

Report

Report to:	Housing and Technical Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	8 December 2021
Report by:	Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

Subject:	Housing Allocation Policy – Local Letting Plans 2022/2023
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ advise on progress against the 2021/2022 letting targets
- ◆ request approval for the 2022/2023 letting targets
- ◆ request approval for the Local Letting Initiatives and the South Lanarkshire Letting Initiative in respect of welfare reform
- ◆ request approval for an amendment to be made to the Housing Allocation Policy in respect of the assessment of medical circumstances

2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that progress against the 2021/2022 letting targets be noted;
- (2) that the 2022/2023 mainstream letting targets, attached as Appendix 1, be approved;
- (3) that the 2022/2023 sheltered letting targets, attached as Appendix 2, be approved;
- (4) that the Local Letting Initiatives attached as Appendix 3, be approved;
- (5) that the South Lanarkshire Letting Initiative, attached as Appendix 4, be approved; and
- (6) that the amendment to the Housing Allocation Policy, detailed in section 10, 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 four housing lists (in relation to mainstream and sheltered properties)
 - ◆ details of Local Letting Initiatives (LLIs) in operation within a local area
- 3.3. LLPs and associated targets are subject to Housing and Technical Resources Committee approval. This is the second annual report on LLPs since the revised Housing Allocation Policy was introduced.
- 4. Impact of COVID-19**
- 4.1. Since the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic, when there was a focus on the delivery of critical services, the Resource has adapted to ensure that the wide range of housing services customers previously received, can continue to be delivered.
- 4.2. The allocation of council housing to all applicant types continues to be a key focus with arrangements in place to ensure the safety of both customers and Housing Services' staff. Demand for social rented housing throughout the pandemic has remained high and in the current year, it is expected that the number of properties becoming available for let will return to normal levels. Together with the progress being made to deliver the Council's new build housing programme, this will help to ensure that customers in most housing need are allocated a home.
- 5. Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan**
- 5.1. The South Lanarkshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019-2024 (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 four housing lists contributes towards achieving the priority objectives set out within the RRTP.
- 6. Achievement of the 2021/2022 Letting Targets**
- 6.1. 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 5 April 2021 and 17 October 2021. Where appropriate, manual adjustments have been made to projections to take account of local issues, such as the number of new build council properties expected to complete during the remaining months of the financial year. This approach allows letting targets and letting initiatives to be fully implemented from the start of the financial year.
- 6.2. 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 2021/2022 are set out in Appendix 1 and 2.
- 6.3. In relation to mainstream council properties, it is projected that across South Lanarkshire the targets set for the Urgent Housing Need and Transfer lists will be achieved. Lets directed to the Waiting list are projected to be only just slightly below target and slightly above target for the Other Category list. The projected lets to the Other Category list can be attributed to the timing of new build properties in Whitlawburn which were delayed due to the pandemic and completed during 2021/2022.

- 6.4 In relation to the targets set for sheltered properties across South Lanarkshire, it is projected that lets to the Transfer and Other Category list will be within target. Lets to the Urgent Housing Need list will be under target, while lets to the Waiting list will exceed the target set. This can be attributed to variations at a local area level relating to low levels of sheltered lets in certain areas and general differences in supply and demand.

7. Letting Targets for Mainstream Properties during 2022/2023

- 7.1. 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.
- 7.2. The factors which have been taken into account when setting the mainstream letting targets for 2022/2023 are detailed below:-
- ◆ a continuing high number of applicants queued on the HomeFinder housing register - as at 17 October 2021, there were over 18,000 applicants on the housing register
 - ◆ a continuing demand from homeless households - as at 17 October 2021, 1,172 homelessness applications had been received year to date. Assuming that this trend continues, it is projected that 2,177 homelessness applications will have been received by the end of the financial year
 - ◆ 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 17 October 2021, there were 941 homeless applicants on the housing register
 - ◆ the number of properties becoming available for let - it is projected that by the end of the financial year, 1,994 mainstream properties will have been let. This represents an significant increase of 29% on 2020/2021 and demonstrates a return to the average turnover levels experienced prior to COVID-19
 - ◆ additional supply of housing – the number of council new build properties and acquisitions planned for completion during 2022/2023
 - ◆ 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, through agreed targets

8. Sheltered Housing Letting Targets for 2022/2023

- 8.1. Between 5 April 2021 and 17 October 2021, 89 sheltered properties became available for let. It is projected that, by the end of the financial year, 165 sheltered properties will have been let, which would represent a 15% increase in turnover on the previous year 2020/2021.
- 8.2. There continues to be a high level of demand for sheltered housing with 1,487 applicants queued on the HomeFinder housing register as at 17 October 2021.
- 8.3. 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 2022/2023.
- 8.4. 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.

9. Letting Initiatives

- 9.1. The Housing Allocation Policy allows for the establishment of Local Letting Initiatives (LLIs) in areas where there are particular needs, issues or circumstances which require to be addressed.
- 9.2. During 2021/2022, there were 5 LLIs in operation across South Lanarkshire and one South Lanarkshire wide initiative. To inform the development of the LLPs for 2022/2023, 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.
- 9.3. It is proposed that the 5 LLIs set out in Appendix 3 be retained during 2022/2023, and the South Lanarkshire Council wide initiative set out in Appendix 4 continues.
- 9.4. It is proposed that during 2022/2023, a full evaluation of the impact of the South Lanarkshire wide initiative will take place to identify whether there is a need for the initiative to be revised or removed. The findings and recommendations from this exercise will be reported within the next Local Letting Plan report to this Committee.

10. Housing Allocation Policy – Medical Assessment

- 10.1. The revised Housing Allocation Policy was introduced in May 2019 and is subject to ongoing monitoring to ensure that policy aims are being met. As part of this process, it has been identified that a minor amendment is required to the policy.
- 10.2. The amendment relates to the assessment of the medical need aspect of a housing application, which is currently carried out by an independent medical adviser, contracted by the Council to provide this service. While this service model has worked well, in order that other model options can be considered and introduced in the future, as necessary, it is proposed that the policy be amended to remove reference to who is involved in the medical assessment process.
- 10.3. It is, therefore, proposed that within section 8 of the Housing Allocation Policy at point 8.2, the following paragraph is removed - 'Medical circumstances are assessed by an independent medical adviser, who will make a recommendation to the council for consideration'.
- 10.4. The current arrangements for the assessment of medical need are currently under review.

11. Next Steps

- 11.1. Implement 2022/2023 letting targets effective from Monday 4 April 2022.
- 11.2. Publish the 2022/2023 Local Letting Plans on the South Lanarkshire Council website.
- 11.3. Continue to monitor the impact of the LLIs and the South Lanarkshire Letting Initiative throughout the year

12. Employee Implications

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

13. Financial Implications

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

14. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

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

15. Other Implications

- 15.1. The content of this report will contribute to the evidence to support the requirements of the Annual Assurance Statement.
- 15.2. The risks associated with welfare reform have been included within the Resource's risk register and actions taken to mitigate these risks where possible.

16. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 16.1. An equality impact assessment has been carried out on each LLI proposed for 2022/2023 and on the South Lanarkshire Letting Initiative. The assessment is that the proposals do not have any adverse impact on any protected characteristics groups.
- 16.2. Consultation on the proposed letting targets and the LLIs has taken place with tenants and other customers at meetings of the Tenant Participation Co-ordination Group.

Daniel Lowe

Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

4 November 2021

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ 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, 17 February 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 2022/2023**South Lanarkshire**

Housing Need List	2021/2022	2021/2022 Projected Lets		2022/2023
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent housing need	55-65%	1177	60%	55-65%
Transfer	15-25%	388	19%	15-25%
Waiting	15-20%	287	14%	15-20%
Other Categories	0-5%	142	7%	0-5%
		1994	100%	

Cambuslang Division

Housing Need List	2021/2022	2021/2022 Projected Lets		2022/2023
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent housing need	55-65%	374	57%	55-65%
Transfer	15-25%	132	20%	20-25%
Waiting	5-15%	57	9%	10-20%
Other Categories	5-15%	96	14%	0-5%
		659	100%	

Clydesdale Division

Housing Need List	2021/2022	2021/2022 Projected Lets		2022/2023
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent housing need	45-55%	178	45%	45-55%
Transfer	20-25%	84	21%	20-25%
Waiting	20-30%	129	32%	20-30%
Other Categories	0-5%	6	2%	0-5%
		397	100%	

East Kilbride Division

Housing Need List	2021/2022	2021/2022 Projected Lets		2022/2023
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent housing need	60-65%	220	65%	60-65%
Transfer	20-30%	79	24%	20-30%
Waiting	5-15%	31	9%	5-15%
Other Categories	0-5%	7	2%	0-5%
		337	100%	

Hamilton Division

Housing Need List	2021/2022	2021/2022 Projected Lets		2022/2023
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent housing need	60-65%	405	67%	60-65%
Transfer	15-20%	93	15%	15-25%
Waiting	15-20%	70	12%	10-20%
Other Categories	0-5%	33	5%	0-5%
		601	100%	

SLC Proposed Letting Targets for Sheltered Properties 2022/2023**South Lanarkshire**

Housing Need List	2021/2022	2021/2022 Projected Lets		2022/2023
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent housing need	25-30%	28	17%	15-30%
Transfer	35-45%	63	38%	40-50%
Waiting	25-35%	72	44%	25-35%
Other Categories	0-5%	2	1%	0-5%
		165	100%	

Cambuslang Division

Housing Need List	2021/2022	2021/2022 Projected Lets		2022/2023
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent housing need	15-20%	5	16%	15-20%
Transfer	35-40%	13	37%	35-45%
Waiting	35-40%	17	47%	35-45%
Other Categories	5-10%	0	0%	0-5%
		35	100%	

Clydesdale Division

Housing Need List	2021/2022	2021/2022 Projected Lets		2022/2023
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent housing need	20-30%	4	18%	15-20%
Transfer	35-45%	7	36%	35-45%
Waiting	30-35%	9	46%	35-45%
Other Categories	0-5%	0	0%	0-5%
		20	100%	

East Kilbride Division

Housing Need List	2021/2022	2021/2022 Projected Lets		2022/2023
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent housing need	30-45%	15	23%	20-30%
Transfer	40-50%	15	23%	30-45%
Waiting	10-20%	35	54%	30-40%
Other Categories	0-5%	0	0%	0-5%
		65	100%	

Hamilton Division

Housing Need List	2021/2022	2021/2022 Projected Lets		2022/2023
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent housing need	25-30%	4	8%	10-20%
Transfer	35-45%	28	63%	55-60%
Waiting	25-35%	11	25%	20-30%
Other Categories	0-5%	2	4%	0-5%
		45	100%	

Proposed Local Letting Initiatives for 2022/2023

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	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	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 waiting list and transfer list applicants who have a local connection.	Cathkin Braes Tenant Management Co-operative area	All property sizes and types	1 year
Rutherglen	Restrict lets to the Urgent Housing Need list up to 45%.	Greenhill Court	All 1 and 2 bedroom properties	1 year

South Lanarkshire Letting Initiative 2022/2023

Management Area	Details of LI	Area Covered by LI	Property types/sizes	Duration of LI
Blantyre Cambuslang Rutherglen Clydesdale East Kilbride Hamilton Larkhall	<p>To help mitigate the impact of welfare reform, priority is awarded to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working age council tenants who, as at 31 March 2013, were under occupying their property in terms of the DWP under occupancy criteria • tenants living in a one-bedroom property who are willing to move to a larger property, provided that they meet the required criteria 	All areas of South Lanarkshire	All property types and sizes	1 year