESTING

We invested on average **£43.36** per home every week

Repairs reported by tenants:

	Number	Target timescale for completion	% completed within timescale
Emergency	11,023	4 hours	100
Urgent	7,718	7 days	100
Routine	11,612	28 days	94.8
TOTAL	30,817		

RENTING

Average Weekly Rent for General Assured Tenancies (a 52 week year):

bedsit

1 bed

2 bed

3 bed

4 bed

AVERAGE RENT

Increase in average rent over the year: **3.60%**

RENT COLLECTION

Rent collected as a percentage of rent debit (less rent lost due to voids):	99.5%
Annual rent debit:	£21,738,451
Percentage of rent debit in current arrears:	5.08%
Percentage of rent lost due to voids:	3.72%
Percentage of rent debit written off in year:	0.33%

LETTING HOMES

Total properties let	661
<i>Lettings by ethnic origin of household:</i>	
White	94.6%
Indian	0.5%
Pakistani	0.5%
Bangladeshi	0.9%
Black Caribbean	0.0%
Black African	2.0%
Mixed/Other	1.5%

LETTINGS BY HOMELESSNESS

Percentage of lettings to:

Statutorily homeless:	26.2%
Other homeless:	11.5%

VOID PROPERTIES

Properties vacant available to let:	2.25%
Properties vacant not available to let:	1.38%

KEEPING SATISFIED

Tenant satisfaction with overall service:	86.80%
Tenant satisfaction with opportunities to take part in management and decision making:	87.00%
Percentage of properties meeting the Decent Homes Standard:	77.03%

Our Performance in 2004-05 : New Charter Housing SOUTH

Renting **6870** properties in Hyde, Denton, Audenshaw, Dukinfield and Longdendale

INVESTING

We invested on average **£42.26** per home every week

Repairs reported by tenants:

	Number	Target timescale for completion	% completed within timescale
Emergency	9,518	4 hours	100
Urgent	7,458	7 days	100
Routine	9,735	28 days	96.9
TOTAL	26,711		

RENTING

Average Weekly Rent for General Assured Tenancies (a 52 week year)

bedsit

1 bed

2 bed

3 bed

4 bed

AVERAGE RENT

Increase in average rent over the year: **3.60%**

RENT COLLECTION

Rent collected as a percentage of rent debit (less rent lost due to voids):

99.18%

Annual rent debit:

£19,436,204

Percentage of rent debit in arrears

(current & former tenants):

5.62%

Percentage of rent lost due to voids:

3.16%

Percentage of rent debit written off in year: **0.78%**

LETTING HOMES

Total properties let **638**

Lettings by ethnic origin of household:

White **96.7%**

Indian **0.2%**

Pakistani **0.3%**

Bangladeshi **0.5%**

Black Caribbean **0.2%**

Black African **0.5%**

Mixed/Other **1.6%**

LETTINGS BY HOMELESSNESS

Percentage of lettings to:

Statutorily homeless: **21.8%**

Other homeless: **0.6%**

VOID PROPERTIES

Properties vacant available to let: **1.66%**

Properties vacant not available to let: **1.24%**

KEEPING SATISFIED

Tenant satisfaction with overall service: **86.80%**

Tenant satisfaction with opportunities to take part in management and decision making: **87.00%**

Percentage of properties meeting the Decent Homes Standard: **77.29%**

Our Performance in 2004-05 : New Charter Housing Trust GROUP

IMPROVING PROPERTIES

Properties with new:

Kitchens	2090
Windows & doors	3112
Rewires	581
Bathrooms	1596
Central heating	1673
Roofs	242

PROPERTY SALES

Total number of Right to Buy/Acquire sales:

New Charter North	147
New Charter South	142

ETHNIC ORIGIN – STAFF & BOARD MEMBERS

	STAFF			BOARDS		
	North	South	Trust	North	South	Trust
White: British	54	53	335	12	14	10
White: Irish	0	0	1	0	0	0
Asian: Indian	1	1	2	0	0	0
Asian: Pakistani	0	0	4	1	0	2
Asian: Bangladeshi	1	1	7	0	1	0
Black: Caribbean	1	0	0	0	0	0
Black: African	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mixed	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	1	2	5	0	0	0
TOTAL	58	58	354	13	15	12

HOUSING OPTIONS SERVICE

(a) Cases dealt with in year	1308	(f) Sources of Homeless cases
(b) Cases accepted as homeless	803	Owner Occupier/Mortgage repossession: 14
(c) Cases accepted in priority need	580	Private tenants/Assured : 86
(d) Cases dealt with within target (33 working days)	68.5%	Lodger breakdown: 184
(e) Households temporarily accommodated in the year		Domestic Violence: 104
NCHT Emergency Accommodation	128	Relationship breakdown: 43
Bed & Breakfast	237	Violence from outside the Home: 43
Women's refuge	61	Community Care/Supported Housing: 29
		Other: 65

BOARD MEMBERS

(B=Building; N=North; P=Property; S=South; T=Trust)

Margaret Barker (S)	Desmond Jeffery (T)
Alaha Begum (S co-opted from 16th November 2004)	Kevin Kirtland (N from 30th September 2004)
Frank Bennett (S from 30th September 2004)	Geoff Loughlin (S co-opted from 16th November 2004)
Tony Berry (S)	Jacqui McCann (N from 16th November 2004)
Alan Bezer (N)	Danny McLoughlin (P)
Andrew Broadhurst (N, P)	Jim Middleton (N from 5th April 2004)
Nick Brown (S co-opted)	Ian Munro (B, P)
Malcolm Burbridge (S from 30th September 2004)	David Partington (N from 16th November 2004)
James Burns (N, P, T)	Kieran Quinn (N from 16th November 2004)
Rex Charlton (Audit Committee)	Khalil Rehman (N; T co-opted)
Gerald Cooney (P, T)	Vincent Ricci (B, S)
Margaret Downs (S)	Joseph Robinson (S)
David Evans (N & T until 30th September 2004)	Joan Ryan (S)
Jacqui Fendall (N from 16th November 2004)	Anne Simmonite (Lucas) (S)
Joseph Fitzpatrick (N until 10th January 2005)	Steve Simpson (N)
Hamid Ghafoor (N, T)	Bill Skilki (B)
John Grimshaw (N until 30th September 2004)	Philip Smith (N, T)
Stephen Hall (B; T co-opted)	Brian Spencer (S until 30th September 2004)
Julie Hardman (B, P, S, T)	Graham Tossell (N until 30th September 2004)
Patricia Haslam (S)	Gordon Tow (N; T from 8th November 2004)
Jed Hassid (T)	Martin Wareing (S & T from 2nd June 2004)
Geoffrey Howarth (B)	Ann Whittam (T co-opted from 16th November 2004)

Sources: RSR; CORE; ODPW Homelessness returns. All the data for the Annual Report are at 31/03/05 or for 2004/05 financial year.

Financial Highlights 2004-05

RTB sales of 280 properties generating **£9.7m** (2003-04: **£14.2m**)

Capitalised major works of **£13.9m** (2003-04: **£12.7m**)

Rent losses from voids decreased by **13.9%** (2003-04: **-3.1%**)

GROUP INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2005

		£'000
Turnover	Rent collected	42,441
Maintenance, management and other administration costs	Cost of providing our services	(43,955)
Operating deficit		<u>(1,514)</u>
Surplus on sale of properties	RTB and RTA sales	2,192
Surplus on ordinary activities before interest and taxation		<u>678</u>
Net interest and tax payable	interest charges we pay on our borrowings	(10,785)
Deficit for the year		<u><u>(10,107)</u></u>

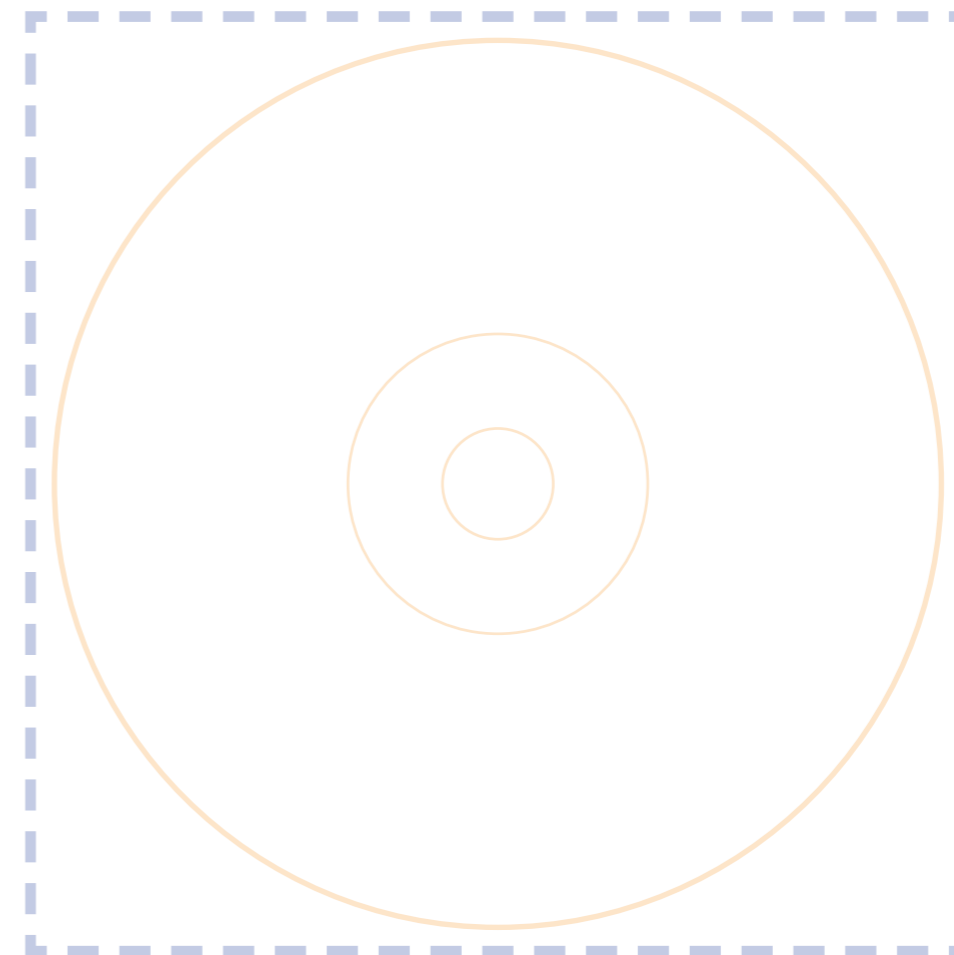
GROUP BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH 2005

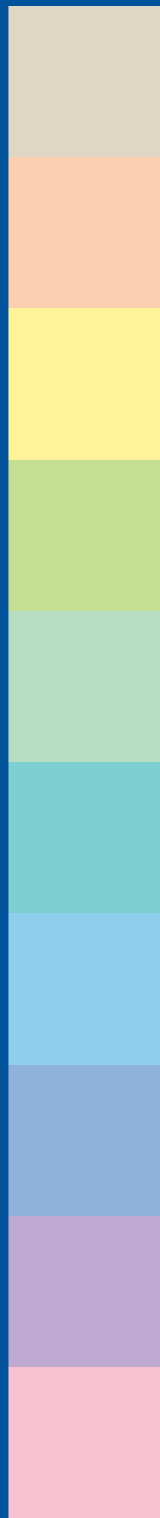
WHAT WE OWN	£'000
Value of Investment in our housing stock	203,639
Cost of the investment in our offices, IT etc	13,339
	<u>216,978</u>
Cash in hand and money we are owed - less bills not paid at year end	(2,800)
Net wealth (assets)	<u><u>214,178</u></u>

HOW WE FUND OUR INVESTMENT

Borrowing from our loan facility	179,600
Other long term creditors	8,462
Accumulated reserves	26,116
Total funding	<u><u>214,178</u></u>

See our website www.newcharter.co.uk for more details





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