

ANNEX B

EXTRACT MINUTES of a meeting of the CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the Remote Meeting using Microsoft Teams on WEDNESDAY, 6 JANUARY 2021

Present: Councillor R Boam (Chairman)

Councillors D Bigby (Substitute for Councillor R Johnson), A J Bridgen, G Hoult, J Hoult, S Sheahan, N Smith and M B Wyatt

Portfolio Holders: Councillors R D Bayliss and N J Rushton

Officers: Mr A Barton, Mrs T Bingham, Mr T Delaney, M D'Oyly-Watkins, Mr C Lambert, Mrs R Wallace and Miss E Warhurst

22. CORPORATE DISPOSAL POLICY

The Head of Housing presented the report to Members.

Councillor R D Bayliss, as Housing and Customer Services Portfolio Holder, spoke in support of the report.

During discussion a concern was raised that the previous policy document was not available for comparison purposes and therefore a request for deferral was made to allow Members to review both documents simultaneously. The Strategic Director assured Members that this document now reflected the many changes to the constitution that had occurred since the policy was last reviewed, and included everything from the previous policy, plus improvements. He explained that it would not have been constructive to show comparison documents as the policy had been totally revised, he therefore advised Members against deferral.

A further debate was held on the suggested deferral of the item and by a majority, it was concluded that the item would remain on the agenda.

During discussion, the following comments were made by Members:

- Concerns were raised regarding the focus of the policy to gain income. It was felt that as a public body the primary focus of the Council was not to make money but to serve the community.
- Concerns were raised in relation to the disposals of community assets and HRA assets as it was felt that the criteria listed was not strict enough. It meant that practically anything could be sold for any reason and this would not be beneficial to the communities.
- A comment was raised that paragraph 2.10 of the policy should be reconsidered as it was the opinion that it did not make clear how to identify surplus or under used land/property assets.
- The Corporate Portfolio Holder took on board the comments made but overall felt that the policy was sound and would be reporting as such to Cabinet.
- In response to the comments made, the Head of Housing explained that this policy would be considered alongside the Disposals Policy, particularly when considering the assets of community value. In relation to the criteria within the policy, Members

were informed that this was felt the most flexible approach for the Council, the majority of which were brought forward from the previous policy.

In response to further questions, the Head of Housing explained that there were several source documents used to form the structure of the policy, but it was a document in its own right which had evolved over some time. Also, the thresholds for disposals had been amended to align with the constitution, this could be revisited in the future but would involve a subsequent process as part of a constitutional review. Finally, the policy did not include a reference to the external valuer as commercial and third-party valuers were now used, these are totally independent from the in-house team.

The Chairman thanked Members for their input and confirmed all comments would be provided to Cabinet when considering the report.