



West Lothian  
Council

**EAST LIVINGSTON AND EAST CALDER LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE**

**HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES**

**REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES**

**A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide the Local Area Committee with an overview of the service activities within East Livingston and East Calder ward.

**B. RECOMMENDATION**

The Local Area Committee is asked to note Housing, Customer and Building Services activity as detailed in the ward report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January – 31st March 2017.

**C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I Council Values</b>	Focusing on our customers' needs. Being honest, open and accountable. Providing equality of opportunities. Making best use of our resources. Working in partnership.
<b>II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act 2010
<b>III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	None
<b>IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	None
<b>V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement</b>	There are positive impact on the following SOA indicators:  SOA4 – we live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities  SOA8 – we make the most effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment
<b>VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b>	None
<b>VII Consideration at PDSP</b>	Yes

**VIII Other consultations**

N/A

**D. TERMS OF REPORT****Housing Performance Information**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Local Area Committee with an overview of the activities of Housing, Building and Customer Services, specific to the East Livingston and East Calder ward.

**Property Void & Let Performance: Mainstream Tenancies**

<b>Void Period</b>	<b>Jan 2017</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Feb 2017</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Mar 2017</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>WL Target %</b>
0-2 weeks	1	100%	1	50%	0	0%	55%
2-4 weeks	0	0%	1	50%	1	50%	30%
4+ weeks	0	0%	0	0%	1	50%	15%
<b>Total Lets</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Property Void & Let Performance: Temporary Tenancies**

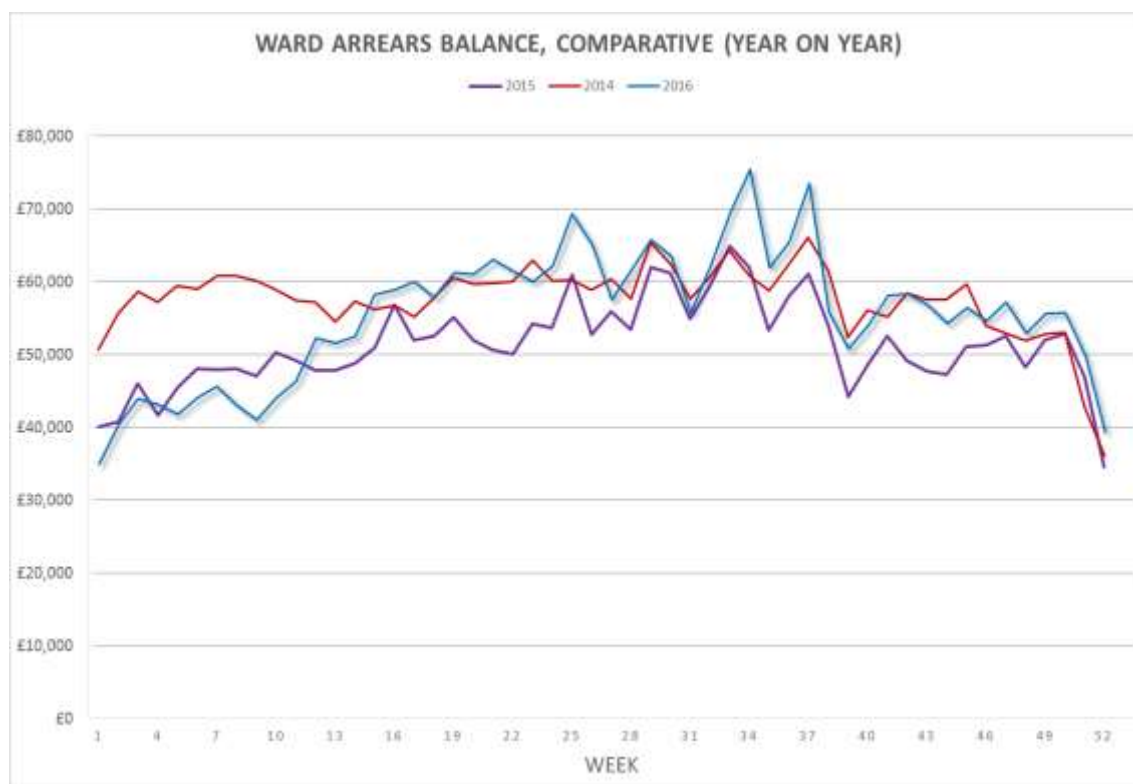
<b>Void Period</b>	<b>Jan 2017</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Feb 2017</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Mar 2017</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>WL Target %</b>
0-2 weeks	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	55%
2-4 weeks	1	50%	0	0%	1	100%	30%
4+ weeks	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%	15%
<b>Total Lets</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Delays in re-letting can occur for a variety of reasons. The type or location of the property, the completion of void work or the identification of additional works not visible during the initial inspection, ensuring that vulnerable persons are appropriately supported through the viewing and sign up process can also add to timeframes. Some of our applicants have specific support requirements which require detailed planning and co-ordination by both Social Work and Housing Services prior to tenancy commencement.

There are 5 Policy Voids in the ward at present, 1 for a decant 2 at Cunnigar House for upgrading works, 1 for asbestos and 1 for upgrading which is now let.

<b>Void period</b>	<b>Number of properties</b>	<b>PV reasons</b>
<4 weeks	1	Asbestos
4 – 12 weeks	0	
13 – 16 weeks	3	X2 Cunnigar House X1 property for upgrading
26+ weeks	1	Decant

## Arrears



	2015/16 (WK52)		2016/17 (WK52)	
Arrears Banding	Balance	Tenants In Arrears	Balance	Tenants In Arrears
£0.01 to £99.99	£2,476	68	£2,776	60
£100.00 to £299.99	£9,964	53	£8,940	48
£300.00 to £499.99	£5,660	15	£8,520	21
£500.00 to £749.99	£9,478	16	£8,828	19
£750.00 to £999.99	£1,851	2	£4,150	5
£1000.00 to £1999.99	£5,161	4	£6,175	5
£2000+	£0	0	£0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>£34,590</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>£39,389</b>	<b>158</b>

The Ward position for Q3 of 2016/17 is £39,389. This is an increase of £4,798 on last year's position. While there are 5 serious arrears cases (£1,000+) it should be noted 68% of cases are in the lower bands (£300 or less) Although overall the position remains positive and we are tracking below last year we will continue focusing on the following:

- Arrangements to pay - increase the visibility of tenants with arrangements within the performance model to identify trends in missed payments for follow up action
- Making best use of resources by considering communicating more with customers through email and telephone
- Increase Direct Debit Take Up by targeted work for example tenants who currently pay by Standing Order
- Benchmarking with other local authorities to ensure we identify and consider implementing any best practice
- Performance Monitoring and Reporting will be reviewed and where appropriate streamlined to ensure information is meaningful and robust to assist with improving rent arrears due.

## **East Livingston and East Calder Area Team Activity**

Officers in the team have a number of tenancies under supervision for issues such as child & adult protection, anti-social behaviour and poor tenancy conditions. Our officers' work with a range of services and agencies to ensure tenants and residents are fully supported, tenancies are maintained and sustained as far as possible and appropriate action taken where necessary.

Rent arrears activity continues to be a weekly priority task for the team and will continue to work with all our tenants in offering the support, advice and assistance. Such assistance includes, referrals for money, energy and debt advice, benefit health checks, completion of income and expenditure to help set up a sustainable payment plan and where appropriate, assist with applications for Discretionary Housing Payments.

## **Capital Programme and New Build Council Housing**

### **New build – East Livingston and East Calder**

<b>Site</b>	<b>No of units</b>	<b>Site Start</b>	<b>No of Houses Handed Over</b>	<b>Site Completion</b>
Adelaide Street, Craigshill	6	Mar-14	6	Sept 14
Community Centre Pumpherston	14	Mar-15	14	June 16
Drumshoreland	86	Sept -16	0	Tbc
Raw Holdings , East Calder	15	May-16	0	Tbc
Almondell, Calderwood	36	January -16	0	Tbc

### **Capital Programme**

Wilkieston	Orchardfield Terrace	Renew roof covering and sarking. Upgrade roughcast; Lintel & cills where required; Ventilation; PV panels	100%	5 houses' roofs completed to a quality standard in line with the budget and to allow the fitting of PV panels.
Longridge	Kirkbrae	External Wall Insulation	100%	These council funded works to 20 council houses are in conjunction to Scottish Government funded (HEEB:ABS) works to 47 private owners. Work is completed.
Pumpherston	Heaney Avenue	External Wall Insulation	100%	These council funded works to 22 council houses are in conjunction to Scottish Government funded (HEEB:ABS) works to 31 private owners. Work is completed.

## **Tenant Participation Update**

### **Tenants Participation Annual Report**

A tenant participation annual report has been developed. The purpose of the report is to document the substantial development work which has taken place during 2016/17 to promote tenant participation, find new interested tenants and new ways to enable them to participate. The report will be published on the intranet and council website.

### **Tenant Led Inspections**

In January, tenants were invited via email and text to participate in a training session to learn about our inspection process. This attracted several interested tenants who will join our bank of inspectors for future inspections.

- **Asbestos in Void Properties**

An action plan was developed from the recent Tenant Led Inspection into Asbestos in Void Properties and fed back to the inspectors on 17<sup>th</sup> Feb. The action plan will address each of the recommendations the inspector's made and will be followed up in due course. The TP team have continued to offer direct support to the TLI process throughout.

- **Anti-Social Behaviour**

A second TLI into Anti- social behaviour commenced in February with 5 inspectors. The final report will be presented to Head of Service and senior managers and an action plan developed to meet their recommendations.

### **Tenants Visit New Build**

In January, members of the Tenants Panel visited the new build houses at School Road in Broxburn. They were very impressed with the renovation of the old school building and the additional new houses on the site. They felt that the workmanship was finished to a very high standard and the surrounding landscape had rejuvenated the area.

### **Tenants News**

The spring edition of Tenants News was published and sent out to all tenants in West Lothian. This is a very effective method of communicating with tenants. The TP Team are always interested in hearing from staff on any ideas or topics they would like to address by emailing [TP@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:TP@westlothian.gov.uk)

### **Q Buster Sessions**

Staff have been out and about talking to customers about the new online Tenants Self-Serve which allow tenants to report repairs and check rent balances as well as offering the opportunity to pay from the comfort of their home.

### **Safer Neighbourhood Council Officer Ward Information**

The Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT's) across the nine multi member ward areas are an integral part of the Community Safety Unit and are a key feature of partnership working. In all the wards, partnership working involves the local housing team, youth worker, council officer with the SNT and officers from Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service all working together to tackle antisocial behaviour in the wards. When necessary, the Community Safety partners will liaise with others from the voluntary organisations including Mental Health advisory workers and private landlords in order to

reduce antisocial behaviour.

The officers and other Community Safety Partners continue to provide early intervention to prevent crimes and antisocial behaviour from occurring and the further escalation of incidents. The number of new antisocial behaviour cases varies across West Lothian with some wards having more cases than others. The East Livingston ward has had 2 new cases this month. This reflects antisocial behaviour reported to the Police and West Lothian Council in each community. There is no definitive reason for the level of numbers being reported from ward to ward and demographic variations and house type can all contribute to the way in which behaviour from others is tolerated or becomes intolerable to others.

ASBOs are deemed as a last resort to all other methods of curtailing antisocial behaviour within communities. It is only when particular individuals refuse to heed warnings issued, that the Antisocial Behaviour Order is requested through the legal process. There are no current ABSOs in this ward.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

To note the contents of the report.

## **BACKGROUND REFERENCES**

**F.** None

Appendices/Attachments: None

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