



**Glasgow City Council**

**Economy, Housing, Transport and Regeneration  
City Policy Committee**

**Report by George Gillespie, Executive Director  
of Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability**

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**Item 1**

**28th January 2025**

**RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM ECONOMY, HOUSING, TRANSPORT AND  
REGENERATION CITY POLICY COMMITTEE**

**Purpose of Report:**

To receive responses to the questions raised at the Economy, Housing,  
Transport and Regeneration City Policy Committee of 19th November 2024.

**Recommendations:**

The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐

consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

**Economy, Housing, Transport and Regeneration  
City Policy Committee**

**Questions from Elected Members at meeting  
held on 19th November 2024**

<b>Item 1</b>	Councillor Ahmed:  <b>In relation to dampness, what can we do, what is happening and why have we allowed this to reach high numbers.</b>	NRS
<b>Answer</b>	<p>It should be noted that the Council is not a housing provider however, we work closely with property owners of all tenures in the repair and maintenance of the city's housing stock. The majority of dampness complaints are received and investigated by NRS Environmental Health (Public Health), however, NRS Housing Services Private Sector and Private Rented Sector Hub teams receive similar enquiries and officers will work together to find solutions for these. The majority of dampness complaints come direct from property owners or tenants. Those complaints relating specifically to condensation/mould, account for under 3% of the annual total of service requests received by the public health team. In comparison, the number of water penetration complaints are closer to 20% of the annual total number of service requests received. Complaints of water penetration are commonplace primarily due to the high proportion of housing stock within the city which is flatted accommodation (circa 73%). The main causes of water penetration are defective plumbing from a flat above or defective property roofs/gutters.</p> <p>Where dampness is being caused by water penetration and a 'statutory nuisance, defined as 'any premises in such a state as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance', exists or is likely to occur/recur then NRS Environmental Health can serve an Abatement Notice under section 80 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. This requires the owner(s) to rectify the problem within a certain timescale. If the owner(s) do not comply with the requirements of the statutory notice, the Council have the powers to either carry out the remedial works in default of the notice; serve a Fixed Penalty Notice on the owner(s); send a report to the Procurator Fiscal or take no action where the cost for remediation would be considerable. Where complaints require more detailed investigation, NRS Scientific Services can provide further support both in terms of environmental monitoring and more detailed "mould in air" assessment.</p>	

	<p>Environmental Health frequently carry out the necessary repair works in default, where owners have failed to do so within the prescribed timescale and where the costs are not prohibitive. In most cases, officers will provide advice and guidance to residents where there is no obvious cause for condensation dampness within the home. It is also recognised that in many cases, more bespoke advice is required to support residents in heating their property as this is often linked with fuel cost poverty and as a result, officers can raise this matter with other colleagues for assistance.</p> <p>Remedial measures can range from re-pointing sections of a wall to the repair/replacement of roof tiles, gutters, downpipes or repairs to flashings.</p> <p>Other remedial measures can include treating the area of dampness with appropriate products and/or installing additional natural or mechanical ventilation. If a house is not substantially free from rising or penetrating damp and where remedial action under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 would not be a possibility, the property would likely fail the Tolerable Standard as defined by the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (as amended).</p> <p>The Tolerable Standard has been the principal measure of housing quality for all tenures in Scotland since 1969. The Tolerable Standard is a 'condemnatory' standard and a house that falls below it is not acceptable as living accommodation. To meet the tolerable standard a house must be 'substantially free from rising or penetrating damp'. However, this does not extend to condensation.</p> <p>Officers from NRS Environmental Health and Housing teams have a close working relationship and will work with owners to tackle dampness problems and to ensure that the property is habitable. Taking enforcement action should be a last resort but where the only option is to close a property then officers will support residents in finding suitable alternative accommodation. Joint working between the teams has resulted in solutions being found for larger scale complex dampness cases.</p> <p>Due to the seriousness of the issue, ongoing actions are detailed within the last committee report <a href="#">Committee Information - View Committee Document</a> and include items such as,</p> <p>an awareness campaign of the impact of dampness and mould will be carried out. This will involve a review of the present leaflet on condensation dampness which is currently being distributed by officers and awareness raising through social media channels. Private Landlords will be separately targeted via a dedicated environmental newsletter highlighting their responsibilities to their</p>	
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	tenants and providing contact details should they need to obtain advice and support.																	
Item 1	<b>Bailie Jenkins noted that a Scottish Awaabs Law is needed to tackle the issues of dampness. Officers to provide an update on this.</b>	NRS																
Answer	We can advise that the Society of Chief Officers of Environmental Health in Scotland (a professional body representing the Environmental Health profession) have highlighted a need for national guidance to be published by the Scottish Government/Public Health Scotland on dampness/mould, in line with that in England. The Council will support their representations and contribute to discussions as necessary.																	
Item 1	<b>Bailie Jenkins noted 434 RSLs with empty homes, and asked are the Council dealing with the Regulator about this. Also, what is the breakdown in RSLs which have empty homes?</b>	NRS																
Answer	<p>Empty Homes officers have not spoken with the Housing Regulator directly in relation to the number of empty RSL void properties. Officers have however reached out to the RSLs individually. NRS Services Private Sector housing team are now working closely with those RSLs who have the highest number of empty properties to support them in bringing these properties back into use. In light of the housing emergency the Council is prioritising these properties for assistance.</p> <p>As of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024, the number of RSL long term empty properties was 458 and can be broken down as follows:</p> <table><tr><th>RSL</th><th>Number of empty properties</th></tr><tr><td>ARDENGLLEN</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>BIELD</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>CASSILTOUN</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>EASTHALL PARK</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>GLASGOW WEST</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>GLASSFORD SHELTERED HOUSING</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>GOVAN</td><td>21</td></tr></table>	RSL	Number of empty properties	ARDENGLLEN	2	BIELD	4	CASSILTOUN	2	EASTHALL PARK	2	GLASGOW WEST	7	GLASSFORD SHELTERED HOUSING	1	GOVAN	21	
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		GOVANHILL	52		
		HANOVER (SCOTLAND)	6		
		KEY	4		
		LINK GROUP	4		
		LOCHFIELD PARK	1		
		LORETTO	18		
		LOWTHER	3		
		MARGARET BLACKWOOD	1		
		MARYHILL	9		
		NEW GORBALS	37		
		NG HOMES	57		
		PARKHEAD	3		
		PARTICK	2		
		PROVANHALL	1		
		QUEENS CROSS	19		
		REIDVALE	15		
		ROSEHILL	5		
		SANCTUARY	3		
		SHETTLESTON	2		
		SOUTHSIDE	18		
		THENUE	6		
		TOLLCROSS	4		
		TRUST	10		
		WELLHOUSE	2		
		WEST OF SCOTLAND	12		

		WHEATLEY GROUP	118		
		WHITEINCH & SCOTSTOUN	2		
		YOKER	4		
		YORKHILL	2		
		<b>Total</b> (on 31 <sup>st</sup> Oct 2024)	<b>458</b>		
<b>Item 1</b>	<b>Councillor Ahmed noted the high number of private empty homes and asked why these are empty are they second homes, uninhabitable?</b>				NRS
<b>Answer</b>	<p>There are a number of reasons why properties become empty. Some of the reasons are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mortgage Default/ Repossessions – Banks and mortgage lenders can often take years to repossess a property and put it back up for sale. In many cases the lenders do not want to take heritable possession of the property if there is significant outstanding debt recorded against the property.</li> <li>• Deceased Owners – where an owner dies intestate, and no Executors have been appointed to deal with the estate. In many cases this results in family disputes which can take years to resolve, if at all. In some cases, family members may have an emotional attachment to the property and do not want to sell.</li> <li>• Title issues – The ownership of the property is in question, and this may not be easily resolved, if at all.</li> <li>• Untraceable Owners – the last known owner on the title deed or other property records cannot be found nor any dependents.</li> <li>• Land banking – speculators buy the property for future investment.</li> <li>• Personal Choice – For reasons known only to the individual they simply do not want to sell or let somebody occupy the property.</li> <li>• Properties which have fallen into a poor state of repair and are uninhabitable.</li> </ul>				

	<p>As of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024, 2394, private homes (this excludes second homes) were reported as being long term empty homes. While this number appears high it is estimated that just over half of these have been empty for more than 1 year.</p> <p>In addition, our empty homes database shows that there are 425 second homes. Our Empty Homes officers are proactive, and Glasgow is the most successful local authority in bringing empty homes back into use. Officers will work with individuals and offer advice and assistance to try and bring as many of these private homes back into use as quickly as possible. Officers will also consider whether voluntary acquisition by an RSL might be an option or whether the Council should promote a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for some of these longer-term empty properties. To date the Council has promoted 66 CPOs to help bring properties back into use for affordable housing.</p>	
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