

Extract from the Joint Strategic Committee - 14 January 2020

JSC/080/19-20 Council Tax “long-term empty” premium and discounts

Summary of discussion:

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital & Resources, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as Item 7.

It was noted that the Joint Strategic Committee had considered a report on 10 September 2019 and agreed that a public consultation should be conducted about possible changes to the “long-term empty premium” and two locally-determined discounts in respect of periods when no Council Tax was payable for properties that were either

- unoccupied and unfurnished; or,
- undergoing or requiring structural alteration or major repair.

The report set out the outcomes of the public consultation and invited Members to consider whether they wished to increase the “long-term empty premium” and the two local discounts.

Members sought clarification regarding the definition of furnished properties and the situation with properties affected by probate.

The Committee considered and debated the merits of

- reducing, retaining or abolishing the two local discounts in respect of unoccupied and unfurnished properties and properties undergoing or requiring structural alteration or major repairs; and
- increasing the long-term empty premium and whether a discretionary policy should be introduced.

Decision:

The Joint Strategic Committee:-

- 1) noted the content of the report;
- 2) **recommended to Adur District Council**
 - a) **that the “long-term empty premium” should be increased in accordance with the maximum figures detailed in paragraph 3.5;**
 - b) **that a discretionary policy should not be introduced;**
 - c) **that the local discount in respect of unoccupied properties undergoing structural alterations should be abolished with effect from 1 April 2020;**
 - d) **that the local discount in respect of unoccupied and unfurnished properties should be abolished with effect from 1 April 2020.**
- 3) recommended to Worthing Borough Council
 - a) that the “long-term empty premium” should be increased in accordance with the maximum figures detailed in paragraph 3.5;
 - b) that a discretionary policy should no be introduced;
 - c) that the local discount in respect of unoccupied properties undergoing structural alterations should be abolished with effect from 1 April 2020;
 - d) that the local discount in respect of unoccupied and unfurnished properties should be retained as is with effect from 1 April 2020.