

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 26 NOVEMBER 2015

31. SALE OF HIGH VALUE COUNCIL HOUSES

Consideration was given to the report of the Borough Solicitor in relation to the report of the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration entitled 'Sale of High Value Council Houses' attached at Appendix 1, considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 10 November, that had sought the direction of them to progress with sales of "high value" Council houses when they become empty, prior to legislation being introduced. The matter had also been considered by the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) on 4 November 2015.

Cabinet, in referring the item, requested the Committee to provide any agreed comments to be submitted to them prior to consideration at its next Cabinet meeting on 12 January 2016.

The Deputy Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration gave an overview of the proposals, provided clarification on issues raised and responded to questions.

In discussion comments and questions were raised in relation to:

- Properties adapted for the disabled – "exemption" definition / criteria.
- Acting prior to the Housing Bill's enactment – advantages/disadvantages.
- Identification of "high value" housing stock – numbers; properties affected; values applied;
- Sale / disposal of "identified" properties – criteria (restrictions / selection / community assets / other social uses / value); associated legal implications.
- Advertisement / Marketing - process; use of in-house / external agents.
- Voids – number / timescales.

The Assistant Solicitor (JW) and Property Services Manager also provided additional clarification on issues raised relating to community assets legislation and voids.

RESOLVED: As a consequence of the discussion on this item the agreed comments of the Committee to Cabinet be that:

1. the proposals are not supported at this time.
2. Cabinet reconsiders the lower values, in respect of the classification of "high value" properties, as set down at paragraph 4.3 of the report of the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration.
3. Cabinet explore further the options for disposal of "high value" properties, including social uses.
4. properties identified for sale, are "properly marketed."