

# North Lanarkshire Council Report

## Communities and Housing Committee

approval  noting

Ref PH/CA

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## Update on Open Market Purchase Scheme

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### Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the Open Market Purchase Scheme (OMPS) which is an extension of the Empty Homes Purchase Scheme (EHPS). The schemes enable acquisition of properties that are for sale on the open market and are predominately former public sector stock. The acquisition of these properties increases housing supply to meet housing need and can potentially enable progression of common works in mixed tenure blocks. It also allows empty properties that may be causing a blight in the local community to be brought back into use.

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### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1) Note the contents of the report
- 2) Note that a further update will be provided to committee in 6 months

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### Supporting Documents

**The plan for North Lanarkshire**

**Ambition Statement 1:** Ensure a housing mix that supports social inclusion and economic growth.

**Programme of Work: PO13** – Plan and deliver 5,000 new council homes by 2035 including over 500 to be acquired through the Open market Purchase Scheme.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the Open Market Purchase Scheme which is an extension of the Empty Homes Purchase Scheme. The Open Market Purchase Scheme is helping to increase the supply of housing to meet housing need as part of the Council's new supply programme.
- 1.2 In 2013 the Council established a scheme to purchase empty homes which was particularly targeted at long term empty properties, particularly those that were falling into disrepair or blighting the local communities. Since inception, the Empty Homes Purchase Scheme has brought 145 empty properties back into use at an average cost of £66,000.
- 1.3 In addition to the Empty Homes Purchase Scheme the Enterprise and Housing Committee approved the development and implementation of an Open Market Purchase Scheme on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2018 and set a target of acquiring 100 properties per annum.
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## 2. Report

- 2.1 The new Open Market Purchase Scheme has proved to be very popular with over 637 enquiries/ applications. Between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019, 130 properties have been purchased with a further 26 at conveyancing stage. The locations of the properties purchased are outlined below:

Area	Number of Properties
Airdrie	32
Bellshill	13
Coatbridge	35
Cumbernauld	17
Kilsyth	2
Motherwell	12
Shotts	3
Viewpark	3
Wishaw	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>

- 2.2 Of the properties purchased in 2018/19, 44 are categorised as having been long term empty properties, and 86 have been purchased through the Open Market Purchase Scheme, although in effect the two schemes have now been merged into one. All of the properties purchased were former council or Development Corporation properties.

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### **3. Equality and Diversity**

#### **3.1 Fairer Scotland**

The purchase of additional homes will contribute to meeting housing need and therefore help address inequality.

#### **3.2 Equality Impact Assessment**

There are no Equality Impact Assessment implications arising from this report.

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### **4. Implications**

#### **4.1 Financial Impact**

4.1.1 A budget of £13.2m was allocated in 2018/19 to fund the purchase and repair of the 130 properties through the Empty Homes Purchase Scheme and the Open Market Purchase Scheme, which have been brought together as one overall Buy Back Scheme. This includes a grant contribution of £3.780m from the Scottish Government.

4.1.2 As at Period 13 £8.071m had been spent on acquisition and repair, and £2.951m had been committed. The average total cost of the properties acquired so far is £81,000, including repairs.

#### **4.2 HR/Policy/Legislative Impact**

There are no HR/Policy/Legislative impacts.

#### **4.3 Environmental Impact**

The properties purchased will be brought up to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, which may improve their thermal efficiency and help reduce carbon emissions.

#### **4.4 Risk Impact**

There are no specific risks arising out of the proposal.

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### **5. Measures of success**

5.1 The acquisition of these properties helps the Council meet its Local Housing Strategy objectives to increase housing supply to meet identified need; help bring empty properties back into use, and help improve housing conditions.

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