

# **Report**

Report to:	<b>Housing and Technical Resources Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>13 November 2019</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>Housing Services Customer Involvement Strategy 2018 to 2022 Annual Review 2018/2019</b>
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## **1. Purpose of Report**

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ provide an update to Committee on the completion of the first annual review of the Council's Housing Services Customer Involvement Strategy 2018 to 2022

## **2. Recommendation(s)**

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

- (1) that the Housing Services Customer Involvement Strategy 2018 to 2022 Annual Review 2018/2019, as detailed within Appendix 1, be noted.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1. South Lanarkshire Council's Housing Services Customer Involvement Strategy 2018 to 2022 was approved by Housing and Technical Resources Committee on 23 May 2018.
- 3.2. This is the fourth strategy developed in partnership with the Tenant Participation Co-ordination group. It outlines how Housing Services will continue to engage with and involve customers in shaping the services provided. The strategy is produced in accordance with the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and reflects the principles of both the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and the National Standards for Community Engagement.
- 3.3. The strategy focuses upon four strategic outcomes:-
- ◆ Customers are informed and knowledgeable
  - ◆ More customers are involved
  - ◆ Customers help to drive continuous service improvement
  - ◆ Customers help to shape change and make a difference
- 3.4. The strategic outcomes contain a total of 23 objectives and subsequent actions that outline how Housing Services and its partners will aim to achieve each of the 4 outcomes.

#### **4. Annual Review 2018/2019**

- 4.1. This is the first annual review of the strategy, and aims to summarise the progress that has been made between 1 June 2018 and 31 March 2019.
- 4.2. In summary, the annual review identified that progress has been made on 18 out of 23 objectives contained across the four strategic outcomes.
- 4.3. The full report on the review, and the associated Action Plan can be found in Appendix 1. The report contains the following sections:-

<b>Summary</b>	Outlines key areas of progress made throughout 2018/2019.
<b>Amendments and additions</b>	Provides an overview of any amendments and additions identified through the review process.
<b>Resourcing customer involvement</b>	Outlines the total financial costs to the Housing Revenue Account relating to customer involvement within the Resource.
<b>2019/20 priority areas</b>	Provides an overview of key customer involvement priorities to be progressed throughout 2019/2020.
<b>Reporting</b>	States that in line with Section 8 of the strategy, 'Monitoring, evaluation and review' the results of the annual review will be reported to relevant stakeholders.
<b>Action Plan 2018/19</b>	Appended action plan with detailed progress made for each strategic outcome within 2018/2019.
<b>Customer Scrutiny Programme 2018/19</b>	Appended information outlining the two customer scrutiny exercises completed within 2018/2019.

- 4.4. Outlined below are some of the key achievements identified in 2018/2019:-

- ◆ For the 11<sup>th</sup> year, an annual programme of involvement was agreed with customers
- ◆ 2 service areas were scrutinised by the South Lanarkshire Customer Scrutiny Group in 2018/2019. Further information on each of these is provided within Appendix 2.
- ◆ 833 tenants were involved in the annual rent setting consultation, a substantial increase on the previous year's consultation
- ◆ In consultation with Gypsy/Traveller site residents, detailed site improvement plans have been developed for the two council operated sites within South Lanarkshire
- ◆ The Customer Publicity Group revised the content of the customer involvement pages of the council's website with the aim of raising awareness of how more customers can become involved

- 4.5. During 2019/2020 some of the priority areas to be progressed will include:-

- ◆ Work with customers to further develop the council website
- ◆ Developing and improving engagement opportunities for young people
- ◆ Ensure the intensive engagement opportunities and the community-led approach continues with site residents within the council's Gypsy/Traveller sites

- ◆ Agree service areas to be included within the 2019/2020 Customer Scrutiny Programme
- ◆ Further expand engagement with people who have lived experience of homelessness
- ◆ Further develop customer involvement in identifying local priorities to be progressed through a participatory budgeting approach

## **5. Next Steps**

- 5.1. The findings of the annual review 2018/2019 will be shared and discussed with relevant stakeholders.
- 5.2. The changes to wider context will be considered throughout 2019/2020 and any amendments required to the strategy will be reflected in the 2019/2020 annual review.

## **6. Employee implications**

- 6.1. There are no employee implications associated with this report.

## **7. Financial implications**

- 7.1. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

## **8. Other implications (Including Environmental and Risk Issues)**

- 8.1. There are no additional risks associated with this report.
- 8.2. The content of this report will contribute to the evidence to support the requirements of the Annual Assurance Statement.

## **9. Impact Assessments and Consultation arrangements**

- 9.1. An equalities impact assessment was completed for the Housing Services Customer Involvement Strategy 2018 to 2022.

**Daniel Lowe**

**Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)**

7 October 2019

## **Links to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives**

- ◆ Focused on people and their needs
- ◆ Accountable, effective, efficient and transparent
- ◆ Achieve results through leadership, good governance and organisational effectiveness
- ◆ Making communities safer, stronger and sustainable
- ◆ Improve health, care and wellbeing
- ◆ Improve the availability, quality and access of housing

## **Previous References**

- ◆ Housing and Technical Resources Committee, 23 May 2018

## **List of Background Papers**

- ◆ South Lanarkshire Housing Services Customer Involvement Strategy 2018 to 2022

**Contact for Further Information**

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

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## **Housing Services Customer Involvement Strategy 2018-2022**

### **Annual Review 2018/19**

If you need this information in another language or format, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs. Phone: 0303 123 1015 or email [equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)

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**Action Plan 2018/19 Update**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 South Lanarkshire Council's Housing Services Customer Involvement Strategy 2018-22 was approved by Housing and Technical Resources Committee in May 2018.
- 1.2 This is the first annual review of the strategy, and aims to summarise the progress that has been made between 1 June 2018 and 31 March 2019, whilst also outlining challenges or changes that have occurred during this period. The review was completed in conjunction with customer representatives from the Tenant Participation Co-ordination Group and supported by the South Lanarkshire Tenant Development Support Project.
- 1.3 The strategy is focused upon four strategic outcomes:
  - Customers are informed and knowledgeable
  - More customers are involved
  - Customers help to drive continuous service improvement
  - Customers help to shape change and make a difference

The four strategic outcomes contain a total of 23 objectives that outline how Housing Services and its partners will aim to achieve each of these. The full list of objectives, and the subsequent actions are listed in the Action Plan, along with the progress made towards each within the first year.

## **2. Summary**

- 2.1 The appended action plan outlines the progress that has been made throughout 2018/19 within each of the strategic outcomes.
- 2.2 In summary, the annual review identified that progress has been made on 18 of the 23 objectives contained within the strategy. Work to progress the remaining five objectives will be taken in line with the schedule outlined within the strategy.
- 2.3 The review also highlighted that:
  - A detailed monitoring framework was developed in partnership with the South Lanarkshire Tenant Participation Co-ordination Group, providing a clear and comprehensive basis for monitoring customer involvement activity.
  - For the 11<sup>th</sup> year, an annual programme of involvement was agreed with customers.
  - Two different service areas were scrutinised by the South Lanarkshire Customer Scrutiny Group in 2018/19. Further information on each of these is provided within Appendix 2.
  - Approximately £200,000 of financial support was provided to support customer involvement across South Lanarkshire.
  - 833 tenants were involved in the annual rent setting consultation, a substantial increase on the previous year's consultation.

- In consultation with Gypsy / Traveller site residents, detailed site improvement plans have been developed for the two council operated sites within South Lanarkshire.
- The Customer Publicity Group revised the content of the customer involvement pages of the council's website with the aim of raising awareness of how more customers can become involved.

### **3. Amendments and additions**

- 3.1 The review process identified that there were no major amendments or additions required for the strategy at this stage.
- 3.2 The review process did identify that the progress made and extensive customer commitment given to the Customer Scrutiny Programme was not adequately reflected within the strategy. As such, Appendix 2 contains an overview of the two scrutiny exercises completed within 2018/19 by the Customer Scrutiny Group and supported by the South Lanarkshire Tenant Development Support Project. Further consideration will also be given as to how the Customer Scrutiny Programme can be expanded and reported more widely.
- 3.3 There are a number of wider contextual changes that have occurred since the strategy was published that should be considered as part of future customer involvement considerations. These include:
  - In March 2019, South Lanarkshire's first five year Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan was published. The plan aims to reduce homelessness across South Lanarkshire over the next five years, and reduce the amount of time homeless households spend in temporary accommodation. Targeted consultation with a range of housing, homelessness and health stakeholders informed the development of the plan.
  - In May 2019, South Lanarkshire Council's Housing Allocation Policy was reviewed and approved at Executive Committee, incorporating the changes in legislative requirements set out within the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014. A full three month consultation on the policy and the changes contained within it was publically available.
  - Throughout 2018/19 the council worked towards its published target of dedicating 1% of its overall budget to a participatory budgeting model. Housing and Technical Resources are actively contributing to this with a range of budgeting areas already being transferred to the participatory budgeting model. This includes sections of the Housing Investment Programme and Estate Improvement Budget.
- 3.4 Following the initial consultative process which customers and other stakeholders contributed to, further consideration will be given within 2019/20 to how these new areas will be included in future customer involvement programmes.



#### **4. Resourcing customer involvement**

- 4.1 The strategy recognises that effective customer involvement requires adequate funding and support. In 2018/19 a range of financial and non-financial resources were provided.

Financial support included:

- Annual grant to tenants and resident groups
- Start-up grant for new groups
- Travel and subsistence to attend meetings/events
- Access to independent advice and support from SLTDSP
- Financial assistance to attend national conferences/seminars

Non-financial support provided to tenants and resident groups included:

- Assistance with organising events and meetings
- General administration support
- Assistance to apply for funding
- Production of leaflets and posters
- Start up support for new groups

- 4.2 In 2018/19 the financial resources spent to support customer involvement was £209,570.29.

#### **5. 2019/20 Priority areas**

- 5.1 Over the next year the priority areas which will be progressed by Housing Services, together with its customers are outlined in the table below.

<b>Strategic Outcome</b>	<b>Objectives/actions</b>
1. Customers are informed and knowledgeable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Further develop the council website to raise awareness of opportunities to become involved.</li><li>• Promote feedback through 'real time' surveys and developing more self-serve options.</li><li>• Develop and improve engagement opportunities for young people. This includes continuing to support and develop the Larkhall youth forum and evaluating its impact. From this consideration will be given to establishing opportunities for engaging young people in other areas.</li></ul>
2. More customers are involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a system to track and evaluate customer involvement activities.</li><li>• Ensure the engagement opportunities and the community-led approach continues with site residents within the councils Gypsy/Traveller sites.</li></ul>

Strategic Outcome	Objectives/actions
3. Customers help to drive continuous service improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customers to agree service areas to be included within the 2019/20 Customer Scrutiny Programme.</li> <li>• Expand programme of local estate walkabouts and encourage customers to participate.</li> <li>• Ensure those with lived experience of homelessness are consulted with in relation to service provision and communication</li> </ul>
4. Customers help to shape change and make a difference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage establishment of customer panels as an important source of feedback.</li> <li>• Further develop customer involvement in identifying local priorities to be progressed through a participatory budgeting approach.</li> </ul>

## 6. Reporting

6.1 In line with the agreed monitoring and reporting schedule of the Housing Services Customer Involvement Strategy 2018-22, the contents of this review will be reported to:

- South Lanarkshire Tenant Participation Co-ordination Group
- Housing and Technical Resources Committee
- Housing and Technical Resources Resource Management Team
- Housing Services Management Team
- Local Housing Forums
- Tenant and resident groups

## Appendix 1 - Action Plan 2018/19 Update

Strategic Outcome 1: Customers are informed and knowledgeable				
	Objective	Action	Timescale	Progress update as at 31 March 2019
1.1	Work with the Customer Publicity Group (CPG) to assess and approve communication intended for distribution to tenants and other customers	Establish new ways of communicating with and involving customers through use of text, email and social media	2018-2019 onwards	New methods of contacting customers are being implemented. This includes promotion of all consultation activities and events on South Lanarkshire Council's social media channels. In addition to this trials on text messaging customers who have 'opted in' to receiving information on becoming involved have taken place. Further work will be progressed on this in 2019/20.
		CPG to meet as required to assess publications	2018-2019 onwards	Two publications, a new Sheltered Housing leaflet 'Keeping you safe' and a revised rent information letter, were accredited with the Customer Approved Stamp in 2018/19.
1.2	Ensure 'Housing news' and 'Sheltered Housing News' articles continue to be relevant and of interest to customers with a particular focus on performance and service improvement plans	Agree arrangements to ensure customer involvement in each edition of 'Housing news' and 'Sheltered Housing News'	2018-2019 onwards	Arrangements agreed with CPG for customer involvement in Housing News. CPG have developed articles for autumn 2018 and Spring 2019 editions of Housing News.
		Carry out survey to determine tenant satisfaction with the content, frequency and format of 'Housing news' and Sheltered 'Housing news'		A survey was incorporated in the autumn 2018 of Housing News, which received positive feedback from those who responded.
		Use 'Housing news' and 'Sheltered Housing News' to feedback on customer consultation/participation and how this will be used to shape service delivery		Two editions published of Housing News in autumn 2018 and spring 2019. These publicised opportunities and events for involvement and provided information on customer involvement activity including the Housing Allocation Policy Review and scrutiny activities. There were also two editions of Sheltered Housing news providing updates on review of the Housing Allocation Policy and feedback from sheltered tenants' on the festival held in October 2018.

**Strategic Outcome 1: Customers are informed and knowledgeable**

	Objective	Action	Timescale	Progress update as at 31 March 2019
1.3	Continue to report on landlord performance and provide comparisons in relation to other social landlords	Produce a landlord performance report in consultation with tenants and in line with Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) guidelines	Annually (by 31 October)	The Scottish Housing Charter 2017/18 supplement was developed and agreed with the Customer Publicity Group and distributed as part of autumn 2018 edition of Housing News.  The TPCG also reviewed the Charter information prior to this being submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator in May 2018.
		Provide comparison of performance in relation to other social landlords through Housing News and council website	2019-2020 onwards	This is now in place within the autumn edition of Housing News, which is also published on the council's website following delivery to all tenants.
1.4	Further develop the council website to reflect best practice in customer engagement and to raise awareness of opportunities to become involved	CPG to review and make recommendations for improvement to content and information	2018-2019 onwards	CPG reviewed the customer involvement pages on the council's website to ensure it raised awareness of the opportunities to become involved. The group made recommendations and the website was updated to reflect these.
		Consider ways to promote customer feedback using 'real time' surveys and by developing more self-serve options for customers	2019-2020	To be progressed in line with the development and implementation of the new integrated Housing and Property Services IT system.
		Undertake online consultation where appropriate	2018-2019 onwards	Regular online consultation takes place with customers on a range of service areas. Within 2018/19 this included the consultation of the revised Housing Allocation Policy and rent setting process. Further development of this, including how surveys with tenants and other customers are conducted, will be progressed in line with the development of the new integrated Housing and Property Services IT system.

**Strategic Outcome 1: Customers are informed and knowledgeable**

	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Progress update as at 31 March 2019</b>
1.5	Develop the use of social media to encourage greater knowledge and understanding of housing services and performance and to encourage more customer feedback	Establish new ways of communicating with and involving customers through use of text, email and social media	2018-2019 onwards	The promotion of all consultation activities and events on South Lanarkshire Council's social media channels now takes place. Further development of this will take place within 2019/20.
1.6	Promote customer awareness of opportunities for customer involvement	Publicise and encourage attendance at events to raise awareness and promote networking opportunities	2018-2019 onwards	Publicity by SLTDSP and through Housing News, and on the council's website promoting the range of opportunities to encourage customers to become involved.  Articles on the council's website and in 'Housing News' to highlight the opportunities for tenants to give their views on the rent proposals for 2020/21 and encouraging them to attend the events and complete the online survey.
1.7	Co-produce annual calendar highlighting customer involvement activities and events	Publish Annual Participation and Communication programme on council website	2018-2019 onwards	To be progressed in 2019/20

Strategic Outcome 2: More customers are involved				
	Objective	Action	Timescale	Progress update as at 31 March 2019
2.1	Develop and implement annual local area participation plans for each housing management area to improve engagement	Develop local area participation plans reflecting local needs and priorities	2018-2019 onwards	Local area participation plans developed and implemented for each housing management area reflecting local needs and priorities. These aimed to help develop customer involvement at a local level and provide realistic opportunities for housing customers to become involved. Customer representatives and officers from the local housing office worked together to develop the plans, and continue to monitor their implementation.
		Monitor and review plans annually and identify actions to be progressed	2019-2020 onwards	
2.2	Encourage involvement and feedback from less engaged groups of customers	Use customer profile information to identify less engaged customer groups	2018-2019 onwards	To be progressed in 2019/20
		Identify opportunities to target specific engagement with these groups of customers	2019-2020 onwards	
		Review, update and promote interested individual database	2018-2019 onwards	
2.3	Establish customer panels	Promote customer involvement, feedback and comments through a range of digital channels	2018-2019 onwards	To be progressed in 2019/20
2.4	Undertake an awareness raising programme for customer scrutiny activities to encourage active participation in them	Develop a programme of scrutiny opportunities	2018-2019 onwards	Customers agreed a programme of scrutiny during 2018/19. This included two service areas/activities that related to the refusal of offers process and the collection of customer contact details. Further information on both exercises is contained within Appendix 2.  Articles relating to customer scrutiny and how customers could get involved were contained within Housing News. The programme was also supported by publicity from the SLTDSP.
		Recruit customers for future scrutiny activities through Customer Scrutiny Framework	2018-2019 onwards	A recruitment drive to encourage more customers to become involved in the scrutiny programme is currently underway and being led by the SLTDSP.

Strategic Outcome 2: More customers are involved				
	Objective	Action	Timescale	Progress update as at 31 March 2019
2.5	Deliver and further develop engagement opportunities with Gypsy/Travellers	Annual focus group meeting with Gypsy/Travellers at Shawlands Crescent, Larkhall	2018-2019 onwards	<p>Throughout 2018/19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A residents group has been established in Shawlands Crescent. This is the first Gypsy/Traveller residents group established in Scotland.</li> <li>The residents group, along with the wider community of both sites, have taken a leading role in the development of site investment masterplans.</li> <li>Feedback provided by residents highlights high satisfaction with the sites and facilities, and also with the influence and decision making opportunities provided to them.</li> </ul>
		Six monthly meetings with Gypsy/Travellers at Springbank, East Kilbride	2018-2019 onwards	As agreed with site residents, six-monthly meetings are now held within the Springbank site with the agenda determined by residents.
2.6	Develop and improve engagement opportunities for young people	Arrange workshop with Youth Council to identify how they wish to be involved	2019-20 onwards	Through the Larkhall local area participation plan there was a short life group established with the local housing office, Youth, Family and Community Learning Service and YMSPs representing Larkhall. From this an action plan was developed to establish a Larkhall Young Persons Forum during 2019/20. Evaluation of this model will take place and will inform further opportunities for engaging young people in other areas.
		Establish Young Persons Housing Forum	2019-20 onwards	
		Explore and identify where existing groups and activities exist that are engaging with young people	2019-20 onwards	To be progressed in 2019/20
		Develop the use of social media to target views of young people		The promotion of all consultation activities and events on South Lanarkshire Council's social media channels now takes place.
2.7	Develop and improve engagement opportunities for homelessness service users	Explore key ways to make involvement effective	2019-2020 onwards	Further areas for involving those with current or lived experience of homelessness are to be progressed as part of the South Lanarkshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019-24. This includes school awareness programme with service user and officer discussions to young people.

Strategic Outcome 2: More customers are involved				
	Objective	Action	Timescale	Progress update as at 31 March 2019
2.8	Continue to provide a range of training opportunities	Develop and publicise annual training programme to ensure that customers have the knowledge, skills and confidence to become involved	2018-2019 onwards	Annual training programme developed and publicised by SLTDSP
2.9	Develop a programme of estate walkabouts and encourage tenants and other customers to participate	Arrange and deliver a programme of local estate walkabouts	2018-2019 onwards	Programme of walkabouts established. This aims to help develop customer involvement at a local level. This will be expanded in 2019/20.
		Develop an action plan to address issues identified and feedback - 'You Said, We Did'	2019/20	To be progressed in 2019/20



### Strategic Outcome 3: Customers help to drive continuous service improvement

	Objective	Action	Timescale	Progress update as at 31 March 2019
3.1	Deliver an annual programme of customer scrutiny through the Customer Scrutiny Group (CSG)	Undertake and report on two scrutiny activities each year	2018-2019 onwards	<p>Customers agreed a programme of scrutiny during 2018/19. This included two service areas/activities that related to the refusal of offers process and the collection of customer contact details. Further information on both exercises is contained within Appendix 2.</p> <p><b>2019/20 Programme</b> Customers are currently considering areas for scrutiny for the 2019/20 programme. To date this includes a review of how homeless households or those threatened with homelessness can access information provided by the council. Other areas will be determined following analysis of the 2018/19 Scottish Housing Charter report.</p>
		Encourage active participation in the scrutiny activities	2018-2019 onwards	Articles have been published in Housing News, aiming to raise awareness of the scrutiny programme. Alongside this the Customer Publicity Group revised the council's website to promote customer involvement and the SLTDSP have also ran a publicity campaign to encourage active participation.
3.2	Explore option to establish a scrutiny panel for older people	Develop a proposal for an Older People Scrutiny Panel	2020-2021 onwards	To be progressed in 2020/21

## Strategic Outcome 4: Customers help to shape change and make a difference

	Objective	Action	Timescale	Progress update as at 31 March 2019
4.1	Establish regular 'You Said, We Did' feedback to customers via 'Housing news', the council website and annual report to tenants highlighting the difference made by customer involvement	Produce 'You Said, We Did' report annually.	2018-2019 onwards	<p><b>Allocation</b> A report detailing the consultation process and feedback received from the Allocation Policy Review was produced. The views received helped to inform the finalised Allocation Policy which was approved by Executive Committee in May 2019. This consultation feedback was highlighted in Housing News and on the council's website.</p> <p><b>Rent setting</b> A report detailing the consultation process and feedback received through rent setting was produced by SLTDSP. Views expressed were considered at a special meeting of Housing and Technical Resources Committee in February 2019, where a rent increase of 3.95% was approved.</p>
4.2	Communicate outcome of estate walkabout programme to customers	Develop an approach to publish and report on the outcomes of estate walkabouts	2018-2019 onwards	Linked to Objective 2.9.
4.3	Analyse and report on feedback from customer satisfaction surveys and ensure that it is used to influence service planning and delivery.	Review and agree approach to how satisfaction results are reported.	2019-2020 onwards	To be progressed in 2019/20
4.4	Develop a system to track and evaluate customer involvement activities and the resulting effect	Explore options to track feedback from customers on their involvement and resulting effect.	2019-2020 onwards	To be progressed in 2019/20
		Develop and implement system		
4.5	Further develop customer involvement in identifying local priorities to be progressed through dedicated estate budgets.	Review options to ensure effective community involvement in identifying estate priorities, including scope to move to a participatory budgeting approach.	2019-2022 onwards	Housing and Technical Resources continue to contribute to the council's commitment to dedicate 1% of its total budget to a participatory budgeting model. In support of this approach, Housing Services have reviewed the Housing Investment Programme budget and identified a number of projects where our customers can be given a choice on what they wish for the

Strategic Outcome 4: Customers help to shape change and make a difference				
	Objective	Action	Timescale	Progress update as at 31 March 2019
				final outcome to be. This includes renovation of lock-up facilities and refurbished communal areas within sheltered housing. This will continue to be progressed in 2019/20.

## Appendix 2

### 1. South Lanarkshire Customer Scrutiny Programme 2018/19

The South Lanarkshire Customer Scrutiny Group (CSG) was formed in July 2016 following the TIS “Making it Happen” Scrutiny training and development programme which took place earlier in the year. The CSG is at the core of the Customer Scrutiny Framework. A key task for the CSG is working with the council to develop a programme for scrutiny work and identify areas of council housing and homelessness services that need to be reviewed.

In 2018/19 the Customer Scrutiny Programme involved customer scrutiny exercises of two service areas/activities within Housing and Technical Resources:

- Refusal of offers process
- Mystery Shopping Exercise 2019 - Customer contact

A summary of both of these exercises has been provided in the table below:

<b>Refusal of offers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In reviewing South Lanarkshire Council's Scottish Housing Charter information, the CSG identified refusal of offers as an area to scrutinise as there were a higher proportion of offers refused across South Lanarkshire in comparison with other social landlords.</li><li>• A scrutiny activity was developed with the aim to review current policy and organisational practice in relation to offers of housing to gain an understanding of the reasons offers are refused, whilst also making recommendations to help minimise the future occurrence of these.</li><li>• The scrutiny activity lasted for 12 weeks and consisted of evidence gathering, customer and officer interviews, data analysis, review and reporting.</li><li>• The CSG presented a report to the council, outlining the key findings of the exercise. The report included 29 recommendations that aimed to improve the customer experience in relation to being offered a council property and reduce the overall percentage of offers refused by applicants.</li><li>• The council responded to each of the recommendations, compiling an action plan on potential areas for improvement. The plan will be progressed through the relevant service areas within Housing and Technical Resources and monitored by the Customer Scrutiny Group on a regular basis.</li></ul>
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<b>Mystery Shopping 2019 - Customer contact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CSG completed the first mystery shopping exercise in 2017. It focussed on assessing whether officers from within Local Housing Offices and the Repairs Centre were taking all available opportunities to collect customer contact data. The key outcomes of this exercise were discussed with officers and actions to aid improvements were progressed.</li> <li>• The CSG agreed that a second follow up exercise was to be held in March 2019 to assess progress in this area. To ensure consistency and comparability the format, scenarios and questions remained the same.</li> <li>• The CSG submitted a report on the exercise to the council in April 2019. It detailed the range of mystery shopping telephone call scenarios completed by members to the Local Housing Offices and Repairs Centre, and the results of these calls.</li> <li>• The report highlighted overall improvements made in the level of customer contact data collected, and contained five recommendations to aid further improvements.</li> <li>• The council responded to each of the recommendations and completed a number of actions to ensure further progress in this area is made.</li> </ul>
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## **2. South Lanarkshire Customer Scrutiny Programme 2019/20**

The Customer Scrutiny Group are currently considering service areas/activities for scrutiny for the 2019/20 programme.

To date this includes:

- a review of how homeless households or those threatened with homelessness can access information provided by the council.

Other areas will be determined following analysis of the 2018/19 Scottish Housing Charter report. Results of the 2019/20 programme will be reported with the Housing Services Customer Involvement Strategy 2018-22 Annual Review 2019/20.