

Report

Report to:	Housing and Technical Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	15 March 2023
Report by:	Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

Subject:	Housing Allocation Policy – Local Letting Plans 2023/2024
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ advise on progress against the 2022/2023 letting targets
- ◆ request approval for the 2023/2024 letting targets
- ◆ request approval for the 2023/2024 local letting initiatives

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that progress against the 2022/2023 letting targets, be noted;
- (2) that the 2023/2024 mainstream housing letting targets, attached as Appendix 1, be approved;
- (3) that the 2023/2024 sheltered housing letting targets, attached as Appendix 2, be approved; and
- (4) that the Local Letting Initiatives attached as Appendix 3, be approved.

3. Background

- 3.1. Local Letting Plans (LLPs) have been a key feature of the Housing Allocation Policy since 2009. During the review of the Housing Allocation Policy in 2018/2019, it was recognised that LLPs continue to provide an effective means for ensuring that a strategic and flexible approach is taken in the allocation of council housing in South Lanarkshire. Consequently, LLPs were retained within the revised Housing Allocation Policy, which came into effect in May 2019.
- 3.2. On an annual basis, LLPs are prepared for each of the housing management areas of South Lanarkshire. LLPs provide an overview of local supply and demand and set out:-
- ◆ annual letting targets for each of the 4 housing lists (in relation to mainstream and sheltered properties)
 - ◆ details of Local Letting Initiatives (LLIs) in operation within a local area
- 3.3. The targets and initiatives detailed within LLPs are subject to Housing and Technical Resources Committee approval. This is the third annual report on LLPs since the revised Housing Allocation Policy was introduced.

4. Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

- 4.1. The South Lanarkshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019 to 2024 (RRTP) sets out a number of objectives to address homelessness and limit the amount of time people experiencing homelessness spend in temporary accommodation. Along with a range of other actions, identifying letting targets for each of the 4 housing lists contributes towards achieving the priority objectives set out within the RRTP.

5. Achievement of the 2022/2023 Letting Targets

- 5.1. The information provided in relation to the achievement of letting targets has been projected to the end of the financial year, based on data collated between 4 April 2022 and 8 January 2023. Where appropriate, manual adjustments have been made to projections to take account of local circumstances. This approach allows letting targets and letting initiatives to be fully implemented from the start of the financial year.
- 5.2. Across each housing management area, letting targets are set within bands for each housing list to allow for a degree of flexibility when allocating properties. Full details of the projected outcomes in relation to the targets set for both mainstream and sheltered properties in 2022/2023, are set out in Appendices 1 and 2.
- 5.3. In relation to mainstream council properties, it is projected that across South Lanarkshire, the target set for the Urgent Housing Need will be achieved. Lets directed to the Transfer and Waiting lists are projected to be on target although at the low end of the banded target. This is due to the high proportion of lets being directed to high need applicants on the Urgent Housing Need list and Other Category list. Lets directed to the Other Category list are projected to be slightly above target and can be attributed to the contribution that South Lanarkshire Council has made to providing housing to displaced Ukrainian households.
- 5.4. In relation to the targets set for sheltered properties across South Lanarkshire, it is projected that lets to the Urgent Housing Need, Transfer and Other Category lists will be within target. Lets to the Waiting list are projected to slightly exceed the target set. This can be attributed to variations at a local area level relating to low levels of turnover in certain areas and differences in supply and demand for sheltered housing.

6. Letting Targets for Mainstream Properties during 2023/2024

- 6.1. The letting targets proposed for mainstream properties across South Lanarkshire and for each of the 4 housing management divisions are set out in Appendix 1.
- 6.2. The factors which have been taken into account when setting the mainstream letting targets for 2023/2024 are detailed below:-
- ◆ demand for social rented housing remains high – 14,493 applicants were on the HomeFinder housing register as at 8 January 2023
 - ◆ a continuing high demand from homeless households – as at 8 January 2023, 1,839 homelessness applications had been received. Assuming that this trend continues, it is projected that 2,390 homelessness applications will have been received by the end of the financial year. This represents an indicative 12% increase on the 2021/2022 year end position and reflects a general increase in homelessness presentations being experienced nationally

- ◆ the Council's statutory duty to homeless households – the number of applicants assessed as homeless and to whom the Council has a duty to provide settled accommodation remains high. As at 8 January 2023, there were 1,132 homeless applicants on the HomeFinder housing register, an increase on the 2021/2022 year end position
- ◆ the number of properties becoming available for let – it is projected that by the end of the financial year, 1,825 mainstream properties will have been let. Whilst this represents a decrease of 9% on the previous year, this figure is comparable with the average turnover levels experienced prior to the onset of Covid-19
- ◆ additional supply of housing – the number of council new build properties and acquisitions planned for completion during 2023/2024
- ◆ joint working with partners – the contribution that HomeFinder partners and other Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) make to meeting housing need, including the needs of homeless applicants and other priority groups, through agreed targets

7. Sheltered Housing Letting Targets for 2023/2024

- 7.1. Between 4 April 2022 and 8 January 2023, 121 sheltered properties became available for let. It is projected that by the end of the financial year, 158 sheltered properties will have been let, broadly comparable to the number let in 2021/2022.
- 7.2. There continues to be a high level of demand for sheltered housing with 1,222 applicants on the HomeFinder housing register as at 8 January 2023.
- 7.3. It is recognised that demand for sheltered housing varies across areas and individual sheltered housing developments and this has been taken into account in the letting targets proposed for 2023/2024.
- 7.4. The letting targets proposed for sheltered properties across South Lanarkshire and for each of the 4 housing management areas are set out in Appendix 2.

8. Letting Initiatives

- 8.1. The Housing Allocation Policy allows for the establishment of LLIs in areas where there are particular needs, issues or circumstances which require to be addressed.
- 8.2. During 2022/2023, there were 5 LLIs in operation across South Lanarkshire and 1 South Lanarkshire wide initiative. To inform the development of the LLPs for 2023/2024, each of the letting initiatives have been subject to review to assess their impact and identify whether there is a need for the initiative to continue.
- 8.3. It is proposed that the existing 5 LLIs, set out in Appendix 3, be retained during 2023/2024 and a new LLI be introduced in the Whitlawburn area of Cambuslang.
- 8.4. The area of Whitlawburn was previously among the most deprived data zones recorded within the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. During recent years, a major regeneration of Whitlawburn has taken place with unpopular housing blocks demolished and replaced by modern, energy efficient homes. The proposed LLI aims to promote sustainability and community cohesion within the Whitlawburn area by giving reasonable priority for housing to Transfer list and Waiting list applicants who have a local connection to Whitlawburn. Details of the initiative are included in Appendix 3.

- 8.5. The South Lanarkshire wide letting initiative was introduced in April 2013 to mitigate the impact of the under occupancy provisions of the Welfare Reform Act 2012.
- 8.6. The evaluation of the initiative has confirmed that its impact has been very limited with only 4 tenants rehoused through the initiative since 2018/2019 and no tenants housed during the last year. This can be attributed to the availability of Discretionary Housing Payment, which mitigated the impact of the under-occupancy provisions of the Act, enabling tenants to continue living in their home without additional financial liability. In addition, analysis of the housing register has identified that there are now very few applicants on the housing register who meet the required criteria for priority to be awarded under the initiative. Consequently, it is proposed that the South Lanarkshire wide initiative be discontinued from 3 April 2023.
- 8.7. It is, however, recognised that there are benefits to providing a means for supporting and facilitating tenants living in larger homes to move to a smaller property, including:-
- ◆ to alleviate financial pressures on tenants who may be struggling to pay rent or heat a property that is larger than they require
 - ◆ a smaller property is more easily maintained and managed and may help a tenant to remain independent in their own home for longer
 - ◆ freeing up larger sized properties in particular areas would help to meet the housing needs of other applicants on the housing register
- 8.8. Within the current Housing Allocation Policy, under occupancy is a recognised housing need category and points are awarded to tenants living in properties which are larger than their household requires. It is proposed that during 2023/2024, a proactive approach be taken to support current tenants under occupying larger sized council properties, to downsize to a smaller property, where they wish to do so. A review of tenants in this situation will be progressed and a housing options based discussion will take place to identify tenants' needs and where appropriate, ensure they are placed on the housing register and that preferences are reasonable.

9. Next Steps

- 9.1. Implement 2023/2024 letting targets effective from Monday 3 April 2023.
- 9.2. Publish the 2023/2024 Local Letting Plans on the South Lanarkshire Council website.
- 9.3. Continue to monitor the impact of the Local Letting Initiatives throughout the year.

10. Employee Implications

- 10.1. There are no employee implications contained within this report.

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1. There are no financial implications contained within this report.

12. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 12.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy which impacts on the natural environment, climate change or sustainability.

13. Other Implications

- 13.1. The content of this report will contribute to the evidence to support the requirements of the Annual Assurance Statement.

13.2. The risks associated with welfare reform have been included within the Resource's risk register and actions taken to mitigate these risks where possible.

14. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

14.1. An equality impact assessment has been carried out on each LLI proposed for 2023/2024. The assessment is that the proposals do not have any adverse impact on any of the protected characteristics groups.

14.2. Consultation on the proposed letting targets and the LLIs has taken place with tenants and other customers at a meeting of the Tenant Participation Co-ordination Group.

Stephen Gibson

Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

23 February 2023

Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes

- ◆ Improve the availability, quality and access of housing
- ◆ Support our communities by tackling disadvantage and deprivation and supporting aspiration
- ◆ Focused on people and their needs
- ◆ Make communities safer, stronger and sustainable
- ◆ Accountable, effective, efficient and transparent

Previous Reference

- ◆ Housing and Technical Resources Committee report – Local Letting Plans, 8 December 2021

List of Background Papers

- ◆ Local Letting Plans 2022/2023

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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SLC Proposed Letting Targets for Mainstream Properties 2023/2024

South Lanarkshire

Housing Need List	2022/2023	2022/2023 Projected Lets		2023/2024
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent Housing Need	55-65%	1151	63%	55-65%
Transfer	15-25%	284	15.5%	15-25%
Waiting	15-20%	284	15.5%	15-20%
Other Categories	0-5%	1106	6%	0-5%
		1825	100%	

Cambuslang/Rutherglen Division

Housing Need List	2022/2023	2022/2023 Projected Lets		2023/2024
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent Housing Need	55-65%	230	69%	55-65%
Transfer	20-25%	41	12%	15-25%
Waiting	10-20%	30	9%	15-20%
Other Categories	0-5%	33	10%	0-5%
		334	100%	

Clydesdale Division

Housing Need List	2022/2023	2022/2023 Projected Lets		2023/2024
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent Housing Need	45-55%	194	51%	45-55%
Transfer	20-25%	69	18%	20-25%
Waiting	20-30%	107	28%	20-30%
Other Categories	0-5%	9	3%	0-5%
		379	100%	

East Kilbride Division

Housing Need List	2022/2023	2022/2023 Projected Lets		2023/2024
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent Housing Need	60-65%	297	68%	60-65%
Transfer	20-30%	70	17%	20-30%
Waiting	5-15%	47	11%	5-15%
Other Categories	0-5%	20	4%	0-5%
		434	100%	

Hamilton Division

Housing Need List	2022/2023	2022/2023 Projected Lets		2023/2024
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent Housing Need	60-65%	430	64%	60-65%
Transfer	15-25%	104	15%	15-25%
Waiting	10-20%	100	15%	10-20%
Other Categories	0-5%	44	6%	0-5%
		678	100	

SLC Proposed Letting Targets for Sheltered Properties 2023/2024**South Lanarkshire**

Housing Need List	2022/2023	2022/2023 Projected Lets		2023/2024
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent Housing Need	15-30%	28	18%	15-30%
Transfer	40-50%	69	44%	40-50%
Waiting	25-35%	58	36%	25-35%
Other Categories	0-5%	3	2%	0-5%
		158	100%	

Cambuslang Division

Housing Need List	2022/2023	2022/2023 Projected Lets		2023/2024
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent Housing Need	15-20%	4	11%	15-20%
Transfer	35-45%	16	44.5%	35-45%
Waiting	35-45%	16	44.5%	35-45%
Other Categories	0-5%	0	0%	0-5%
		36	100%	

Clydesdale Division

Housing Need List	2022/2023	2022/2023 Projected Lets		2023/2024
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent Housing Need	15-20%	5	22%	15-20%
Transfer	35-45%	9	39%	35-45%
Waiting	35-45%	9	39%	35-45%
Other Categories	0-5%	0	0%	0-5%
		23	100%	

East Kilbride Division

Housing Need List	2022/2023	2022/2023 Projected Lets		2023/2024
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent Housing Need	20-30%	7	11%	20-30%
Transfer	30-45%	31	51%	30-45%
Waiting	30-40%	21	35%	30-40%
Other Categories	0-5%	2	3%	0-5%
		61	100%	

Hamilton Division

Housing Need List	2022/2023	2022/2023 Projected Lets		2023/2024
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent Housing Need	10-20%	11	28%	25-35%
Transfer	55-60%	13	34%	45-50%
Waiting	20-30%	13	34%	15-25%
Other Categories	0-5%	1	3%	0-5%
		38	100%	

Proposed Local Letting Initiatives for 2023/2024

Management Area	Details of LLI	Area covered by LLI	Property types/sizes	Duration of LLI
Clydesdale	Priority for housing will be given to applicants who have a social or economic connection with the area. To encourage tenancy sustainment, discussions will take place with prospective tenants to ensure that they fully understand the context to living in a rural location.	Forth East Douglas Douglas Water Glespin Rigside	All property types/sizes	1 year
Hamilton	Reasonable priority for housing to be given to applicants with an assessed mobility need.	Almada Tower Wyler Tower	1 and 2 bedroom multi storey flats	1 year
Cambuslang	Reasonable priority for housing to be given to applicants with an assessed mobility need.	Rosebank Tower Sherry Heights Standford Hall Logan Tower Springhall Court	2 bedroom multi storey flats	1 year
Cambuslang	Priority for housing to be given to Transfer list and Waiting list applicants who have a local connection.	Cathkin Braes Tenant Management Co-operative area	All property sizes and types	1 year
Cambuslang	Priority for housing to be given to Transfer list and Waiting list applicants who have a local connection.	Whitlawburn	All property types and sizes	1 year
Rutherglen	Restrict lets to the Urgent Housing Need list up to 45%.	Greenhill Court	All 1 and 2 bedroom properties	1 year