

COUNCIL TAX PREMIUMS

4.0 Overview and Scrutiny Comments

- 4.2 The Panel discussed the Council Tax Premiums Report at its meeting on 7th November 2024.
- 4.3 Councillor Shaw expressed support for the scheme and following an enquiry, it was confirmed that the proposal was to charge 100% Council Tax Premium after one year of the conditions being met. It was also confirmed that the date that the property became empty would be the date used once the proposed changes come into effect.
- 4.4 Support for the proposals was also expressed by Councillor Hassall, who also enquired about the criteria for homes being unfurnished. The Panel heard that whilst there was no legal definition the broad view was that the home should be habitable with some furniture and white goods present. Following a further question from Councillor Hassall, it was clarified that the Council proposed to charge the maximum amounts permitted by the legislation.
- 4.5 Following an enquiry from Councillor Bywater drawing on the experience of a constituent, the Panel heard that the Council were able to exercise discretion in genuine cases of houses being on the market and specifically where a property had been through probate for a period longer than exception provided. Further detail on this would be worked into future policy development. It was also confirmed that notice would be placed into local newspapers to confirm the changes along with 12 months notice of these coming into effect.
- 4.6 In response to a question from Councillor Lowe, the Panel heard that properties which were vacant due to the occupant/s moving to a care home would remain exempt provided that they remained unoccupied.
- 4.7 It was confirmed to the Panel, following a question from Councillor McAdam regarding the empty period after which a premium could be charged, as set out within the recommendations, were set in legislation.
- 4.8 Following a question from Councillor Hassall, the Panel heard that guidance was in place to ascertain what classified as a property being actively marketed for sale, but that further work would be developed on this subject during future policy development.
- 4.9 A comment from Councillor Hunt was read out to the Panel regarding receiving detail on and it was proposed by Councillor Mokbul to add an additional recommendation to the Cabinet report, this recommendation was seconded by Councillor Lowe and the Panel voted unanimously in favour of forwarding the proposed recommendation to the Cabinet;

4) to agree that an update of the numbers of the properties falling under the scheme be reported back to the democratic cycle once the new policy has been in place for 12 months.

4.10 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for Cabinet to make a decision upon the recommendations within the report, and additionally, the Panel request that the Cabinet consider adding the following recommendation to their report;

4) to agree that an update of the numbers of the properties falling under the scheme be reported back to the democratic cycle once the new policy has been in place for 12 months.