

**Reference from Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee – Utilisation of Housing**

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee	18 January 2023
Communities, Housing and Environment Policy Advisory Committee	14 March 2023

<b>Wards affected</b>	all
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**Executive Summary**

The Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee has requested that this Committee ask the Executive for a report with any further information as to the nature of any unoccupied properties and their future utilisation.

**This report makes the following recommendation to the Communities, Housing and Environment Policy Advisory Committee:**

That the Committee consider the request from the Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee to ask the Executive for a report with any further information as to the nature of any unoccupied properties and their future utilisation.

# Reference from Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee – Utilisation of Housing

## 1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The Council Tax Base 2023/24 and Collection Fund Adjustment was presented to the Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee on the 18 January 2023.

Extract of Minute 94 from the above-mentioned meeting is outlined below:

*The Lead Member for Corporate Services introduced the report and stated that the Council Tax Base and Collection Fund Adjustment were reviewed annually. Specific reference was made to point 3.4 of the report, which set out the calculations applicable to the Council Tax Base for 2023/24 and demonstrated the just under two-percent increased growth in the tax base. The growth in homes within the Maidstone borough was highlighted, alongside appendix 2 and 3 to the report.*

*In response to questions, the Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement stated that the Council had collected a higher amount of Council Tax across the 2022/23 financial year than expected, causing a surplus to be brought forward to the 2023/24 financial year. The surplus would be a one-off source of additional funding, with the collection fund adjustment arising out of business rates to be calculated and included within the report presented to the Committee at its next meeting. The predicted non-collection allowance had been based on the information available to the Council; if the figure was estimated too cautiously, this would impact the finances of the Council Tax preceptors that received the majority of the Council Tax collected, such as Kent County Council. Residents were encouraged to apply for Council Tax Support when eligible.*

*In response to further questions, the Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement confirmed that an empty home premium could be applied to the Council Tax charged to property owners as an incentive to ensure that any vacant properties were made suitable for occupation. The full Council Tax rate could then be applied if the building remained vacant whilst suitable for occupation. The number of households entitled to a single adult household discount was based on the data available to the Council. Several Members of the Committee expressed concern at the number of vacant properties outlined in Appendix 1 to the report. It was felt that further information should be provided on the contributing factors to the properties' vacancies and the utilisation of those properties. As the utilisation of housing would relate to the Lead Member for Housing and Health's portfolio, the Communities, Housing and Environment Policy Advisory Committee would be requested to review the matter.*

### **RESOLVED:**

- 1. That given the number of empty properties noted at the Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee Meeting of 18 January 2023, the*

*Communities, Housing and Policy Advisory Committee be requested to ask the Executive for a report with any further information as to the nature of any unoccupied properties and their future utilisation;*

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## **2. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND WHY NOT RECOMMENDED**

Not Applicable.

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## **3. REPORT APPENDICES**

None.

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## **4. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes, 18 January 2023: