



LIVINGSTON SOUTH 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 the Livingston South Ward.

B. RECOMMENDATION

The Local Area Committee is asked to note Housing, Customer and Building Service activity as detailed in the ward report for the period 1st July 2019 – 30th September 2019.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs. Being honest, open and accountable. Providing equality of opportunities. Making best use of our resources. Working in partnership.
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act 2010
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	There is no impact
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	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
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	None
VII	Consideration at PDSP	Yes
VIII	Other consultations	N/A

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D1. Housing Performance Information

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

Property Void & Let Performance: Mainstream Tenancies

Void Period	July	%	Aug	%	Sept	%	WL Target %
0-2 weeks	2	33.3%	0	0%	0	0%	55%
2-4 weeks	2	33.3%	1	50%	0	0%	30%
4+ weeks	2	34%	1	50%	4	100%	15%
Total Lets	6	100%	2	100%	4	100%	100%

Property Void & Let Performance: Temporary Tenancies

Void Period	July	%	Aug	%	Sept	%	WL Target %
0-2 weeks	0	0%	1	33.3%	1	33.3%	55%
2-4 weeks	0	0%	2	66.7%	1	33.3%	30%
4+ weeks	2	100%	0	0%	1	33.4%	15%
Total Lets	2	100%	3	100%	3	100%	100%

There has been 12 mainstream and 8 Temporary tenancies re let within the ward for Q2.

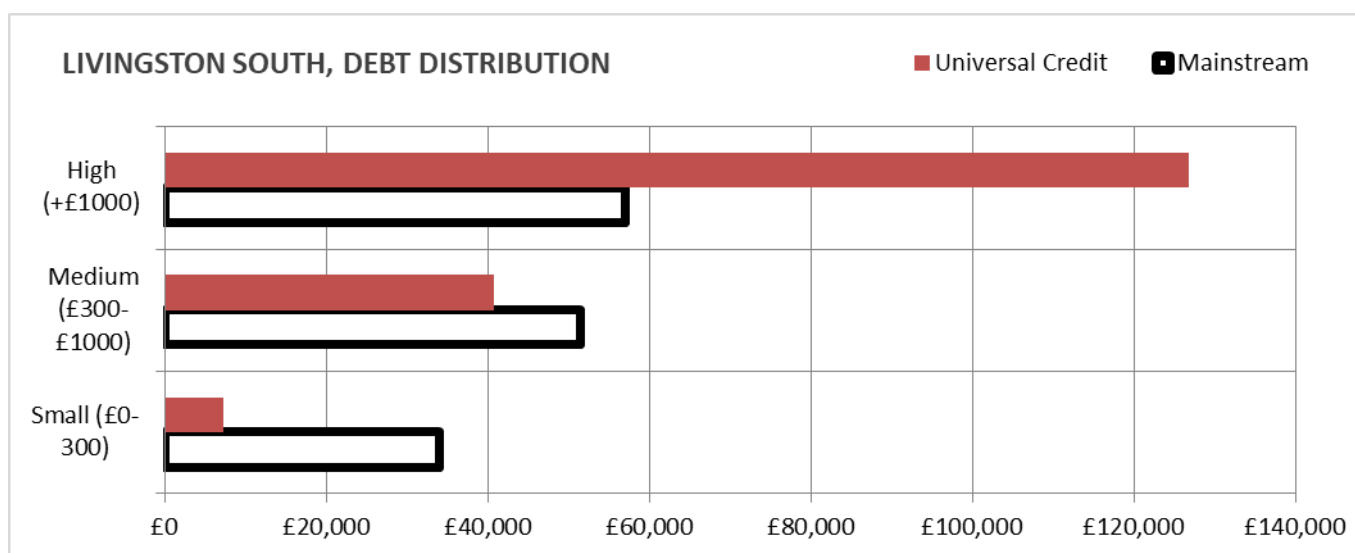
Delays in re-letting can occur for a variety of reasons. The type or location of the property, the completion of void work or the identification of additional works not visible during the initial inspection and time taken ensuring that vulnerable persons are supported through the viewing and sign up process. 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.

D2. Arrears Performance:

Livingston South - Financial Summary

For the Livingston South ward the collection rate for the year to date in Q2 remains excellent at 95.0%. Livingston South rental income to collect is £2,882,449 and the service has collected £2,737,305.

The overall increased arrears in comparison to last year are as a result of Full Service Universal Credit being introduced in West Lothian from May 2018, along with other Welfare Benefit reforms and the current economic climate.



In the same week last year Livingston South ward had 60 Universal Credit (UC) households. Since then the number of UC households has increased by 305.0%.

High

There are 99 cases of which 63 are Universal Credit Cases.

Medium

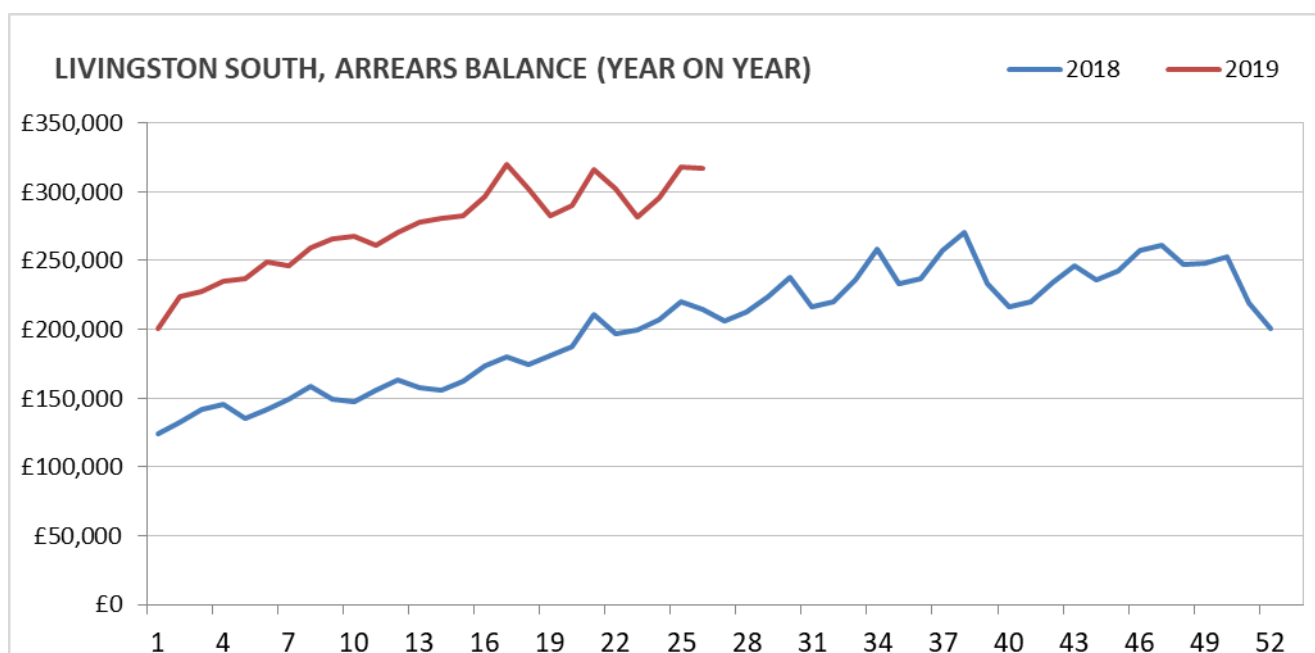
There are 175 cases of which 72 are Universal Credit cases.

Low

There are 339 cases of which 48 are Universal Credit cases.

	2018/19 (WK26)				2019/20 (WK26)			
	Mainstream		UC		Mainstream		UC	
Arrears Banding	Balance	#	Balance	#	Balance	#	Balance	#
£0.01 to £99.99	£8,163	185	£127	3	£5,805	133	£849	16
£100.00 to £299.99	£33,507	180	£3,118	16	£28,204	158	£6,400	32
£300.00 to £499.99	£31,539	82	£4,589	12	£22,502	59	£12,720	33
£500.00 to £749.99	£29,495	49	£4,681	7	£20,730	34	£13,470	22
£750.00 to £999.99	£15,250	18	£2,443	3	£8,240	10	£14,583	17
£1000.00 to £1999.99	£27,296	20	£19,397	14	£35,815	28	£51,813	35
£2000+	£19,590	8	£15,006	5	£21,250	8	£74,948	28
Group Total	£164,840	542	£49,360	60	£142,546	430	£174,784	183
Movement					(-) £22,294	(-) 112	(+) £125,423	(+) 123
Overall Total	£214,200		602		£317,329		613	
Overall Movement					(+) £103,129		(+) 11	

The arrears position for Livingston South Q2 is £317,329. This is an increase of £103,129 on last year's position. The West Lothian overall position is currently £3,383,810.



During the course of this year we plan to focus on the following:

Making best use of resources by considering communicating more with customers through SMS, email and telephone.

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.

Promote Alternative payment methods, particularly the Tenant's Self Service Portal

D3. Livingston Team Activity.

Rent arrears activity continues to be a weekly priority task for the team and will continue to work with all our tenants in offering 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.

Officers in the team have a number of tenancies under supervision for issues such as child 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 maintained and sustained as far as possible and appropriate action taken where necessary.

Livingston South Team Activity

Rent arrears activity continues to be a weekly priority task for the team and will continue to work with all our tenants in offering support,

D4. New Build Housing

WLC New Build Activity	Site	No of units	Site Start	No. of Houses Handed Over	Site Completion
	Almond Link	20	Feb-16	20	April - 2017
	Lammermuir	44	Jun-16	44	January – 2019
	Almondvale Stadium	37	Aug-17	17	December - 2019 (estimated)
	Eagle Brae	30	TBC	0	TBC

	A design team has been engaged to progress with the development works for the Eagle Brae site. Demolition works to the site will commence in January 2020.				
RSL New Build Activity	Site	No of Units	Site Start	No. of Houses Handed Over	Site completion
RSL Activity					
Places for People	Brotherton Farm, Bellsquarry	23	March 19	0	March – 2020 (estimated)
Castle Rick/Edinvar	Quentin Court, Dedridge	18	Jan 19	0	June - 2020 (estimated)
West Lothian Housing Partnership	Former Police Station, Almondvale	146	March 17	0	March – 2021 (estimated)
Almond Housing Association	Cloverbank, Ladywell	12	Aug 19	0	July – 2020 (Estimated)

D5. Tenant Participation Update July to September 2019

The TP Team continue to engage with tenants at various forums and regular meetings which include, Housing Networks, Tenants Panel, Capital and Repairs Working Group and Editorial Panel.

Meet and Greet on The Street

The TP team joined forces with the local housing staff to carry out a programme of events on the streets of West Lothian, promoting Tenant Participation and a variety of services such as, home security, Assisted Decoration Scheme, Aids and Adaptations and assistance with rent and applying for a council house. There were eight pop up events carried out over the summer months and many people benefited from first hand advice and information.

Blackburnhall Tenants

Following on from the Meet and Greet events, tenants from the new build site in Blackburn had shown an interest in forming a tenants group. The TP team and local Housing staff arranged a meeting in August where fifteen tenants came to discuss various concerns about their homes and the surrounding area. A further meeting was planned for October to identify the interest in setting up a tenants group.

Eastfield Tenants

There had been some interest from tenants on the new build site in Fauldhouse and the local housing staff to establish a tenants group. All tenants were invited to attend a meeting to look at the way forward but unfortunately only one person attended. The housing staff will continue to seek interest and monitor the requirement for a tenants group should it arise.

The Big Lunch

Following on from the Homeless Housing Network, members have developed an innovative approach to engaging with customers who are in the homeless route, either from temporary tenancies or B&B accommodation. The lunch is provided by 'The Larder' a social enterprise cook school who aims to help people change lives through food. Customers have an opportunity to have a hot meal and spend some time in a social setting with access to services such as, the Advice Shop and Housing Services.

Tenant Led Inspection

A new inspection commenced in September with three inspectors looking at the Dampness and Condensation process carried out to council homes by Building Services. The team of three have interviewed operatives and

managers, visited homes and had demonstrations of the testing kits available. The final report will be delivered to senior managers early in November.

D6. Safer Neighbourhood Team Update

The Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT's) continue to work in two teams across the nine multi member ward areas as an integral part of the Community Safety Unit. In all the wards, partnership working involves the local housing teams, the SNT officers, resources from Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service all working together to tackle antisocial behaviour. When necessary, the partners will liaise with partners from the voluntary organisations including Mental Health advisory workers, Youth Action Project and private landlords in order to reduce antisocial behaviour. The team also responds to complaints regarding unauthorised encampments and concerns about Houses of Multiple Occupation.

SNT have been busy conducting joint visits with Police Scotland officers, having discussion meetings with police officers, carrying out joint visits with Housing officers regarding day to day tenancy and ASB management issues. Examples of activity - a warning notice was issued on a tenant in the ward. An intervention visit was carried out following complaints against a resident who had previously been subject to an interim ASBO. Partnership working is ongoing with regards to issues arising from private lets and a House of Multiple Occupancy in the area and investigations continue.

E. CONCLUSION

To note the contents of the report.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None

Appendices/Attachments: None

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Date: 14th November 2019.