Item 4

6th October 2022

Glasgow City Council

Contracts and Property Committee

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Regeneration & Sustainability

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Proposed Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) of 4 properties - 73 Rylees Crescent, Glasgow, G52 4BZ, Flat 2/2, 4 Melville Street, Glasgow G41 2LN, Flat 0/2, 35 Westmoreland Street, Glasgow G42 8LL and Flat 0/4, 94 Allison Street, Glasgow, G42 8ND

Purpose of Report:

To advise Committee of the requirement to promote a compulsory purchase order at 73 Rylees Crescent, Glasgow, G52 4BZ, Flat 2/2, 4 Melville Street, Glasgow G41 2LN, Flat 0/2, 35 Westmoreland Street, Glasgow G42 8LL and Flat 0/4, 94 Allison Street, Glasgow, G42 8ND, to bring empty homes back into use, improve the condition of the housing stock and remove neighbourhood blight.

Recommendations:

That Committee:

- approve the promotion of Compulsory Purchase Orders over the properties at 73 Rylees Crescent, Glasgow, G52 4BZ, Flat 2/2, 4 Melville Street, Glasgow G41 2LN, Flat 0/2, 35 Westmoreland Street, Glasgow G42 8LL and Flat 0/4, 94 Allison Street, Glasgow, G42 8ND

- approve the 'back-to-back' agreements with the Wheatley Group for 73 Rylees Crescent, Glasgow, G52 4BZ, with Southside Housing Association for Flat 2/2, 4 Melville Street, Glasgow G41 2LN and Flat 0/4, 94 Allison Street, Glasgow, G42 8ND and with Govanhill Housing Association for Flat 0/2, 35 Westmoreland Street, Glasgow G42 8LL

Ward No(s): 4 – Craigton, 6 – Pollokshields, 8 – Southside

Citywide:

Local member(s) advised: Yes x No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

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1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the reasons for bringing an empty mid terraced 5 apartment house and 3 flatted properties back into effective use through compulsory purchase, with ownership transferring to Registered Social Landlords which will facilitate an increase in affordable housing supply, remove neighbourhood blight, and will ensure the future maintenance of these properties.

1.2 The Scottish Government Housing to 2040 vision sets out a vision and route-map to increase affordable housing supply, in parallel with making better use of existing housing supply.

1.3 The Glasgow City Council Strategic Plan 2017 to 2022 supports registered social landlords in the provision of new homes across the city and this includes bringing vacant and derelict properties back into use for social housing accommodation and to promote inclusive growth.

1.4 Glasgow's Housing Strategy prioritises improving and maintaining the quality of our private housing stock as a key objective in maintaining thriving neighbourhoods, providing good quality housing to attract and retain population, promoting area regeneration, supporting wider strategic regeneration goals and improving energy efficiency in the housing stock.

1.5 Making better use of underutilised housing and property assets continues to be a key focus following approval of Glasgow's Empty Homes Strategy by the City Administration Committee on 28th November 2019. A key priority of the strategy is to tackle the problem of empty properties with the aim being to bring these properties back into residential use under the ownership of a RSL partner to increase the availability of affordable housing, including for larger households, and provide good quality accommodation for those who need it.

2. Current Situation

2.1 The 4 residential properties are identified on the council tax register as being long-term empty homes.

2.2 The 5 apartment property at 73 Rylees Crescent has been empty since 21 September 2006. The property is creating a blight on the area and is attracting antisocial behaviour. The property is the focus of persistent complaints from the local community and elected members. Contact was eventually made with the joint owner (who also has Power of Attorney for the other joint owner), in November 2020. Despite receiving assurance from the owner that essential repairs would be carried out to the property, no action has been taken and this larger family property remains a constant source of complaint and concern in the area.

2.3 The tenement property at 4 Melville Street was the subject of statutory intervention following the failure of owners to carry out essential common repairs voluntarily when the building fell into a state of serious disrepair. On

completion of the works in October 2020, the owners failed appoint a property factor and put in place a Maintenance Plan for the building. Meanwhile, the flat at 2/2 has never been re-occupied and remains a source for anti-social behaviour activity putting the Council's substantial investment in the property at risk. Southside Housing Association (SSHA) who have already acquired a flat in the property, have offered to purchase this flat on a voluntary basis, but the owner has refused to sell. Once this flat is acquired, SSHA will be appointed as managing agent to deliver a 5 year maintenance plan for the building as the Council has now placed a maintenance order on the property.

2.4 The landlord of flat 0/2, 35 Westmoreland Street, failed to participate on a voluntary basis when owners carried out major common repair works to their building in 2013. Action was taken by the Council in terms of Section 30 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 in respect of this flat to allow the works to proceed. The owner of the property previously let out the property but has not done so following expiry of his private landlord registration in February 2017. Govanhill Housing Association had offered to purchase the flat on a voluntary basis but the landlord refused to sell. The flat is in poor condition and does not meet the repairing standard. The owner has now effectively abandoned the property. The flat is presently occupied despite its poor condition. The occupants have advised that they have no tenancy agreement in place nor do they pay council tax. It is proposed that the occupants will be rehoused in other suitable alternative accommodation once their needs have been assessed.

2.5 The owner of flat 0/4, 94 Allison Street cannot be traced. The Council has been unsuccessful in their attempts to track down the legal owner in order for Southside Housing Association (SSHA) to make an offer to purchase the property voluntarily. The flat has been lying abandoned for a number of years and is in poor condition failing both the repairing and tolerable standards. SSHA already have ownership within the building and are looking to bring this tenement property up to a factoring standard.

3. **Proposals**

3.1 The Council will compulsory purchase the property at 73 Rylees Crescent. On confirmation of the CPO by the Scottish Ministers, the ownership of the property will be transferred by the Council to the Wheatley Group through a 'back-to-back' agreement which will be legally agreed by both parties in advance of the CPO being promoted. This will enable the Wheatley Group to bring this family sized property back into effective use as social housing.

3.2 The Council will compulsory purchase the flats at 2/2 4 Melville Street and flat 0/4, 94 Allison Street. On confirmation of the Order by the Scottish Ministers, the ownership of the properties will be transferred by the Council to Southside Housing Association (SSHA) through a 'back-to-back' agreement which will be legally agreed by both parties in advance of the CPO being promoted. This will enable SSHA to consolidate their ownership in both buildings and bring these 2 empty properties back into effective use as social housing.

3.3 The Council will compulsory purchase the flat at 0/2, 35 Westmoreland Street. On confirmation of the Order by the Scottish Ministers, the ownership of the property will be transferred by the Council to Govanhill Housing Association (GHHA) through a 'back to back' agreement which will be legally agreed by both parties in advance of the CPO being promoted. This will enable GHHA to consolidate their ownership in the building and carry out essential repair works to bring the property back into use as social housing.

3.4 Funding for the acquisitions will be made available to the Housing Associations through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) budget.

3.5 A comprehensive statement of reasons supporting the compulsory purchase of each of these properties is being prepared and will require to be submitted to Scottish Ministers for consideration.

3.6 The owners of the property identified for CPO will continue to be given the opportunity to sell the property to the Housing Association on a voluntary basis prior to confirmation of the compulsory purchase order. Owners will be entitled to seek compensation for the loss of their property from the date of confirmation, in accordance with statutory provisions.

4 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial:	All costs including the owners' claims for compensation will be met with funding provided from the AHSP budget.
Legal:	Legal Services will promote the CPOs and draw up the "back to back" agreements with Wheatley Group, Southside Housing Association and Govanhill Housing Association.
Personnel:	Staff input required to assist in the delivery of the programme has been accounted for within existing resources.
Procurement:	N/A

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.	Yes – This initiative will help deliver key strategic outcomes of Glasgow's Housing Strategy 2017 – 2022, which has been subject to an EQIA. The provision of a family property will meet a priority housing need meeting multiple equality outcomes.
What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?	CPOs of empty homes will help deliver key strategic outcomes of Glasgow's Housing Strategy 2017-22 which has been subject to an EQIA. Improvement to housing stock particularly in lower end of the private rented sector will bring a range of benefits to many residents.
Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.	Yes. Targeted CPO of empty properties will improve the standard of accommodation for all owners and residents and increase provision of affordable homes in the city.

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:	Yes- (Action No.8), preparing an improvement plan for private sector housing (Action No.9), and encouraging retrofit of existing housing to higher EPC rating (Action No.39).
What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?	Reduced climate impact by maintaining the current housing stock for longer, leading to less need for demolition and newbuild.
Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?	Yes. The 'fabric first' approach to carbon reduction in retrofit programmes means housing requires to be of decent quality to contribute to carbon savings. The transition of these homes into social rent will require them to meet higher condition and energy efficiency standards.
Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:	There are no privacy and Data Protection impacts.

5 Recommendations

That Committee:

- approve the promotion of Compulsory Purchase Order over the properties at 73 Rylees Crescent, Glasgow, G52 4BZ, Flat 2/2, 4 Melville Street, Glasgow G41 2LN, Flat 0/2, 35 Westmoreland Street, Glasgow G42 8LL and Flat 0/4, 94 Allison Street, Glasgow, G42 8ND

- approve the ‘back-to-back’ agreements with Wheatley Group for 73 Rylees Crescent, Glasgow, G52 4BZ, with Southside Housing Association for Flat 2/2, 4 Melville Street, Glasgow G41 2LN and Flat 0/4, 94 Allison Street, Glasgow, G42 8ND, and with Govanhill Housing Association for Flat 0/2, 35 Westmoreland Street, Glasgow G42 8LL