

Stirling Council

Housing Letting Analysis 2023/24

In 2023/24, Stirling Council let 414 properties. This is an increase of 51 homes properties since 2022/23, and 68 properties since the Housing Allocation Policy was initially revised in 2021/22. Most of the additional lets in 2023/24 have been due to 'homeless flips', introduced during the policy review in 2022, with these accounting for fifty-five additional lets in 2023/24. 'Homeless flips' are essentially where a household living in a Council owned property as temporary accommodation is offered the opportunity to stay in their current home on a permanent basis. This option was used where people had become settled into an area, had children at school, or there was another social or personal reason for them remaining in their current accommodation on a permanent basis.

Table 1 shows the source of lets made in 2023/24 and is taken from the Council's Annual Return on the Scottish Housing Charter (ARC) to the Scottish Housing Regulator. The majority of properties let during the year were let to homeless households (54.1%), with 15.9% of lets being made to existing Council tenants which ensures there is a turnover of homes.

The 39 lets categorised as being let to 'other' groups captures homes let to Ukrainian households displaced by the war in Ukraine. The Housing Service bid for and were awarded Scottish Government grant funding of £720,000 to bring forty void Council requiring significant repairs back into use to provide homes for displaced Ukrainian guests. A working group involving officers from the Council's Housing and Asylum Resettlement teams managed the project, with properties decorated and furnished to a high standard. Out of the forty homes grant funding was provided for, 39 were let during 2023/24 with one tenancy starting on the first working day in 2023/24.

Table 1: Total Lets 2023/24 (ARC contextual indicator 2)

Source of let	Number of lets
Homeless	224
Existing tenants	66
Waiting	85
Other	39
Total	414

Table 2 shows the number of lets made in 2023/24 to each Allocation Group against the target set out within the Council's Allocation Policy. The policy sets out that there is a flexibility of plus or minus 5% against each of the target percentages, with the total lets to each group all being within this target.

It is worth noting that the lets to the Allocation Groups don't contain 'homeless flips' or lets to Ukrainian households where grant funding from the Scottish Government

was obtained. In line with the last Housing Allocation Policy Review paper approved by the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee in November 2022, and the Ukraine Long Term Resettlement Fund paper approved by Council in June 2023, these lets are not counted toward the target of lets to each Allocation Group.

Table 2: Lets by Allocation Group

Allocation Group	Number of lets	Percentage of lets	Target
Homeless	169	52.8%	50%
Transfer	66	20.6%	25%
Waiting	62	19.4%	20%
Strategic	23	7.2%	5%
Total	320		

Table 3 shows the number of homes let to homeless households in Stirling over the last three years. This shows that there has been an overall increase in lets made to people that are homeless despite a decrease in lets to the Homeless Allocation Group. This increase can be attributed to the number of homeless flips carried out in 2023/24 and a slight increase in the overall turnover. It is likely that in 2024/25 the number of homeless flips will decrease from the 55 properties flipped in 2023/24. This is to ensure that the Council has enough accommodation to meet our statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation to homeless households and not to breach the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order.

The decrease in lets to the homeless group for 2023/24 can be attributed to the 39 lets to Ukrainian households which meant there were less homes to let to other people in housing need.

Table 3: Homeless Lets 2021/22 – 2023/24

	Homeless Allocation Group lets	Homeless Flips	Total Homeless lets
2021/22	183	0	183
2022/23	178	24	202
2023/24	169	55	224

In 2023/24 there were a total of 23 lets to the Strategic Housing Group with the reasons for these set out in table 4 below. Reasons for placement into the Strategic Housing group under exceptional circumstances included three people rehoused from 1 Johnston Avenue where the block is being used for temporary accommodation; one carer who didn't meet the legal requirements to succeed a tenancy; two people at risk of ongoing violence in their home; and two people who had severe health risks in their current homes.

Table 4: Reason for Strategic Group lets

Strategic Group Reason	Number of lets
Leaving the armed forces	2
Delayed discharge	2
Kinship carers	5
Care leavers	6
Exceptional circumstances	8
Total	23

Tables 5 and 6 show the number of lets made in each of the Council's allocation areas by both the size of property let, and the allocation group let properties in each area.

Similar to previous years, most properties let in the year were one and two bedroom homes, with only fifty-four three-bedroom homes, eight four-bedroom homes, and two five-bedroom homes let during the year. The low turnover of larger homes, and demand for these when they do become available, can be seen in the high level of points to be let a larger home (see Table 9 below). This information is considered when determining the housing mix for new build developments, and in recent times there have been a number of larger family sized homes on sites in Plean, St Ninians and Cowie.

Table 6 sets out the number of homes let to each Allocation Group in specific allocation areas. Although in most areas the number of lets to each group is broadly in line with the overall target of lets to each Allocation Group (set out in Table 2), it is not always possible to meet this within individual areas. There are a number of reasons for this, including a lack of demand for an area within particular groups; properties being adapted or accessible and being let to groups where there is a need; giving consideration to a higher number of lets to a particular group in previous years; and ensuring that the overall quota of lets to allocation groups can be met.

Table 5: Lets by area and property size

Allocation Area	Property Size (number of bedrooms)					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Aberfoyle	2	1	0	0	0	3
Ardeonaig	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arnprior	0	0	0	0	0	0
Balfron	3	4	0	0	0	7
Balquhidder	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bannockburn	10	12	2	0	0	24
Blairdrummond	0	0	0	0	0	0
Braehead	7	6	1	1	0	15
Bridge of Allan	1	10	2	0	0	13
Broomridge	4	2	0	0	0	6
Buchlyvie	3	4	0	0	0	7
Callander	7	7	3	0	0	17
Cambusbarron	3	2	3	0	0	8

Causewayhead	2	0	0	0	0	2
Cornton	3	19	3	0	1	26
Cowie	6	5	2	1	0	14
Crianlarich	0	4	0	0	0	4
Croftamie	1	0	0	0	0	1
Deanston	1	3	0	0	0	4
Doune	2	4	0	0	0	6
Drymen	2	1	1	0	0	4
Dunblane Rylands	6	3	0	0	0	9
Dunblane Town	3	4	1	0	0	8
Fallin	3	9	2	0	0	14
Fintry	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gargunnock	3	3	0	0	0	6
Gartmore	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hillpark/Firs	0	4	3	0	0	7
Killearn	1	1	1	0	0	3
Killin	0	5	1	0	0	6
Kippen	3	0	0	0	0	3
Lochearnhead	0	0	0	0	0	0
Milton of Buchanan	0	0	0	0	0	0
Plean	8	11	4	0	0	23
Port of Monteith	0	0	0	0	0	0
Raploch Craighall	0	4	1	0	0	5
Raploch Ferguson	4	14	5	2	0	25
Raploch Glendevon	1	1	0	0	0	2
Raploch Scott	11	8	1	3	0	23
Riverside	0	2	0	0	0	2
St Ninians Cultenhove	9	13	7	0	0	29
St Ninians Lower	1	4	1	0	0	6
St Ninians Mayfield	5	11	3	0	0	19
St Ninians Newhouse	1	0	1	0	0	2
St Ninians Newpark	1	2	0	0	0	3
St Ninians Polmaise	4	9	3	0	0	16
Stirling Town	19	6	2	0	0	27
Strathblane	1	3	0	0	0	4
Strathyre	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thornhill	0	2	0	1	0	3
Throsk	0	0	0	0	0	0

Tyndrum	0	0	0	0	0	0
Whins of Milton	1	5	1	0	1	8
Total	142	208	54	8	2	414

Table 6: Lets by Allocation Area and Allocation Group

Allocation Area	Homeless Group	Homeless Flip	Strategic Group	Transfer Group	Waiting Group	Ukraine	Total
Aberfoyle	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
Ardeonaig	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arnprior	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Balfron	6	0	0	0	0	1	7
Balquhidder	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bannockburn	10	1	0	5	2	6	24
Blairdrummond	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Braehead	6	3	2	3	1	0	15
Bridge of Allan	5	1	0	1	3	3	13
Broomridge	1	4	0	1	0	0	6
Buchlyvie	3	1	1	0	0	2	7
Callander	6	1	0	3	2	5	17
Cambusbarron	4	0	3	0	0	1	8
Causewayhead	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Cornton	14	4	2	2	3	1	26
Cowie	4	4	1	2	1	2	14
Crianlarich	1	0	0	1	0	2	4
Croftamie	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Deanston	1	0	1	0	1	1	4
Doone	5	0	0	0	1	0	6
Drymen	2	0	0	1	0	1	4
Dunblane Rylands	4	1	0	0	1	3	9
Dunblane Town	5	1	0	0	1	1	8
Fallin	6	3	0	2	2	1	14
Fintry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gargunnoch	1	2	0	1	0	2	6
Gartmore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hillpark/Firs	1	1	1	1	2	1	7
Killearn	1	0	0	0	0	2	3
Killin	4	1	0	0	0	1	6
Kippen	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Lochearnhead	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Milton of Buchanan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Plean	9	3	2	5		4	23

Port of Monteith	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Raploch Craighall	0	0	0	3	1	1	5
Raploch Ferguson	9	7	2	1	2	4	25
Raploch Glendevon	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Raploch Scott	15	2	1	2	1	2	23
Riverside	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
St Ninians Cultenhove	6	3	2	10	3	5	29
St Ninians Lower	3	1	0	2	0	0	6
St Ninians Mayfield	7	1	2	5	2	2	19
St Ninians Newhouse	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
St Ninians Newpark	1	2	0	0	0	0	3
St Ninians Polmaise	6	1	0	5	3	1	16
Stirling Town	10	5	1	2	4	5	27
Strathblane	2	0	0	1	1	0	4
Strathyre	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thornhill	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
Throsk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tyndrum	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Whins of Milton	3	1	1	2	1	0	8
Total	169	55	23	66	39	62	414

The table below shows the average time taken for applicants to be rehoused in 2023/24 broken down by the group the property was let to. The longer than average time to house applicants on the transfer group is in line with previous years and generally reflective of both transfer applicants more restrictive housing aspirations, and the low number of homes let to existing tenants prior to the Allocation Policy being reviewed in 2021.

Table 7: Average time to re-house

Allocation Group	Time to be re-housed (days)
Homeless	549
Homeless Flip	529
Transfer	1,066
Waiting	631
Displaced Ukrainian Household	203
Strategic	191

Table 8 shows the number of supported lets that Stirling Council made during 2023/24, with over one in five lets being supported. These are lets of adapted or accessible housing as well as homes let in Kelly Court, the Council's only sheltered housing complex in the Stirling Town area.

The percentage of supported lets has for the past three years been relatively consistent (27.2% in 2021/22 and 25.9% in 2022/23). The number of wheelchair accessible properties let in 2023/24 however, has been considerably lower than in previous years and can be attributed to no new build wheelchair accessible homes being purchased in 2023/24 (due to slippage on one development) as well as the turnover of wheelchair homes being lower than our general stock. The need for accessible homes can be seen in tables 15 to 17 below and shows a high level of demand for this type of housing in relation to available homes. To attempt to meet this unmet need in the area, within the Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan, there is a target that 15% of new build homes each year should be accessible. In addition, a financial incentive to move of £2,000 was introduced for people living in wheelchair accessible homes who no longer require this type of housing, along with priority for rehousing within the Allocation Policy.

Table 8: Lets by need 2021/22 (Taken from ARC Contextual indicator 3)

Type of let	Number of lets	Percentage of lets
General needs lets	324	78.3%
Ambulant accessible lets	80	19.3%
Wheelchair accessible lets	4	1%
Sheltered accommodation lets	6	1.4%
Total supported lets	89	21.7%

The average number of points required to be housed is set out in table 9 and a comparison to previous years contained in table 10. This shows that the number of points required to be housed from the Transfer Group is significantly higher than in the Waiting Group. This is likely reflective of the number of transfer applicants being housed with under-occupancy points in addition to other forms of housing need they have.

To provide some context to these points, some of the current award of points include:

- Overcrowding by one bedroom – 50 points
- Overcrowding by two bedrooms – 100 points
- Overcrowding by three or more bedrooms – 200 points
- Being provided a notice to leave by a private landlord – 200 points
- Living in conditions below the tolerable standard – 400 points
- High medical points – 400 points
- Domestic abuse points – 450
- Under-occupation points – 450

Table 9: Average points to be housed

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed	Average
Waiting list	286	393	414	100	n/a	343
Transfer list	534	425	563	850	700	477

Table 10: Average points to be housed 2021/22 – 2023/24

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Waiting list	334	332	343
Transfer list	441	391	477

Table 11 shows the different type of housing need that applicants who were housed from the Waiting and Transfer Groups during 2023/24 had. Applicants often had more than one type of housing need which means the total lets in this table is not equal to the total lets to the Waiting and Transfer Groups.

This shows that the most common reason for people to be rehoused in 2023/24 was their current home not being suitable for their medical or health requirements. The high number of supported lets being made and the priority given to people who require adapted or accessible homes is contributes to this being the most common reason for people to be rehoused.

Excluding social inclusion points (which are a small award intended to give priority to people with a link to an area where two households have the same level of need), the second most common need of people rehoused was insecurity of tenure. These points are awarded where a household has no security in their current home and can include where a private tenant has been given a notice to leave their home, when a person has no fixed address, or when a person is staying with friends or relatives.

There were also a number of people rehoused with domestic abuse points, with these points intended to provide an alternative option to homelessness to people living with domestic abuse.

Table 11: Housing Need of Applicants Housed

Points Type	Lets
Medical	91
Insecurity	39
Domestic Abuse	18
Social Inclusion	46
Below Tolerable Standard	4
Under-occupancy	29
Overcrowding	29
Harassment	2

Table 12 sets out the number of households on the Council's housing list as of 1st April 2024. The number of households on the housing list has remained relatively consistent over recent years despite the overall number of lets made.

Stirling Council received 1,045 new applications for housing in 2023/24, as well as having 443 be accepted as legally homeless during the year.

Table 12: Housing Applications at 1 April 2024

Housing List	Number of Applicants
Homeless	593
Transfer	829
Waiting	1,742
Strategic	18
Total	3,182

Table 13 shows the number of applications on the Transfer and Waiting groups at 1st April 2024 that had been awarded different levels of points. Table 14 shows point categories that have more than one level of award broken down by each level. Of particular note in table 14 is that 72 people have been awarded a high level of insecurity of tenure points. This level of insecurity of tenure points are predominantly awarded to people who have been given a notice to leave by their landlord and can provide an indication of the number of people in the private rented sector threatened with homelessness who may present as homeless in the near future.

Table 13: Housing Need in the Transfer and Waiting Group

Point type	Transfer Group	Waiting Group	Total
No points or only social inclusion	283	690	973
Overcrowding	245	361	606
Below Tolerable Standard	0	13	13
Insecurity of Tenure	0	725	725
Medical	393	324	717
Domestic Abuse	10	30	40
Harassment	7	3	10

Table 14: Housing Need in the Waiting and Transfer Groups

Point type	Low	Medium	High	Total
Medical	325	181	211	717
Insecurity of tenure	312	341	72	725
Overcrowding	475	105	26	606
Below Tolerable Standard	3	5	5	13

Tables 15 to 17 below set out the need for accessible housing on the Council's housing list. They show that there is a high demand for ambulant accessible and

wheelchair accessible in the area, despite the high number of supported lets made each year. The largest demand is for ambulant accessible ground floor homes, though there is a larger turnover of this type of home each year. Despite the lower number of households requiring wheelchair accessible housing, there are fewer homes that become available each year (see table 8 above).

Most households require one or two bedroom accessible homes, though there is a need for larger homes as well. Households that require larger accessible homes tend to wait longer for suitable properties to become available due to the severe lack of suitable properties within the Council's existing stock. This information is considered when determining the housing mix for developments and in recent years wheelchair accessible housing has been built or purchased on sites in Cowie, Hillpark, Cornton, St Ninians, as well as being built on sites currently being developed in Raploch and Old Plean.

Table 15: Accessible Housing Demand

	Homeless Group	Transfer Group	Waiting Group	Strategic Group	Total
Ground Floor Properties	7	220	164	0	391
Wheelchair Accessible Properties	3	26	22	1	52
Total	10	246	186	1	443

Table 16: Ground Floor/Ambulant Accessible Need by Property Size

	Homeless Group	Transfer Group	Waiting Group	Strategic Group	Total
1 or 2 bedrooms	2	198	153	0	353
3 bedrooms	3	13	10	0	26
4 bedrooms or more	2	9	1	0	12
Total	7	220	164	0	391

Table 17: Wheelchair Accessible Need by Property Size

	Homeless Group	Transfer Group	Waiting Group	Strategic Group	Total
1 or 2 bedrooms	2	19	19	1	41
3 bedrooms	1	4	0	0	5
4 bedrooms or more	0	3	3	0	6
Total	3	26	22	1	52

Table 18 shows the percentage of tenancy offers refused during 2023/24 as being 36.2%. This does represent a reduction of refusals in recent years (the percentage of offers refused was 49.4% in 2021/22 and 40.8% in 2022/23), with the introduction of suspensions for refusing two reasonable offers in the Waiting and Transfer Group likely to have contributed to this.

There are however, still a high number of refusals, with households in the Homeless Group most likely to refuse an offer of housing. The majority of people housed from this group accepted their first offer, however a significant minority refused this.

Table 19 sets out the reason for refusals made during 2023/24 and shows that the most common reason for people refusing homes was that they did not want a home in the area offered. This was also the most common reason for homeless households refusing an offer of housing, with the Homelessness and Housing Options team currently reviewing the information and advice provided to homeless households in response to this.

Only one person during 2023/24 refused a home due to the condition of the home offered. This property was reviewed following this refusal and found to meet the Council's lettable standard.

The 'other' category contains refusal reasons that don't easily meet other refusal reasons and this year is predominantly people being unable to attend a viewing due to being abroad, working away or being unwell.

The impact of the high refusal rate for homeless households is that in 2023/24, of the 169 households on the Homeless Allocation Group rehoused, the majority (102 or 60%) accepted their first reasonable offer of housing. 67 households (40%) refused their first offer of housing and accepted their second reasonable offer. The cumulative time between the first offer being made in these cases and the household being housed into permanent housing was 11,227 days. This equates to an extra 168 days homeless on average per household.

In addition, the average time between the first offer of housing being made and a household being housed when there was children in the home was higher at 224 days on average (4,925 cumulative days and affecting 22 households and 42 children).

Table 18: Number of Tenancy Offers Refused 2023/24 (taken from ARC Indicator 14)

	Homeless Group	Transfer Group	Waiting Group	Strategic Group	Total
Tenancy Offers Accepted	161	66	98	24	349
Tenancy Offers Refused	117	37	34	10	198
Percentage of tenancy offers refused	42.1%	35.9%	25.8%	29.4%	36.2%

Table 19: Refusal Reasons 2023/24

Refusal Reason	Homeless	Transfer	Waiting	Strategic	Total
Applicant doesn't want this size of home	7	1	3	0	11
Applicants doesn't want this street	2	0	0	0	2
Area unsuitable	49	13	13	3	78
Change of requirements	2	0	2	3	7
Applicant moved	1	0	0	0	1
No reply to contact	2	0	1	0	3
No reply to offer	16	1	0	1	18
Home not to applicants liking	13	6	2	0	21
Rooms too small	6	6	0	0	12
Too many stairs	1	0	1	0	2
Unable to move at present	3	1	9	0	13
Property condition	0	0	0	1	1
Garden too big or small	0	5	2	0	7
Applicants wants a garage or driveway	0	1	0	0	1
Neighbours	0	3	0	0	3
Other reason	15	0	1	2	18
Total	117	37	34	10	198

A sensitive lettings process was introduced into the Council's Housing Allocation Policy when it was reviewed in November 2022. Sensitive lets are a method of allocating individual properties to help ensure housing management issues resulting from an allocation are minimised and that the let leads to a sustainable tenancy.

Sensitive lets are identified at a monthly meeting of the Housing Service's Allocation and Tenancy Management teams, along with the Council's Community Safety Team. If a property is identified as one which should be let sensitively, consideration is given to the applicant at the top of the housing list and their suitability for a property based on the information we have about the applicant, the void property and the surrounding area and neighbours.

Forty one properties were identified as being sensitive lets during 2023/24, with 17 applicants being bypassed for offers of housing as a result of this.

Table 20: Sensitive Lets by Area

Allocation Area	Number of sensitive lets
St Ninians Culterhove	13
St Ninians Mayfield	5
St Ninians Polmaise	7
Stirling Town	4
Bannockburn	2
Whins of Milton	1
Cornton	2
Bridge of Allan	2
Cowie	1
Plean	1
Raploch Scott	1
Raploch Ferguson	1
Buchlyvie	1
Total	41

Conclusions:

Although the letting analysis demonstrates the Council is meeting its legal obligations in terms of the reasonable preference groups set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014, there are a number of challenges facing the Council.

Although the number of lets made by Stirling Council in 2023/24 is the highest for a number of years, turnover is still relatively low, with Stirling having the 7th lowest turnover of all local authorities with housing stock. Although in some respects this is a positive sign that tenancies are being sustained, it does cause issues in meeting local housing need.

There are clearly a significant number of households on the Council's Housing list with unmet housing needs, many of whom will not be made offers of re-housing due to the lack of available homes. In addition, the Scottish Housing Regulator have highlighted that Stirling Council are one of eight local authorities at heightened risk of systemic failure in the delivery of services to people experiencing homelessness. This means that there is a risk that the demands on Stirling Council to provide homeless households with temporary and permanent housing could shortly exceed our capacity to respond. The high number of households with a high award of insecurity points is also an indicator that there are a number of households in the area threatened with homelessness who may shortly become homeless which.

Despite the high proportion of supported lets made by Stirling Council during 2023/24, there is also a lack of accessible, and in particular, wheelchair accessible homes, to meet the needs of all applicants quickly.

To address these issues, information on demand is considered when determining the housing mix for new build developments, with a number of both larger and accessible housing being built or purchased in recent years, and will further homes planned in the Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan. Cuts to the Affordable

Housing Supply Programme will however, impact on the Council's ability to meet local demand.

Work to prevent homelessness through the Council's Housing Options team in line with the Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan is also ongoing. As part of the Allocation Policy Review to be carried out in 2024, consideration should be given to how homelessness can be prevented and time households spend homeless minimised to ensure that the Council continues to meet its statutory obligations to homeless households.