

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



FAULDHOUSE AND THE BREICH VALLEY LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

HOUSING CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

REPORT BY INTERIM 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 Fauldhouse & Breich Valley 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 Quarter 2 1st July 2022 – 30th September 2022.

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 Fauldhouse & Breich Valley ward.

Property Void & Let Performance: Mainstream Tenancies

Void Period	Jul 22	%	Aug 22	%	Sep 22	%	WL Target %
0-2 weeks	1	11.1%	3	30%	1	14.2%	55%
2-4 weeks	0	0	1	10%	0	0%	30%
4+ weeks	8	88.9%	6	60%	6	85.8%	15%
Total Lets	9	100%	10	100%	7	100%	100%

Property Void & Let Performance: Temporary Tenancies

Void Period	Jul 22	%	Aug 22	%	Sep 22	%	WL Target %
0-2 weeks	1	33.3%	0	0%	0	0%	55%
2-4 weeks	2	66.7%	2	50%	1	50%	30%
4+ weeks	0	0%	2	50%	1	50%	15%
Total Lets	3	100%	4	100%	2	100%	100%

D2. Fauldhouse and Breich Valley - Financial Summary

For the Fauldhouse and Breich Valley ward the collection rate for the YTD in Q2 remains excellent at 93.8%. Fauldhouse and Breich Valley has collected £3,893,135 vs a charge of £4,152,325.

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 Fauldhouse and Breich Valley ward had 464 Universal Credit (UC) households in arrears. Since then the number of UC households in arrears has increased by 7.8%.

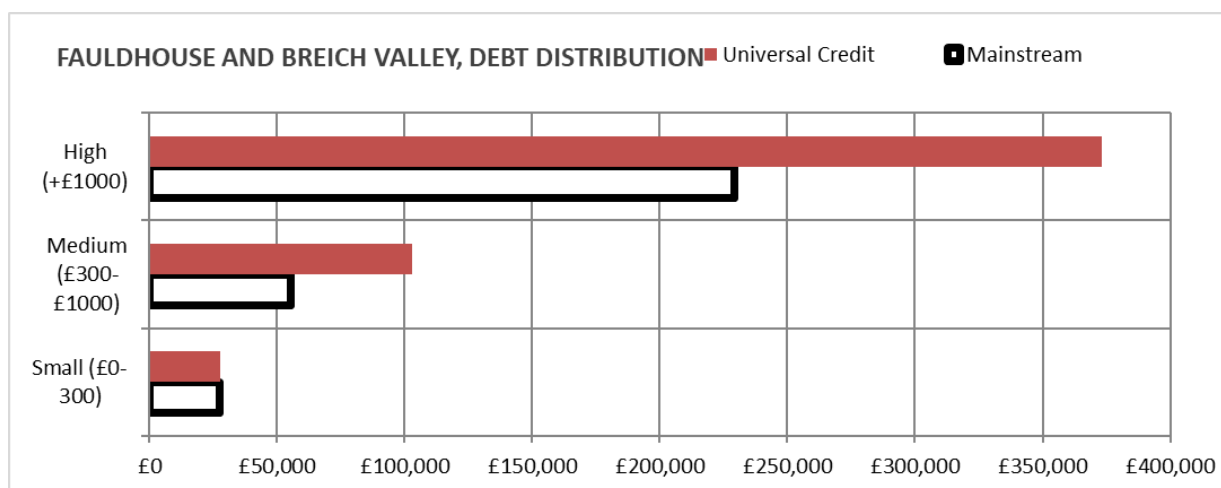
The number of tenancies in arrears in this ward has increased by 31 since last year. Small debt cases (£300 or less), account for 45.6% of households.

There are 212 serious arrears cases (+£1000 in arrears). These cases are 23.2% of all households in arrears in this area, containing 73.8% of the debt.

The arrears position for Fauldhouse and Breich Valley Q2 is £816,701. This is an increase of £115,417 on last year's position. The West Lothian overall position is currently £4,780,804.

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

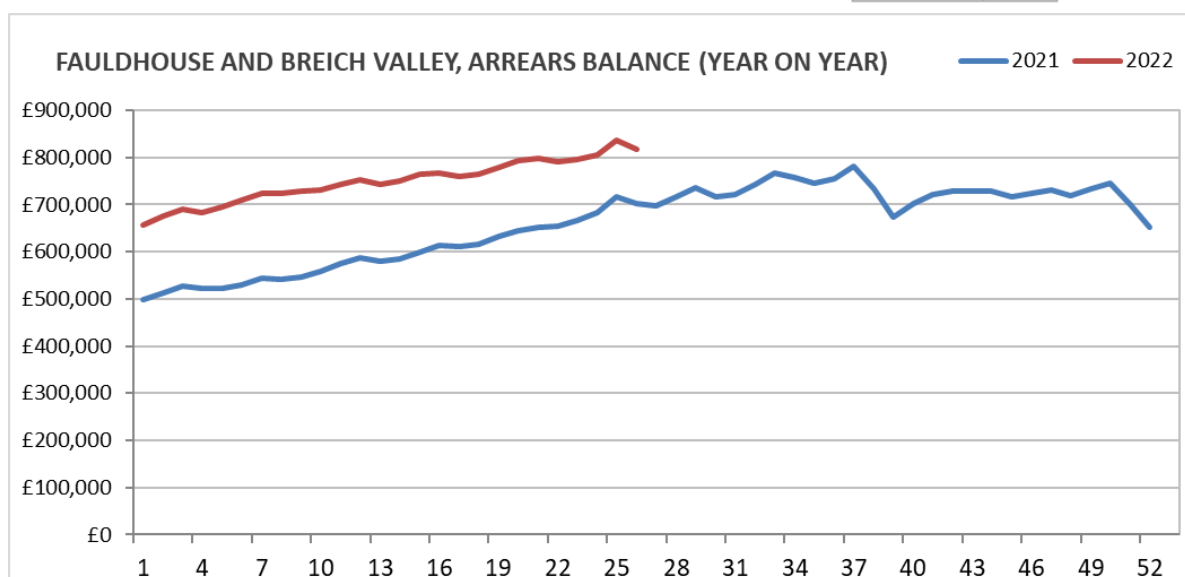


Arrears Banding	2021/22 (WK26)				2022/23 (WK26)			
	Mainstream		UC		Mainstream		UC	
	Balance	Cases	Balance	Cases	Balance	Cases	Balance	Cases
£0.01 to £99.99	£4,908	113	£3,207	58	£4,835	115	£2,804	50
£100.00 to £299.99	£23,405	132	£23,409	120	£22,742	124	£25,227	127
£300.00 to £499.99	£19,430	51	£28,760	75	£21,172	54	£33,591	85
£500.00 to £749.99	£18,431	31	£25,891	42	£18,503	31	£34,298	55
£750.00 to £999.99	£14,737	17	£35,412	40	£15,908	19	£35,267	41
£1000.00 to £1999.99	£55,317	38	£108,047	75	£47,358	34	£104,391	73
£2000+	£144,612	36	£195,718	54	£181,908	36	£268,697	69
Group Total	£280,841	418	£420,444	464	£312,426	413	£504,275	500
Movement					(+) £31,585	(-) 5	(+) £83,831	(+) 36

Overall Total
Overall Movement

£701,284 **882**

£816,701 **913**
(+) £115,417 (+) 31



D3. Fauldhouse & Breich Valley Area Team Activity

Officers in the Housing team have embraced the council's flexible / hybrid working arrangements since April 2022, working from home, office and out in our communities. The focus on rent arrears activity continues to be a weekly priority task for the team and officers continue to work with all our tenants in offering support, advice and assistance. Such assistance includes referrals for money 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.

During quarter 2, officers have continued to work closely with colleagues in Building Services, engaging with tenants to ensure that health and safety work has been completed and all necessary compliance work is undertaken in tenancies to ensure that these meet legislative requirements. As a result we have identified a number of tenants requiring support.

Officers have been working to support a number of tenants in the area alongside colleagues from other service areas and agencies, dealing with a range of tenancy management issues and providing assistance and support to help tenants sustain their tenancies. This can range from being involved in complex care management cases alongside colleagues in social

policy to being involved in assisting to resolve neighbour disputes with Police Scotland and Safer Neighbourhood Team colleagues.

D4. Capital Programme and New Build Council Housing

WLC completions 57

RSL completions 76

WLC New Build Activity	Site	No of units	Site Start	No. of Houses Handed Over	Site Completion
WLC	Mossend	69	Jul-21	17	Feb-23
RSL Build Activity	Site	No of units	Site Start	No. of Houses Handed Over	Site Completion
Almond Housing Association	Polbeth Farm, Polbeth	25	Aug - 20	25	Apr-22

D5. Tenant Participation

Tenant Participation continued throughout the quarter via digital methods and seen face to face meetings monthly. The customer experience team and tenant participation team have worked together to ensure the best possible service is delivered to our tenants. They have jointly implemented improvements and communication. Such as:

Tenants Panel

Tenant members continued to take part in monthly digital meetings with senior managers and the Head of Service, discussing service improvements and developments and receiving updates from each service area. They have been provided with the HRA and Capital Overview and have been involved in performance scrutiny over the quarter.

Capital & Repairs Working Group (CaRs)

Managers from Building Services and the Housing, Strategy & Development Team met with tenant members to discuss major improvement works, update them on the various projects being carried out and share benchmark information. These meetings ensure that tenants' views are heard and offer another scrutinising service delivery method.

Tenant Participation Development Working Group (TPDWG)

Members meet to ensure Tenant Participation stays high on the services agenda, looking at ways of engaging with more tenants. This group have worked with the Tenant Participation Team to review and agree the roles and remit of each working group. They have worked hard to produce a new 5 year Tenant and Customer Participation Strategy. The TPDWG completed their work on the animated video to increase engagement. This has now been launched and widely recognised by TPAS and TIS. This was an excellent piece of work.

Editorial Panel

This quarter the members have been involved in the collation of the Winter edition of Tenants News. The members continue to review the tenant's handbook online to ensure it is still relevant and current.

TP Facebook Group

The Tenant Participation team continue to see a steady rise in the number of tenants engaging with Facebook posts. The members have recently reviewed what content should be shared on the Facebook page and how the 397 members would like to be involved in Tenant Participation. These discussions have resulted in implementing the tenant's talk scheme, where tenants become experts on our social media platforms. We share our surveys in digital form on the Facebook page for tenants to complete. We will soon be investigating how we can implement focus groups using the Facebook group.

D6. Safer Neighbourhood Council Officer Ward Information

The Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) officers continue to work across the nine multi member ward areas as an integral part of the Community Safety Unit, as part of their working remit to reduce noise and antisocial behaviour (ASB). Partnership working involves the local housing team, council officer within the SNT and officers from Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service all working together to tackle antisocial behaviour. When necessary, the partners will liaise with voluntary organisations including West Lothian Youth Action Project, mental health advisory workers and private landlords in order to reduce antisocial behaviour.

Fauldhouse and Breich Valley Ward Data

Table 1: The following tables set out details of the number of new cases opened each month, overall number of active cases; number of cases resolved. Not all incidents become a case and officers will open a case where further investigations are necessary.

Cases and Incidents	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Incidents reported to SNT	30	29	25	27	31	18						
Number of new cases	2	1	2	2	3	1						
Number of active cases	5	4	3	5	4	3						
Number of resolved cases	3	2	2	2	2	2						

Table 2: The following table provides an overview of the types of incidents that are being reported to the SNT.

Incident Categories	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
ASB Part 2 Complaint	8	14	14	11	22	13						
ASB Part 5 Noise Complaint	13	12	4	9	6	2						

Dog Barking	0	0	2	0	0	0						
ENV Health Complaint	0	0	1	3	1	1						
Non ASB Noise Complaint	2	2	0	0	0	0						
SST Section 3 Tenancy Management	6	0	1	4	2	1						
Unauthorised Encampment	0	1	0	0	0	0						
Youth Disorder	1	0	3	0	0	1						
Grand Total	30	29	25	27	31	18						

Table 3: The following table provides numbers of ASBO that are current in ward and compared to all of West Lothian.

ASBO	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of ASBO's current	1	1		
All of West Lothian	7 plus 1 Interim	8 plus 1 Interim		
Age of perpetrator	33	33		

West Lothian Ward Data

Table 4: The following table provides number of all active cases and total number of incidents for West Lothian

West Lothian	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Total Number of Active Cases	45	47	51	61	51	58						
Total Number of Incidents	309	339	323	326	333	229						

E. CONCLUSION

To note the contents of the report

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None

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