

OFFICIAL



Glasgow City Council

City Administration Committee

Item 4

23rd January 2020

Report by Councillor Kenny McLean, City Convener for
Neighbourhoods, Housing and Public Realm

Contact: Ian Robertson Ext: 76000

IBROX /CESSNOCK HOUSING REGENERATION STRATEGY

Purpose of Report:

To advise Committee of the proposed strategic partnership arrangement between Glasgow City Council and Govan Housing Association to tackle the condition of the pre-1919 tenement stock in the Ibrox /Cessnock area of the city.

Recommendations:

That Committee:

- considers the content of this report; and
- approve the Strategy and proposals contained therein.

Ward No(s): 5

Citywide:

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

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Scottish Government has made a commitment to increase housing supply, in addition to making best use of existing housing supply in its policy document, Homes Fit for the 21st Century.
- 1.2 One of the central themes in Glasgow's Housing Strategy 2017-22 <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=4584&p=0> is 'Increasing the supply and improving the quality of housing available to Glasgow's people and one of the strategic priorities is to 'Manage, maintain and improve the existing housing stock.' A key action is to address properties which currently fall below the tolerable standard (BTS) or are in danger of becoming BTS or falling into disrepair.
- 1.3 The Scottish Housing Condition Survey 2016 estimated that 67% of all pre 1919 stock is in critical disrepair (building elements central to weather-tightness structural stability and preventing deterioration of the property). 5% of the pre 1919 stock is described as requiring extensive repair (serious/urgent disrepair covering more than 20% of the building). Within the Council's Statement of Assistance, priority for funding, subject to availability, is given to owners to carry out common repair works in pre-1919 tenement properties, in identified priority areas
- 1.4 The Council's Strategic Plan 2017-2022 lists as one of its priorities the need to 'Develop a repair and maintenance strategy with registered private landlords and private owners for pre 1919 properties in the city.'
- 1.5 Both the Housing Strategy and Strategic Plan highlight as a priority the need to bring empty homes back into use, to tackle problems in the private rented sector and take action against rogue landlords.
- 1.6 The strategy was considered by the Neighbourhoods, Housing and Public Realm City policy Committee on 19th November 2019 and has been referred to the City Administration Committee for approval.

2. Background

- 2.1 The built heritage in the form of pre 1919 tenements is considered an important cultural and heritable attribute for the city and a vital part of our housing stock. It is estimated that over 76,000 properties were built before 1919 and around 70,000 of these are flats within tenements. These properties account for circa 23% of the total housing stock in the city.
- 2.2 From 2001-2009 the Council, working in partnership initially with Communities Scotland (prior to the Transfer of the Management and Development Funding budget to the Council) and local housing associations, targeted the rehabilitation of a number of tenement blocks in disrepair within the Ibrox/Cessnock area. These properties were the subject of significant investment at that time. The housing associations received funding to acquire properties within the blocks in order to arrest the decline in the housing stock

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

and take on a management role where they acquired a majority interest in a building. This enabled Govan Housing Association to establish a firm presence in a number of closes, within blocks 1 and 3 as shown in Appendix 3 of the strategy document, in terms of ownership and in the provision of factoring services.

- 2.3 In recent years Glasgow City Council ('the Council') has been required to undertake statutory action to safeguard four tenement properties in Ibrox Street/Harley Street where the buildings were declared dangerous. This has identified the need for a housing strategy to look at the condition of the unimproved tenement stock in the locale and the need for a programme of works to halt the decline. It is recognized that this could only be delivered through a partnership approach between the Council and Govan Housing Association ('the Association').
- 2.4 The partners are aware of many of the issues with the pre-1919 tenement stock in the area and have made significant inroads to date in terms of common repairs and backcourt improvements in a targeted number of closes. Further acquisitions have enabled the Association to increase its factoring base in the area and introduce maintenance plans and back court improvements to protect investment and secure the long term future of the tenement stock.
- 2.5 In the wider area the Council has assisted private owners with funding where they have been prepared to carry out works to their properties on a voluntary basis. Around £1m in grant funding has been allocated to private owners in 7 tenement properties, in the past 3 years, to carry out major repairs.

3. Strategy Objectives and Current situation

- 3.1 The partners have agreed a number of strategic housing objectives:
- Tackle disrepair within the pre-1919 tenement stock
 - Programme of preventative maintenance via promotion of the Association's factoring services
 - Eliminate poor private landlord practice to ensure high levels of compliance
 - Create a sustainable tenure balance through targeted acquisitions
 - Bring empty homes and abandoned ground floor shops back into use for social housing
 - Address environmental issues
- 3.2 For the purpose of the strategy the geographical area will cover 295 pre-1919 tenement buildings in 33 blocks as shown in Appendix 1 of the strategy. Six blocks, bounded by Midlock Street (west) Brand Street (north), Harley Street (east) and Paisley Road West (south) as shown in Appendix 2 of the strategy will be prioritised for funding or statutory action. This area has already been the target of early intervention works by the partners.
- 3.3 As part of a wider city stock condition survey, 50 tenement properties in the Ibrox/Cessnock area have been surveyed using drones and thermal imaging

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

in the Ibrox /Cessnock area. The information is currently being collated and a copy of the survey findings have already or will be distributed to property factors or residents of their respective buildings. The findings will inform future work programmes.

- 3.4 Private Rented properties account for more than 50% of the total housing stock within the priority six blocks rising to over 60% in blocks 4 and 5 identified in appendix 3 of the strategy. It is envisaged that a significant number of these properties will fail to meet the required property standards or not hold the relevant certificates/documentation. Landlord registration will be a key tool in challenging poor landlord practice and non-compliance. The Association will look to acquire private rented stock within the six blocks in order to bring tenure diversification and stability to closes where property management issues have been identified.
- 3.5 A multi-agency approach will be required to effectively tackle the environmental issues in the area as this will require both physical and social change. The local community will require to be engaged, to encourage participation and to empower local people to get involved and shape the future and maintain improvements once investment has taken place.
- 3.6 A number of properties are currently the subject of compulsory purchase or proposed compulsory purchase action. To date a total of 6 compulsory purchase orders are being promoted in the priority area, covering 4 empty flats in Ibrox Street, Elizabeth Street and Harley Street and 2 vacant shops in Harley Street. Once the orders are confirmed with an agreed date of entry the properties will be transferred to the Association to consolidate their ownership in these buildings and to bring the properties up to the required standard for social housing. This is a positive step as it will help to eliminate incidents of anti-social behaviour and tackle environmental blight in the area.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 A phased approach is planned to tackle problematic closes within the six blocks. However, there will be flexibility within the programme to vary this and target resources where priorities are identified or where owners are prepared to carry out repairs to their property on a voluntary basis. In order to safeguard public investment, owners must appoint a property factor on completion of the works, put a maintenance in place for the property and agree to common building insurance. The Association will actively promote its factoring services across the area and presently factor 32 of the 73 properties (44%) in the six blocks. The aim is for all properties within these blocks to be factored within the next three years.
- 4.2 The Association has developed a work specification for its factored closes and provides additional services in terms of close cleaning, including stairs and windows, backcourt/landscape maintenance and bin pull out/in service. In addition the Association's subsidiary the 'Govan Home Team (GHT)' can undertake works at a significantly reduced cost to address problems in back courts which could include the removal of bin shelters and concrete plinths,

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

landscaping open spaces and drying areas, paving, rectifying drainage issues and reviewing bin provision. GHT will explore both 'bin and bulk' pull through services which would assist Neighbourhoods and Sustainability (NS) and owners, delivering additional benefits for residents while reducing resources for the Council. GHT is keen to develop a closer working relationship with NS.

- 4.3 The Council will use its statutory repair powers where properties or previous investment are at potential risk and owners are unwilling or unable to carry out necessary repairs. Building surveys will be undertaken on properties where disrepair has been identified.
- 4.4 As part of the regeneration process the Council through its Empty Homes Officers will identify and target all empty homes within tenement properties in the area with a view to bring them back into use. Where vacant shops are highlighted on the ground floor of tenement properties these will be investigated and if there is an opportunity to bring these into use for social housing then this will be pursued. If the shops are not suitable for housing all other options will be explored. The Council will use compulsory purchase powers where necessary to bring empty properties back into use or to tackle property condition issues.
- 4.5 Landlord registration is a key element of the enforcement regime. The Council will use its legislative powers to tackle poor landlord practice and will use the new regulations which were recently introduced under The Private Landlord Registration (Information) (Scotland) Regulations 2019 to seek 'prescribed information' from private landlords, initially within the six blocks, before being rolled out across the wider area. The information local authorities can request, is almost identical to that within an Enhanced Enforcement Area and will enable the Council to seek certification / documentation pertaining to fire, gas and electrical safety, smoke and heat detection, energy performance, and building insurance etc. This will be supported by a programme of property inspections where landlords fail to provide any of the necessary certification or where concerns have been raised about property standards. Support and training will also be provided for private landlords.
- 4.6 Funding will be made available to the Association for targeted acquisitions where this will deliver a successful outcome in terms of property repairs or property management. Previous investment in the six blocks has enabled the Association to increase their factoring presence in the area which has helped to safeguard this investment. The partners have also given a commitment to explore the viability of a social lettings model where a Registered Social Landlord could enter into a lease/management agreement with the private landlord/tenant(s) for which an affordable rent and management fee would be charged.
- 4.7 The aim of the strategy is to work in partnership with owners and residents to improve the standard of properties and the surrounding environment. Residents will be consulted throughout the strategy period and a community engagement plan and communications strategy will be developed. The partners are committed to working with local support providers and third

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

sector agencies to provide a range of services that meet the needs of the community and benefit the area. This will be supplemented by a number of complementary services provided by the Association.

- 4.8 The strategy and action plan will be delivered by dedicated teams within DRS Housing and Regeneration Services and the Association with their specific roles and responsibilities having been identified. Targets and Key Performance Indicators will be established to measure a range of issues and timescales will be monitored for delivery of the action plan. It is proposed that Ward Members will be updated annually and a report taken back to committee at the end of the strategy period.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The primary aim of the strategy is to safeguard the future of the pre 1919 tenement stock in the area. This will be delivered by building on the success of the acquisition and repairs programme that the partners have undertaken to date. Further acquisitions will be targeted in those properties which will deliver the greatest impact and the Council will use compulsory purchase powers to facilitate essential repair works or to bring empty homes back into use.
- 5.2 Key interventions are required in order to raise management standards in the private rented sector. The Council is committed to using the new regulations which permits local authorities to seek 'prescribed information' from private landlords. Support and training will also be provided.
- 5.3 The Association is looking to introduce services in the area which will benefit residents. This will be supported by GHT who can provide a wide range of services and support the Council in tackling environmental issues. Resident engagement will be addressed through the community engagement plan which will be complemented by a communications strategy.
- 5.4 Targets and Key Performance Indicators will be established in order to measure the success of the strategy and the delivery of the action plan. The partners will meet regularly to evaluate the level of progress and feedback will be sought from the community and other stakeholders to ensure that the strategy is meeting their needs and aspirations.

6. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: Council funding will be met from existing Private Sector Housing Grant and Affordable Housing Budgets.

Legal: Legal Services will provide support with the promotion of compulsory purchase orders.

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Personnel: Staffing will be met from existing resources.

Procurement: All works and services will be procured from current frameworks which are in place.

Council Strategic Plan: The proposals support the theme:

Resilient and Empowered Neighbourhood
Priority 81-Bring Empty Homes back into use and delivery of homes for social rent.

Priority 84- Extend our approach to Enhanced Enforcement Areas to tackle problems in the private rented sector and take action against rogue landlords.

Priority 85 –Develop a repair and maintenance strategy with registered social landlords and private owners for pre 1919 tenements in the city.

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2017-22 Yes. This strategy will help deliver key strategic outcomes of Glasgow's Local Housing Strategy which has been subject to an EQIA.

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report? This will have a positive impact on residents' quality of life.

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio economic disadvantage. Housing has a significant impact on health inequalities in Scotland. This will improve the standard of accommodation for residents and help reduce costs for those who will benefit from a social housing tenancy.

Sustainability Impacts:

Environmental: Environmental improvement works will remove blight. Improving energy efficiency measures will result in carbon savings.

Social, including opportunities under Article 20 of the European Public Ibrox /Cessnock sits within a Thriving Place, and will benefit from a range of projects going on in the wider Govan area. The quality of accommodation and wellbeing of residents will

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Procurement Directive:

be significantly improved as a result of delivering the works.

Economic:

The proposed works will have a positive impact on property values. Social housing tenants will also benefit from lower rents

Privacy and Data Protection impacts:

No data protection impacts identified.

7 Recommendations

7.1 That Committee:

- considers the content of this report; and
- approve the Strategy and proposals contained therein.

OFFICIAL