Annual Highlights
2015–2016
A year at Glasgow Housing Association
Message from GHA’s Chair

Gordon Sloan looks back over the year’s highlights.
It has been an eventful year at GHA as we pushed forward with our ambition to create ‘Better homes, better lives and a better Glasgow’.

There have been many highlights, including the completion of new homes at Sighthill, Toryglen and Barmulloch and, of course, the demolition of the iconic Red Road flats which paves the way for further regeneration.

We also unveiled plans and began preparatory work to form a new Joint Venture with Glasgow City Council as part of our mission to deliver an outstanding repairs service to our customers.

Above all, it was the year in which we worked with our sister organisations in Wheatley to develop a five-year Group strategy – Investing in Our Futures.

Investing in Our Futures spells out Wheatley Group’s vision and aims between now and 2020. For GHA, this means we’re working on ambitious plans to build 4,000 homes and investing £200 million in our existing properties and neighbourhoods.

Most importantly, it means listening to people in local communities about what their priorities are. That’s exactly what we did as we drew up our local plans, based on the aims of Investing in Our Futures, for each of our communities for the next five years. To read our local plans, go to www.gha.org.uk.

Many of the improvements we’ve introduced this year, from our new online services to the design of our new-build homes, have been shaped directly by the feedback of our customers.

We look forward to engaging with many more people over the next year as we work together to make homes and lives better.

Gordon Sloan
Chair of GHA

Here are some of our highlights for 2015-16.
Over the year we completed 515 new affordable homes across our communities.
Hundreds of new homes
Over the year we completed 515 new affordable homes across our communities.

We also started work on 437 more and have a further 760 in development.

GHA tenants moved into:
- 141 new homes in Sighthill, the first stage of a huge regeneration project which will transform the area
- 157 new homes at Barmulloch which also include an amenity block for tenants who need an extra bit of support
- 100 new homes at North Toryglen, part of the regeneration of the area which will also include homes for private sale, a care home for the elderly and new shops
- 66 homes at Kingsway in Scotstoun and 51 in Rosemount in the north of the city.

Sighthill and North Toryglen are among eight areas in Glasgow which have been earmarked as priorities for regeneration. Known as Transformational Regeneration Areas (TRAs), plans for these communities are being delivered through a partnership Transforming Communities: Glasgow, made up of Scottish Government, Glasgow City Council and GHA.

Investment work
Over the past year, we invested almost £45million in improving our homes. The work included new roofs, overcladding, new heating and replacement kitchens and bathrooms.

The work completed this year means that GHA has, since 2003, now delivered:
- 45,322 central heating systems
- 14,683 new windows
- 47,522 new kitchens
- 47,169 new bathrooms

We have also:
- overclad 40,098 homes
- reroofed 38,194 homes, and
- rewired another 44,494 homes.

Warmer homes, cheaper bills
We are working on a number of fronts to tackle fuel poverty in our communities.

A project to fit 500 GHA homes with solar panels has now saved tenants £525,000 on their energy bills.

Tenants who had panels fitted to their roofs benefit from free electricity produced during daylight hours.

The panels have also generated more than 3.5million kWh of electricity – the equivalent of making 176 MILLION cups of tea.

The panels, launched in 2011, have also helped save more than 1,900 tonnes of CO₂ – the same amount of CO₂ as would be produced driving a bus 14,300,000 miles.
Fuel advice slashes bills
Tenants across our communities saved £424,335 in the past year thanks to our fuel advice service.

Free expert advice from our fuel advisors helps tenants cut their bills and access the cheapest tariffs.

Between 1 April 2015 and 31 March this year, our fuel advisors carried out 2,293 visits to GHA tenants at home. They helped people:

- reduce payments
- get on a lower tariff
- apply for a Warm Homes Discount payment, and
- reduce debt.

Red Road and other demolitions
Thousands of people watched as six Red Road multi-storey flats in Glasgow were demolished in an explosive blowdown.

Although the blowdown didn’t go exactly as predicted, with several of the top storeys left standing on two blocks, all residents were able to return safely to their homes soon after the demolition. The remaining storeys were brought down in just a few weeks by long-reach machinery.

Consultation with the local community is already under way about future plans for the site.

Over on the south of Glasgow, multi-storey blocks were reduced to rubble – paving the way for a £5milion development of 50 houses.
Three high-rise buildings at Tarfside Oval in Cardonald came down in a controlled explosion while a fourth was taken down using an ultra high-reach machine. Work on the new homes is scheduled to begin in late 2016.

Meanwhile, in the Gallowgate, our Whitevale and Bluevale flats were brought down using a new method. The ‘TopDownWay’ technology – which had been previously used only in France – avoided the need for full-height scaffolding on the 85-metre tall buildings.

A platform on top of the building allowed demolition staff to remove walls and floors piece by piece while keeping dust, noise and vibration to a minimum.
Joint Venture plans unveiled
We unveiled plans to deliver our repairs and maintenance service through a new Joint Venture with Glasgow City Council.

Our parent company, Wheatley Group, will become a 50-50 joint owner and partner in City Building Glasgow, the council’s wholly-owned subsidiary. As well as delivering a £33 million a year (excluding VAT) repairs service for Wheatley, the joint venture will be responsible for GHA’s £27m annual capital investment programme and the City Council’s own repairs, worth £30 million annually.

The number-one priority is to ensure tenants and factored homeowners continue to receive an outstanding repairs service and the new Joint Venture represented the best opportunity to do that.

We already have a strong and productive working relationship with City Building, which holds the current contract to deliver GHA’s repairs service. Details of how the Joint Venture will operate are being worked through with the aim of having everything in place in 2017.

Improving performance
We achieved a strong business performance over the year, maintaining good results in many of the areas where we already excelled and improving in others.

Some of the highlights for 2015-16 at GHA include:

› overall customer satisfaction maintained at 90%
› tenants who feel their rent represents good value for money up from 75% to 81%
› complaints responded to within Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO) timescales up from 90% to 96%
› 99.9% of repairs appointments were kept and repairs completed right first time maintained at 95%
› average length of time to relet a home maintained at just over 14 days
› strong rent collection performance with gross rent arrears at 3.9%.

At GHA, over 98% of homes now reach the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. The remainder of the properties are categorised as exemptions in line with the Scottish Housing Regulator’s guidance.

Jobs and training
We created 219 jobs and training opportunities for GHA customers over the year as part of our drive to support tenants to lead better lives.

We create jobs and training through employability schemes, Modern Apprenticeships and through clauses in our new-build and investment contracts which require contractors to provide employment opportunities for local people.

We also create opportunities through our Wheatley Pledge scheme, which incentivises contractors and suppliers to do more for our communities.

Across our parent organisation Wheatley Group, we created a total of 564 jobs and training places for people in our communities over the year.
Customers have a real say
Tenants are at the heart of what we do and we want to give them real influence in local decisions.

Our Area Committees, made up of tenants and other community representatives, in the North East, North West and South each distributed £1.5million of funding to grassroots projects aimed at making neighbourhoods better and safer.

They allocated money to everything from upgrades for paths, lighting and bin storage areas to sports projects for young people and pensioners’ parties.

Tenants also got involved in influencing our services through our network of 15 local committees, our scrutiny panel and inspection teams.

Our African Forum and Polish Forum continued to bring people from communities of interest together to discuss what matters to them.

Online services
More than 1500 tenants have signed up for our new improved online services which went live in summer 2015.

Tenants can now see their account, with details of all their payments and charges, as well as pay their rent or other bills, book a repair or request other services.

The online services are part of our drive to give people more choice about how they get in touch and transact with us.

Once registered, tenants carried out a total of 8,181 interactions on the new online channel and made £700,000 of payments towards their bills.

Support for the most vulnerable
We are committed to providing flexible, tailored support to more vulnerable people across our communities by working with others in the Group. Our sister organisation, Loretto Care, launched a new Tenancy Support Service, which sees care and housing staff work closely together to support people to stay in their home.

The service was fully rolled out in September 2015 and, in a short space of time, had provided a new level of support to over 1140 tenants.

When an individual or family is referred to the service, the team works with them over eight weeks, providing personalised support. They can help with everything from booking a doctor’s appointment to getting help with mental health issues or addiction. For some it is about supporting them to reduce isolation by increasing their opportunities for social contact.

Top marks for sheltered housing
Care inspectors gave our sheltered housing service a glowing report.

Our services were praised for performing at a ‘very good level with areas of excellent practice’.

The Care Inspectorate, which regulates and inspects care services in Scotland, looked at key areas of the housing support service during the validation inspection. Tenants were interviewed and completed questionnaires as part of the inspection.

Tenants told the inspector staff ‘always go the extra mile’ and they were regularly asked their views of the service. Inspectors praised the way the service communicates with tenants and the range of leisure and social activities on offer, including the ‘Sheltered Housing’s Got Talent’ competition, bake-offs and also knitting, art and cooking sessions.

We run 21 sheltered housing complexes and two very sheltered housing complexes throughout Glasgow.
Customer service excellence
Our focus on customer service excellence was again recognised this year when Wheatley was awarded accreditation to a prestigious UK scheme.

Wheatley gained Customer Service Excellence (CSE) accreditation – the national standard for excellence in customer service in public sector organisations – with one of the best ratings in the scheme’s history.

CSE accreditation is overseen by the UK Government’s Cabinet Office and recognises how organisations serve the people they work for.

GHA was part of the assessment which saw Wheatley awarded 16 ratings of Compliance Plus and 34 ratings of Full Compliance. It is understood that only one other organisation has achieved a higher number of Compliance Plus ratings in the history of the Standard.

GHA was previously awarded CSE accreditation in its own right six years in a row.

Click and connect
We continued to increase the number of Click & Connect centres in our communities with over 30 now open to the public.

New centres opened this year at Milton, Castlemilk and Knightswood.

Click & Connect provides free computer facilities and support classes in some of Scotland’s poorest communities. Expert advice is on hand to help people log on to job sites, create a CV, get online shopping discounts, pay their rent and access online benefit forms and accounts.

The centres are a partnership between Glasgow Kelvin College, Wheatley Group and others. The Castlemilk centre was the first to be opened in one of Glasgow’s libraries and was a partnership with Glasgow Life.

Handyperson service a hit
Tenants are loving getting a helping hand with odd jobs around the home.

Our Handyperson service is there to help tenants who are over 60 or disabled with small jobs around the home.

It proved a big hit this year with 1494 people using the service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016 and 6754 jobs carried out.

Jobs ranged from hanging curtains to plumbing in washing machines and assembling flat-pack furniture.