



CABINET – 13TH JANUARY 2021

SUBJECT: ENFORCED SALE POLICY

REPORT BY: INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The attached report was considered by the Joint Scrutiny Committee (Environment & Sustainability and Housing & Regeneration) on 15th December 2020. The report outlined a proposed Enforced Sale Policy, prior to its presentation to Cabinet for approval on 13th January 2021. This is a mechanism by which problematic, long-term empty private sector dwellings, derelict commercial properties and land are brought back into beneficial use where Statutory debts have been registered against the property but not discharged.

2 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE COMMENTS

- 2.1 This report attached at Appendix 1 was considered by the scrutiny committee members who sought clarification that this proposed policy would only apply to empty properties and were reassured that the policy clearly states that this is a last resort to deal with long term empty properties.
- 2.2 Members asked if elements of the criteria are weighted for example where there are debts or does a property vacancy trigger the enforced sale procedure. The scrutiny committee were assured that the criteria as set out in the policy must be followed and the council would follow the steps to try to work with property owners before using this policy.
- 2.3 The scrutiny committee sought details on the number of empty properties and were informed that the council tax database is checked in April every year and will show all properties registered as empty for 6 months or more. The number fluctuate around 1000 to 1500 per year. The majority will make their way onto the housing market and the private housing team will work with property owners. In terms of problematic properties that this policy could apply to the number will be single figures.
- 2.4 Members asked what the council does where properties do not have a registered owner and were advised that officers would contact Land Registry which shows properties that have been sold and because it has been a requirement to register sales for more than 20 years, the number of properties that are not registered with the Land Registry are becoming fewer.
- 2.5 Finally the scrutiny committee asked how long this process would take and were advised that it could take 6-7 months to follow the procedure. Members were

advised it is a useful and cost neutral policy that can bring long term empty properties back into beneficial use.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1** Following consideration and discussion the joint scrutiny committee, by the majority present and in noting that there were none against and no abstentions, recommend to Cabinet that:
- 3.2** That Cabinet approve the adoption of an enforced sale policy as an enforcement tool for Caerphilly County Borough Council's use.
- 3.3** That Cabinet approve a figure of £500 be adopted as the level of debt at which this policy can be implemented.

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Appendix: Report to Joint Scrutiny Committee 15th December 2020 – Agenda Item 4