



Glasgow City Council

Neighbourhoods, Housing and Public Realm
City Policy Committee

Report by Executive Director of Regeneration and the
Economy

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Item 1

20th November 2018

Condition of Pre 1919 Tenement Stock- Interim Report

Purpose of Report:

To provide members with information on the issues affecting our pre 1919 tenement housing stock and highlight the work that will be undertaken over the next 12 months to determine the condition of the stock.

Recommendations:

That Committee considers the content of this report and notes that detailed findings, outlining the condition of the city's pre 1919 tenement stock will be reported back to committee in 12 months' time.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

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

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1. Policy Background

- 1.1 Statutory powers have been available to local authorities since the Housing (Scotland) Act 1969 to address private sector repair issues in flatted dwellings in common ownership with the focus in Glasgow always being on the older pre 1919 tenement stock.
- 1.2 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).
- 1.3 One of the two central themes to Glasgow's Housing Strategy 2017-22 is 'Increasing the supply and improving the quality of housing available to Glasgow's people' and one of our strategic priorities is to 'Manage, maintain and improve the existing housing stock.'
- 1.4 Local authorities are required in terms of section 72 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 to publish a Statement (Scheme) of Assistance for private sector housing. This was last updated in June 2016. One of our main priorities for assistance is pre 1919 tenement properties in priority areas, where the property is deemed as substandard or is in danger of becoming substandard and require works to the common parts.

2. Context

- 2.1 The built heritage in the form of the 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. In 1975, Hyndland in the west end was given its own special designation and today it still remains the only tenement conservation area in the UK.
- 2.2 Pre 1919 tenements can be found in many areas of the city with specific concentrations of older private houses in poor condition in a number of inner city areas such as Govanhill, Ibrox/Cessnock, East Pollokshields, Strathbungo and Haghill / Dennistoun in the east end.
- 2.3 While flats in our older private tenements continue to provide an important affordable segment of the owner occupied and private rented sector markets there are significant challenges associated in taking forward common repairs, some of which are as follows:
 - Owners lack of knowledge/responsibility
 - Affordability issues – owners are unwilling or unable to pay for repairs
 - Outdated title deeds which create barriers to repair
 - Growth in the private rented sector
 - Lack of maintenance plans/building insurance in place
 - Availability of resources vs value for money
 - Legislation – risk to local authorities

- 2.4 Our future initiatives will build on the lessons learned through the Glasgow Factoring Commission which produced an Action Plan as part of its Final report in December 2013 proposing that tenement repairs/maintenance should be tackled on two broad fronts :
- Developing and adopting best practice in good factoring and property maintenance.
 - Improving access and improving the complex legal framework governing private sector housing.
- 2.5 Previous investment in the pre-1919 tenement stock has been key to safeguarding this built form. Financial assistance has been made available through the Private Sector Housing Grant budget, previously Non-Housing Revenue Account (Non-HRA) over the last 35-40 years. Around £5m -£6m per annum has been earmarked for pre 1919 tenement repairs in recent years.

3 Current Issues

- 3.1 Demand is increasing from private owners for grant assistance to repair their tenement buildings as the cost of repairs continue to rise due to current build costs, tenements that are 'listed' or in a conservation areas where the specification for repairs is more detailed and specific.
- 3.2 In the past 2/3 years a growing number of tenement properties have either had to be evacuated or had emergency stabilisation works carried out, having been classed as dangerous buildings. Many require extensive repair works which could cost in excess of £500,000 to return them to a good state of repair.
- 3.3 **Case Study 1.** A prominent tenement within a conservation area in the south side of the city was in part evacuated in 2016 due to structural defects being identified on one side of the building. Despite the owners being offered grant assistance by the council on more than one occasion to repair their building they have failed to do so. All residents have now vacated the property as it continues to deteriorate. The current cost of repair has been estimated at more than £700k.
- 3.4 **Case Study 2.** Another tenement on the south side of the city was vacated due to the building being in a dangerous condition. Due to the high cost of repair and to save the property from demolition, the building required to be structurally stabilised before repairs could be undertaken. Owners were advised that financial support could only be considered by the council if they were prepared to pay £50,000 each towards the total cost of work which is likely to exceed £800k.
- 3.5 **Case Study 3.** A mid terraced tenement in the east end of Glasgow was the subject of extensive fire damage following a fire in a top floor flat. This resulted in the loss of the roof. The building was not factored and there was no common building insurance policy in place. Of the eight owners, only one had adequate insurance cover. Three owners had no insurance and four others were under insured. The property was lying exposed and subsequent rainwater damage

adversely impacted on the adjoining properties. Repair costs were estimated at £500k to £600k. The cost of demolition and to shore up adjoining tenements on either side (the tenements are built on a slope) was estimated at over £200k plus an anticipated 50% reduction in property valuations. Following statutory action the building has now been made wind and watertight and structurally secure thus protecting adjoining tenements. Discussions are currently ongoing with owners regarding the internal reinstatement of flats.

- 3.6 Repair issues in pre 1919 tenements are not just reserved for the stock in private ownership. Many Housing Associations (RSLs) across the city are currently experiencing major stonework issues in their tenement stock where linestone repairs, carried out primarily in the 1980's / early 1990's, are now failing and the cost to replace/ repair this is significant.
- 3.7 RSL tenement stock may also need reconfigured/modernised as it no longer meets the modern day requirements of potential tenants. Other challenges include the requirement to tackle fuel poverty and how to deliver effective energy efficiency measures in older properties.
- 3.8 DRS Housing and Regeneration Services has undertaken a pilot condition survey. This looks at the fabric and thermal efficiency of 50 pre 1919 tenement buildings, in the Ibrox /Cessnock area of the city using a drone and thermal imaging technology. Once the reports have been fully evaluated, a copy of the findings will be issued to the property factors and owners to highlight the extent of any disrepair in their buildings.

4. Future Action Plan

- 4.1 Develop a comprehensive database of all pre 1919 tenement stock in the city.
- 4.2 Over the course of the next 12 months comprehensive research will be undertaken involving RSLs and other stakeholders. A short life working group will be formed with commercial property factors and property owners to determine and quantify the extent of disrepair within the pre 1919 tenement stock and report back to committee with our detailed findings by the end of 2019.
- 4.3 This will be supplemented by carrying out a comprehensive stock condition survey affecting around 500 tenement properties in total across a minimum of 10 areas of the city where there are concentrations of pre 1919 stock. The survey specification has been agreed and we are currently in discussions with the Corporate Procurement Unit on timescales for taking this forward.
- 4.4 Discussions are ongoing with a number of RSL partners and private owners to develop repair and maintenance strategies in areas where our pre 1919 tenements are giving the greatest cause for concern. Our initial focus will be on Ibrox/Cessnock and East Pollokshields. Although Glasgow's Affordable Housing Supply Programme is primarily focussed on delivering new build housing, £5m is currently assigned to support the acquisition strategy

(excluding Govanhill). The strategy assists RSLs to acquire flats in targeted closes so that effective property management can be put in place to help protect this housing supply into the future. eg. Govan Housing Association to acquire flats in over 30 tenements in Ibrox/Cessnock. The stock condition survey will be refined based on these current areas of focus, and work programmes will be identified as a consequence.

- 4.5 A Scottish Cross Party Working Group was set up in March 2018 to look at common repair and maintenance issues in tenement properties. Officers have commenced discussions with the Scottish Government on these issues and will provide their officials with regular updates over the next 12 months. This will include a review of any shortcomings in existing legislation and local authority powers relating to private sector housing repairs.
- 4.6 We will continue to work with private owners, RSLs and property factors to roll out programmes of preventative maintenance in order to bring properties up to a factoring standard. Financial assistance will be considered (subject to the availability of funding) where owners agree to repair their properties on a voluntary basis, appoint a property factor and agree to a maintenance plan and common building insurance policy being put in place for the property.
- 4.7 The current Statement (Scheme) of Assistance will require to be updated in line with our findings.

5. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

<i>Financial:</i>	The financial implications set out in the report in relation to the stock condition survey will be fully funded from the PSHG Budget.
<i>Legal:</i>	There are no legal issues arising from this report.
<i>Personnel:</i>	There are no personnel implications arising from this report.
<i>Procurement:</i>	Discussions are ongoing with the Corporate Procurement Unit on timescales for taking forward the stock condition survey.

Council Strategic Plan: The proposals support the themes
Resilient and Empowered Neighbourhoods

Priority 77 – Work with residents to preserve the character of conservation areas.
Priority 81 - Bring empty homes back into use
Priority 85 - Develop a repair and maintenance strategy with RSLs and private owners in pre 1919 tenements.

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2017-22

Yes. This initiative will help deliver key strategic outcomes of Glasgow's Local Housing Strategy 2017 – 2022, which has been subject to an EQIA.

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?

There is no significant impact.

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio economic disadvantage.

This interim report will form the basis of a more detailed report in the future which will address property condition the aim of which is to improve living conditions for residents and should have a positive impact on property values for owners in the longer term.

Sustainability Impacts:

Environmental:

The preservation of our pre 1919 tenement stock is important to safeguard the city's built heritage and help sustain and improve our local neighbourhoods.

Social

The quality of accommodation for residents will be improved and this will have a positive impact on their health and wellbeing.

Economic:

Additional funding will be sought from a number of organisations such as the Scottish Government, Historic Scotland, City Heritage Trust which will keep areas attractive and positively impact on property values.

Privacy and Data Protection impacts:

There are no privacy and Data Protection impacts.

6. Recommendations

6.1 That Committee considers the content of this report and notes that detailed findings, outlining the condition of the city's pre 1919 tenement stock will be reported back to committee in 12 months' time.