

Making progress for MOD tenants at Dreghorn

Some progress may have been made in the plight of the Dreghorn tenants facing eviction.

The Edinburgh South West MP, Dr Scott Arthur, convened a meeting of Dreghorn residents and councillors at Oxbgangs Library this week to discuss the issues that tenants there are facing.

Living Rent [had set up a petition](#) earlier in the year to demand that the council provides 47 families in the Dreghorn homes with some support when they were threatened with eviction as the houses were put up for sale.

On the petition Living Rent said: "Without the council buying back the homes, the families are concerned that they will be evicted and face homelessness after being assured that these houses would be long term secure accommodation for them and their families.

"The impact that this news has had on residents huge. It impacts everything from their livelihoods and economic stability to their mental and physical health and wellbeing.

"We demand that Edinburgh City Council purchase the houses and allow Dreghorn Residents to stay on as tenants, ensuring they can remain in their community."

In July 2022 it was announced that the Dreghorn properties were surplus to requirements and would be sold. The council responded by seeking [to buy back 23 of the homes for £5.7 million](#), but the [purchase](#) did not include the 47 which are

currently occupied. In January of this year the council also agreed to buy a further 17 homes at a capital cost of £3.85 million.

In 2023 Paul Lawrence, the council's then Executive Director of Place, said the initial purchases were "the first part of a wider and deeper relationship" with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) which will make more available "on a phased basis".



The residents of the 47 homes under discussion are private tenants and their landlord is The Ministry of Defence (MOD) who own the properties but are planning to sell them. The councillors who attended the meeting included the Convener of Housing, Homeless and Fair Work, Cllr Lezley Marion Cameron, Finance Convener, Cllr Mandy Watt and local councillor, Cllr Conor Savage.

At the meeting the councillors confirmed that The City of Edinburgh Council is now in negotiation with the MOD about the potential purchase of 38 properties, 19 of which are occupied by sitting private tenants.

The councillors also confirmed at the meeting that they are prepared to purchase the properties along with the sitting tenants, and that they will not make it a requirement that all the properties are bought with vacant possession. The councillors said any transaction was subject to the Council agreeing appropriate terms with the MOD for such a transaction.

Dr Arthur said: "I'm pleased that the Council and the MOD are now working together on this matter. I'll continue to support Dreghorn residents with the aim of ensuring none become homeless."

Previously Dr Arthur met the Minister for Veterans and People, Birmingham MP, Alistair Carns, to discuss the ongoing concerns over Dreghorn Estate. Further to that and at Dr Arthur's request, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) previously confirmed to the CEC that it would be prepared to sell the properties with sitting tenants.

We understand The City of Edinburgh Council is preparing a comment after our inquiry this morning and it will be added here when received.

Sinead McNulty, Edinburgh City organiser for Living Rent said: "It is great news that the council is working to find a solution on this. Residents now need the council to put its money where its mouth is and commit to buying up the properties and ensuring that all Dreghorn residents are able to remain in their community.

"When they moved in, Dreghorn residents were promised their homes were secure forever but instead, over the last few months they've faced doubt and unrest about whether or not they'll be made homeless.

"This news from councillors is a huge step forward and will give residents hope that the community that had built up around Dreghorn will remain intact.

"Preventing these evictions is not just about preventing

homelessness, but also keeping this community together, kids in school, and people's dignity to be able to choose where they live.

“The council has in its power to ensure that the tenants are able to remain in their homes and it needs to do everything it can to prevent them from being forced out. The council must commit to buying the homes with the people inside them and converting them into council homes. Failing to do so would be catastrophic for the families and can not be allowed to happen.”



Photo courtesy of Dr Scott Arthur MP