

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability

Housing and Communities Committee: 3 November 2021

Subject: Better Homes West Dunbartonshire – Brunswick, Montreal & Quebec Houses, Clydebank

1. Purpose

1.1 The report updates members on the consultation exercise with tenants of Brunswick, Montreal and Quebec Houses over the future of the 3 blocks as part of the Council's Better Homes West Dunbartonshire Housing Asset Management Strategy.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the committee:

- (i) Note the content of the report and the actions that have been taken to consult with the residents of Brunswick, Montreal and Quebec Houses, North Mountblow, Clydebank;
- (ii) Agree to designate all 78 properties within these 3 blocks as surplus to requirements;
- (iii) Invite the Chief Officer, Housing & Employability to take the next steps with remaining tenants
 - a. To ensure that all tenants have a live and current housing application and are provided with the necessary priority identification through the Council's Allocation Policy:
 - b. Discuss and authorise Home Loss and Disturbance Payments with all tenants
- (iv) Authorise the Chief Officer, Housing & Employability to commence the procurement of a demolition contractor at the appropriate time during the re-housing process; and
- (v) Agree to delegate to the Chief Officer, Housing & Employability, to investigate options for future use of the land and report back to a future Housing and Communities Committee;

3. Background

Brunswick, Montreal & Quebec Houses

- 3.1** There are 78 properties within the 3 blocks at Brunswick, Montreal and Quebec Houses, Clydebank, all properties are within the Housing Revenue Account and there are no other owners. Over time these blocks have become less popular and in accordance with the Asset Management assessment of stock, performed poorly in term of key indicators of demand, future costs and current costs.
- 3.2** At the May 2021 Housing and Communities Committee, Members agreed to the suspension of letting activity at the properties at Brunswick, Montreal and Quebec Houses, Clydebank and that a consultative exercise was undertaken with the tenants in respect of the future of the properties based on the options identification appraisal that was presented to the Committee that outlined the following options:-
1. Do nothing and keep the properties as they are
 2. Retain the properties, carry out capital works and introduce a lettings plan
 3. Declare the blocks as surplus to requirements, re-house all tenants and provide the home loss and disturbance payment and demolish all 3 blocks and market the site for future external development
 4. Declare the blocks as surplus to requirements, re-house all tenants and provide the home loss and disturbance payment , demolish all 3 blocks and use the site for new build development
 5. Declare the blocks as surplus to requirements, de-cant the tenants temporarily and retain all 3 blocks and fully refurbish both internally and externally with decants and a lettings plan
 6. Declare the blocks as surplus to requirements and demolish one or two of the blocks and fully refurbish internally and externally with decants and a lettings plan
- 3.3** The consultation took place from 30 June 2021 until 25 August 2021 and took the form of the following:
- A Survey Monkey Questionnaire
 - A series of virtual meetings hosted by Zoom
 - Individual Contact

4. Main Issues

Brunswick, Montreal & Quebec Houses

- 4.1** Over the course of the consultation period we managed to directly engage with 35 tenants across the 3 blocks. This represents 57% of all resident within the blocks as there are a number of voids, temporary accommodation units, resilience flats and a caretaker flat. As well as direct contact a survey monkey

link was provided to all tenants to put forward their views, and a series of virtual consultation events were held over Zoom.

- 4.2** As a basic overview, of the 57% of tenants that we spoke to, the clear majority said that they would like to be re-housed and for the properties to be demolished for a new build development – this opinion accounted for 64% of tenants. The results for the specific options presented are as follows:

Option	Option Description	Response
1	Do nothing and keep the properties as they are	3%
2	Retain the properties, carry out capital works and introduce a lettings plan	8%
3	Declare the blocks as surplus to requirements, re-house all tenants and provide the home loss and disturbance payment and demolish all 3 blocks and market the site for future external development	22%
4	Declare the blocks as surplus to requirements, re-house all tenants and provide the home loss and disturbance payment , demolish all 3 blocks and use the site for new build development	64%
5	Declare the blocks as surplus to requirements, decant the tenants temporarily and retain all 3 blocks and fully refurbish both internally and externally with decants and a lettings plan	0%
6	Declare the blocks as surplus to requirements and demolish one or two of the blocks and fully refurbish internally and externally with decants and a lettings plan	3%

- 4.3** It is therefore recommended that Committee approve the designation of the blocks as surplus, the re-homing of remaining tenants through the Council’s allocation policy, with home loss and disturbance payments and the eventual demolition of the buildings.

- 4.4** Moving forward to the future use of land, this will take account of the opinions expressed as part of the consultation highlighted above but will also be subject to further and wider consultation with the surrounding community and a report will be brought to the Housing and Communities Committee at an appropriate time outlining the plans for this.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** Any decision about Brunswick, Montreal and Quebec Houses will affect those currently residing there. As outlined above, extensive consultation has taken place and tenants have been kept up to date at every step of the way and will continue to be.

- 5.2 There are resource implications in terms of managing the re-homing of the remaining tenants if the recommendations are approved, this will be done in a similar manner to Clydebank East surplus stock in the recent past.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

Financial

- 6.1 As outlined within the options presented previously to Committee, there are financial implications with all but one option. Declaring the properties surplus to requirement, re-housing tenants and eventually demolishing properties will be funded from the HRA, in particular the Housing Asset Management budget within the wider Housing Capital Programme. There is an estimated cost of £1.75m over a 3 years period exclusive of any future build costs and updates on the financials will be fully reported to future Housing and Communities Committees.

Procurement

- 6.2 A demolition contractor will be procured if the recommendations are approved. Discussions will take place between Housing Development, Consultancy Services and Procurement on how to best approach this and any actions reported to future Housing and Communities Committee.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1 There are no perceived risks with the recommendations at present.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was carried out covering the wider Housing Asset Management Strategy. No negative impacts were identified for the protected characteristic groups and the conclusion was that the strategy should impact favourably on all tenants as the long term objectives is to ensure that there is sufficient good quality housing stock to address all types of housing need.

9. Consultation

- 9.1 As outlined above in relation to the Brunswick, Montreal and Quebec regeneration, an 8 week consultation period took place from 30 June 2021 until 25 August 2021. The results are detailed at Section 4. Ongoing tenant consultation takes place with the WDTR0 over any future decisions regarding use of land will take place and be reported to the Committee.
- 9.2 The recommendations and actions contained within this report have all been consulted with the members of the Better Homes Project Board where Finance, Housing, Building Services and Procurement are all represented.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** The Strategic Housing Asset Management Strategy sits within the Council's Asset Management Framework and will contribute to the objectives within the Council's Local Housing Strategy.
- 10.2** The ongoing implementation of the West Dunbartonshire Housing Asset Management Strategy contributes greatly to all five strategic priorities but principally to the priority to improve local housing and environmentally sustainable infrastructure.

Peter Barry
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Date: 20th October 2021

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Appendices: None

Background Papers: Housing Asset Management Strategy 2018-2023 and associated Equalities Impact Assessment

Report to Housing and Communities Committee, 5th May 2021, Better Homes West Dunbartonshire Housing Asset Management Strategy

Wards Affected: 5