

## APPENDIX 2

### **Proposed Compulsory Purchase by West Lothian Council of Land Extending to Approximately 0.34 Acres at Main Street, Blackridge, West Lothian**

#### **Statement of Reasons**

##### Description of Property

The property comprises approximately 0.34 acres and is shown hatched on the attached plan. Previously it was the site of a hotel and public house however the building was demolished in 2003 following an extensive fire. The site has remained undeveloped and lain derelict ever since.

The site, which is rectangular in shape and fronts onto Main Street, Blackridge, has become overgrown with vegetation and scrub since the demolition of the buildings. While the site itself is relatively level and at street level, the general area slopes steeply upwards from the front of the site to the rear with the result that the west, east and northern boundaries of the site are marked by retaining walls.

Neighbouring properties comprise Blackridge Primary School to the rear (north) and to the west a footpath serving the school with private housing beyond that, while immediately to the east of the property is the access road to the school with private housing beyond. The surrounding area is predominantly residential in nature.

##### Purpose of Acquisition and Proposed Use

The purpose of the acquisition is to enable the improved accessibility of Blackridge Primary School and to support its expansion for the purposes for additional nursery capacity and future general education capacity provision.

The acquisition of the site would improve education capacity within the village of Blackridge and improve the amenity of the area which is predominantly residential in nature. Once acquired, the land will be utilised for staff parking and drop-off facilities thereby allowing scope for the extension of the school.

##### Description of New Rights to be Created

There will be no new rights created by the acquisition.

##### Enabling Act

The Council is promoting this CPO under s.189 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as planning permission has been secured (reference 0639/FUL/19) for the site to be developed to provide car parking and drop-off facilities for the nursery to be constructed adjacent to the existing school.

##### Engagement with Owner(s)

The council has undertaken a search in the Land Register, and has identified that, the property is now owned by Dalmarnock Limited a Company incorporated under the

Companies Acts, (Company Number SC405057), and having their registered office at 1353 Pollokshaws Road, Glasgow, G41 3RG.

The council has been endeavouring to acquire the property since September 2015 when officers first engaged with the then owners, M & S Property Management. The owners indicated that they required £225,000 to £250,000 in order to sell the site. In turn the council obtained independent valuation advice that indicated the value of the property lay between £45,000 and £60,000. Officers subsequently offered £85,000 in an effort to reach agreement with the owner to sell the land. After ownership was transferred to Dalmarnock Limited, the offer of £85,000 was re-proposed however no response to the council's correspondence has been received.

#### Relevant Engagement

The Blackridge Primary School Parent Council have made representation to both their local Councillors and to council officers to discuss the potential health and environmental issues created by the derelict and overgrown nature of the site. Officers have endeavoured to engage with the landowners on numerous occasions to bring the site into council ownership. Property officers alongside Education colleagues have identified the need to construct additional nursery capacity due to Scottish Government early years changes. There is also a lack of private nursery provision and childminder services offered within the Blackridge area.

#### Public Benefit

The redevelopment of the site for parking and as a drop off point for the nursery school will both raise the amenity of the surrounding area and ease traffic congestion at peak times thereby benefitting nearby residents. Acquisition of the site will also future-proof the education estate within the area for anticipated increased education capacity.

#### Planning

Planning permission was awarded on 6 November 2019 for the erection of a nursery building with external play space and the formation of a Multi-Use Games Area as well as car parking facilities. The site under CPO consideration would form the car parking area and falls within the red line boundary of the planning application as per the approved plans under planning reference 0639/FUL/19.

#### Funding

A valuation report was obtained from the District Valuer in 2016 who valued the property at £50,000 (FIFTY THOUSAND POUNDS). In addition there would be an additional spend estimated at £350,000 in creating the parking and drop off point, all of which would be funded out of the capital budget.