

Empty Homes Strategy 2019-22 - Review noted – Instruction to Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability.

2 With reference to the minutes of the City Administration Committee of 28th November 2019 (Print 5, page 379) approving the Empty Homes Strategy and action plan 2019-22, there was submitted a report by the Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability regarding the delivery of the strategy, advising

- (1) of the 7 key aims of the strategy;
- (2) that the strategy had contained an ambitious 20 point action plan which had set out a target of 200 to 250 empty homes to be brought back into use annually over the lifetime of the strategy and had targeted over 100 properties for compulsory purchase order over the 3 years;
- (3) of the key successes of the strategy;
- (4) that in March 2021, the Scottish Government had published its first long-term national strategy entitled “Housing to 2040” and in response to this document, the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership (SEHP) in November 2021, in collaboration with COSLA and the Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers had published its paper entitled “Why Empty Homes Matter”, the aim of which was to further develop the work of local authorities on empty homes through an awareness campaign to highlight the benefits of the work on empty homes;
- (5) that SEHP had published its annual Impact Report in May 2022 which supported the use of existing powers such as Compulsory Purchase Orders and restated the need for further powers for empty homes officers including Compulsory Sale Orders and Rental Orders which were needed to prevent homes from being left to deteriorate indefinitely at a time when Scotland desperately needed more homes;
- (6) that the Scottish Government had recently announced that it had plans to enable Councils to raise the amount of Council Tax paid on empty and second homes which would form part of a consultation to help increase housing availability, as detailed in the report;
- (7) that statistics obtained from Council Tax records across Scotland in December 2022 had identified a total of 42,865 properties empty for 6 months or more with 27,692 of these properties being empty for 12 months or more and that as at 1st April 2023, Council Tax records had shown that there was a total of 2,698 non-exempt long-term empty homes in Glasgow for more than 6 months, with a further 471 properties being recorded as second homes;
- (8) of the priority actions for empty homes for 2023-28;

- (9) that no local authority had delivered comparable outcomes to Glasgow in terms of bringing empty properties back into use and that from April 2022 to March 2023, a total of 454 empty homes had been brought back into use; and
- (10) that officers from Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability would continue to provide evidence to the Scottish Government to support the case for additional powers, such as Compulsory Sales Orders and that the Council was committed to working closely with the Scottish Government to bring down the average timescale for promoting Compulsory Purchase Orders, as detailed in the report.

After consideration, the committee

- (a) noted the report and that actions in relation to the empty homes would be integrated through the new Local Housing Strategy 2023-28 with an annual update on progress being submitted to this committee; and
- (b) instructed the Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability to
 - (i) provide members of this committee with further information in relation to Compulsory Sale Orders; and
 - (ii) invite elected members to attend a workshop being held in 2023 on empty homes and that there be elected member representation on a working group which it was anticipated would be one of the proposed actions from the workshop.