

EX124. Update of Changes to Falkirk Council's Allocation Policy from October 2021

The Executive considered a report by the Acting Director of Transformation, Communities and Corporate Services which provided an update on progress of the interim special lettings initiative to Falkirk Council's allocations policy, to relieve pressures on the homeless service following the impact of the pandemic.

Homeless applicants who the Council had a duty to rehouse, over the last 12 months, had presented with increasing vulnerabilities. Over 44% were fleeing domestic abuse, and many (32%) had been asked to leave due to the stresses of the pandemic. Over 50% cited a mental health condition and 39% a physical, or other, disability. There was still an unprecedented number of applicants in temporary accommodation with an average of 349 households between October to December 2021, although this reduced to 329 in December. Time spent in temporary accommodation was averaging around 144 days, while pre-pandemic this was 107 days. There had been a 28% reduction in the number of properties available to rent since 2020. Prior to the pandemic there were, on average, 308 Home Seekers on the housing register. Since the pandemic this figure more than doubled to 627, and there were now 758 Home Seekers on the housing register.

On 27 October 2021, the percentage of sequencing changed for mainstream properties, with 70% being sequenced for Home Seekers, 15% for Home Movers and 15% for Home Starters. During the three-month period, the number of homeless offers increased by 62 properties compared to the previous system. Of the current 754 Home Seeker applicants 131 were currently on offer within the Council area, 105 for Falkirk Council properties and 26 for Registered Social Landlord (RSL) properties. The time taken for homeless applicants to be rehoused had not changed dramatically during the three-month period, with households waiting an average of 343 days between April to December 2021 to be rehoused. In 2020, over the same time period, the average was 314 days.

Decision

The Executive agreed to extend the period of special lettings initiative for a further three months to allow the finality of the impact to be realised.