

No council property lets in almost half of West Lothian's communities

Almost half of West Lothian's communities had no council property to let in the first three months of the year.

Councillors heard that there were no lets available in 20 of 49 communities in the county between January and April.

However the number of lets was slightly up on the same period last year and the bulk of the council homes , 111 or 63%, went to homeless people.

The Housing Services Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel heard that the number of permanent lets for the period 1 January to 31 March was 176. compared to the same quarter last year when 152 properties were let.

This increase in available lets is a result of there being more properties repaired and made available for letting.

The communities with the highest percentage of total lets were Blackburn and Whitburn with 20 lets each; Armadale with 17 lets and Fauldhouse with 12 lets .

Four communities had one mainstream property available to let – Philpstoun, Winchburgh, Breich and Longridge.

Eleven communities had between two and four properties available to let – Bridgend, Linlithgow, Eliburn, East Calder, Mid Calder, Pumpherston, Uphall Station, Addiewell,

Stoneyburn, West Calder and Blackridge.

There were six sheltered housing properties let in the quarter.

Of the 20 communities with no lets, the bulk were in Livingston neighbourhoods- Craigshill, Alderstone, Livingston Village, Bellsquarry, Kirkton, Howden and Murieston. Other communities with no lets were small villages across the county from Linlithgow Bridge in the east to Greenrigg on the western border.

In a report to the committee Sarah Kelly, Housing Needs Manager said: "The report highlights that there has been an increase in available lets when compared to the same quarter of 2022/23 and that there continues to be some communities where there is no movement in vacant properties at all."

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter