

Report

Report to:	Housing and Technical Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	17 February 2021
Report by:	Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

Subject:	Housing Allocation Policy – Local Letting Plans 2021/2022
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1. Purpose of report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ advise on progress against the 2020/2021 letting targets
- ◆ request approval for the 2021/2022 letting targets
- ◆ request approval for the Local Letting Initiatives and the South Lanarkshire Letting Initiative in respect of welfare reform

2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that progress against the 2020/2021 letting targets, be noted;
- (2) that the 2021/2022 mainstream letting targets, attached as Appendix 1, be approved;
- (3) that the 2021/2022 sheltered letting targets, attached as Appendix 2, be approved;
- (4) that the Local Letting Initiatives attached as Appendix 3, be approved; and
- (5) that the South Lanarkshire Letting Initiative, attached as Appendix 4, 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, LLP's 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. The onset of COVID-19 in March 2020 and the introduction of restrictions had a significant impact on the way in which housing services were delivered. During the initial months of the most severe restrictions, the focus for Housing and Technical Resources was to ensure the delivery of essential services to customers, particularly those most vulnerable within communities.
- 4.2. The allocation of Council housing was considered an essential service and the Resource worked hard to continue to let vacant homes safely to applicants in most need of housing, in particular homeless households. Indeed, the approach taken in South Lanarkshire to continuing to let properties and meet the needs of homeless households during the pandemic has been recognised nationally and highlighted as a positive example by the Minister for Local Government Housing and Planning.
- 4.3. The allocation of Council housing continued during 2020 and into 2021, and was broadened to include the letting of vacant properties to other types of applicant. The pandemic has, however, had an adverse impact on a number of the factors that are considered and taken into account in the development of LLPs, including a decrease in the volume of properties becoming available for let, and increase in demand from homeless households. Further detail on these factors is set out in Section 7.

5. Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

- 5.1. The South Lanarkshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019 to 2024 (RRTP) approved by Housing and Technical Resources Committee in January 2019 sets out a number of objectives to address homelessness and limit the amount of time people experiencing homelessness spend in temporary accommodation.
- 5.2. Identifying letting targets for each of the four housing lists along with a range of other actions, contributes towards achieving the priority objectives set out within the RRTP.

6. Achievement of the 2020/2021 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 and is based on data collated from 6 April to 13 December 2020. 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 are set out in Appendices 1 and 2.
- 6.3. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus has been to prioritise lets to the Urgent Housing Need list, in particular homeless applicants. Consequently, in relation to mainstream properties across the South Lanarkshire area, it is projected that the target set for lets to the Urgent Housing Need list will be exceeded, while lets to the Transfer list is expected to be slightly lower than the target set.
- 6.4. In relation to the targets set for sheltered properties across South Lanarkshire, it is projected that the Urgent Housing Need list target will be achieved, 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 2021/2022

- 7.1. The letting targets proposed for mainstream properties across South Lanarkshire, and for each of the four 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 2021/2022 are detailed below:-
- ◆ a continuing high number of applicants queued on the HomeFinder housing register. As at 13 December 2020, there were 15,609 applicants on the mainstream housing list
 - ◆ a continuing high demand from homeless households. As at 13 December 2020, 1,542 homelessness applications had been received. Assuming that this trend continues, it is projected that 2,259 applications will have been received by the end of the financial year. In comparison with 2019/2020, this represents an increase of 170 (8%) in homelessness applications received
 - ◆ 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 13 December 2020, there were 1,140 homeless applicants on the HomeFinder housing register, which is an increase of 18% (174) compared to the same period last year
 - ◆ the number of properties becoming available for let. It is projected that by the end of the financial year, 1,485 mainstream properties will have been let. In comparison with 2019/2020, this represents a decrease of 26% in turnover. The disruption to empty property management, and a decrease in tenancies ending during the pandemic, has contributed to the overall decrease in turnover of empty properties
 - ◆ additional supply of housing - the number of Council new build properties and acquisitions planned for completion during 2021/2022
 - ◆ joint working with partners - the contribution that HomeFinder partners and other Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) make to meeting the needs of homeless applicants, through an agreed target of lets

8. Sheltered housing letting targets for 2021/2022

- 8.1. Between 6 April 2020 and 13 December 2020, 97 sheltered properties became available for let. It is projected that by the end of the financial year 139 sheltered properties will have been let, which would represent a 13% increase in turnover on the previous year 2019/2020.
- 8.2. There continues to be a high level of demand for sheltered housing, with 1,274 applicants queued on the HomeFinder housing register as at 13 December 2020.
- 8.3. It is recognised that demand for sheltered housing varies across individual sheltered housing developments, and this has been taken into account in the letting targets proposed for 2021/2022.
- 8.4. The letting targets proposed for sheltered properties across South Lanarkshire, and for each of the four housing management areas, are set out in Appendix 2.

9. Local 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 2020/2021, there were six LLIs in operation across South Lanarkshire. To inform the development of the LLPs for 2021/2022, each of the LLIs has been subject to review to assess their impact and identify whether there is a need for the LLI to continue.
- 9.3. Based on the findings from the review of the LLIs, it is proposed that the LLI in Kelvin Gardens, Hamilton be removed. The LLI was introduced to promote and encourage tenancy sustainment by providing housing support and money advice to new tenants. This type of support is now delivered by the HomeStart service, which operates across all housing management areas, and provides a range of support and assistance to new Council tenants to set up and sustain their tenancy. Consequently, there is no longer a requirement for a separate LLI.
- 9.4. It is proposed that the five LLIs set out in Appendix 3 be retained during 2021/2022.

10. South Lanarkshire Letting Initiative

- 10.1. The South Lanarkshire Letting Initiative was introduced in April 2013 to mitigate the impact of welfare reform on Council tenants affected by the under occupancy provisions of the Welfare Reform Act 2012.
- 10.2. It is recognised that since its introduction, the impact of the initiative has been limited. It is, however, proposed that the initiative, set out in Appendix 4, continues as one of a number of measures taken by the Council to help tenants affected by the under occupancy provisions, and as such remains a useful tool.

11. Next Steps

- 11.1. Implement 2021/2022 letting targets effective from Monday 5 April 2021.
- 11.2. Publish the 2021/2022 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 Statements.
- 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 2021/2022 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)

21 January 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, 1 April 2020

List of Background Papers

- ◆ Local Letting Plans 2021/2022.

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 2021/2022**South Lanarkshire**

Housing Need List	2020/2021	2020/2021 Projected Lets		2021/2022
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent housing need	50-60%	950	64%	55-65%
Transfer	20-30%	223	15%	15-25%
Waiting	10-20%	198	13%	15-20%
Other Categories	0-10%	114	8%	0-5%
		1485	100%	

Cambuslang Division

Housing Need List	2020/2021	2020/2021 Projected Lets		2021/2022
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent housing need	55-60%	236	62%	55-65%
Transfer	10-15%	42	11%	15-25%
Waiting	5-15%	37	10%	5-15%
Other Categories	15-25%	65	17%	5-15%
		380	100%	

Clydesdale Division

Housing Need List	2020/2021	2020/2021 Projected Lets		2021/2022
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent housing need	40-45%	156	56%	45-55%
Transfer	15-25%	40	15%	20-25%
Waiting	30-40%	77	27%	20-30%
Other Categories	0-5%	4	2%	0-5%
		277	100%	

East Kilbride Division

Housing Need List	2020/2021	2020/2021 Projected Lets		2021/2022
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent housing need	55-65%	233	70%	60-65%
Transfer	20-30%	66	20%	20-30%
Waiting	10-15%	13	4%	5-15%
Other Categories	0-5%	22	6%	0-5%
		334	100%	

Hamilton Division

Housing Need List	2020/2021	2020/2021 Projected Lets		2021/2022
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent housing need	55-60%	325	66%	60-65%
Transfer	20-25%	75	15%	15-20%
Waiting	15-20%	71	14%	15-20%
Other Categories	0-5%	23	5%	0-5%
		494	100%	

SLC Proposed Letting Targets for Sheltered Properties 2021/2022**South Lanarkshire**

Housing Need List	2020/2021	2020/2021 Projected Lets		2021/2022
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent housing need	25-30%	39	29%	25-30%
Transfer	40-45%	49	35%	35-45%
Waiting	25-30%	44	31%	25-35%
Other Categories	0-5%	7	5%	0-5%
		139	100%	

Cambuslang Division

Housing Need List	2020/2021	2020/2021 Projected Lets		2021/2022
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent housing need	15-20%	4	15%	15-20%
Transfer	35-40%	13	45%	35-40%
Waiting	35-40%	9	30%	35-40%
Other Categories	5-10%	3	10%	5-10%
		29	100%	

Clydesdale Division

Housing Need List	2020/2021	2020/2021 Projected Lets		2021/2022
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent housing need	20-25%	4	25%	20-30%
Transfer	40-50%	3	17%	35-45%
Waiting	25-35%	9	50%	30-35%
Other Categories	0-5%	1	8%	0-5%
		17	100%	

East Kilbride Division

Housing Need List	2020/2021	2020/2021 Projected Lets		2021/2022
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent housing need	30-45%	17	40%	30-45%
Transfer	40-50%	16	37%	40-50%
Waiting	10-20%	10	23%	10-20%
Other Categories	0-5%	0	0%	0-5%
		43	100%	

Hamilton Division

Housing Need List	2020/2021	2020/2021 Projected Lets		2021/2022
	Target	Number	%	Target
Urgent housing need	25-35%	14	29%	25-30%
Transfer	40-45%	17	34%	35-45%
Waiting	20-30%	16	31%	25-35%
Other Categories	0-5%	3	6%	0-5%
		50	100%	

Proposed Local Letting Initiatives for 2021/2022

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 2021/2022

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