

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

**AGENDA
ITEM NO**

HOUSING COMMITTEE

20 JUNE 2017

10

Report Title	PROPERTIES AT GLOUCESTER STREET & BRADLEY STREET, WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE
Purpose of Report	To seek approval to the disposal of these properties and delegated powers to apply the Council's Decanting Policy and service of notices.
Decision(s)	<p>The Committee RESOLVES :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To authorise each of the following officers, namely the Heads of Asset Management, Housing Management and Housing Contracts (in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Housing Committee and relevant Ward Councillors) to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. make decisions in accordance with the Council's Decanting Policy and b. serve demolition notices on relevant tenants. 2. In the event that the Council decides not to (or is unable to) fund the redevelopment of property at Gloucester Street/Bradley Street, Wotton-under-Edge ("the Property"), to authorise the Head of Asset Management to dispose of the Property to a Registered Provider of Social Housing or otherwise, on the open market.
Consultation and Feedback	Ward members and the Town Council are being consulted - feedback awaited.
Financial Implications and Risk Assessment	<p>The cost of the major works needed to bring these houses up to a lettable standard is higher than the approved cap in the Property Obsolescence Procedure Guide.</p> <p>The HRA has reached the debt cap, and is currently unable to borrow additional funds for new housing. However, this site will be considered, along with all other opportunities and subject to funding, as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan. If however, funding is not available for the Council to develop the site, best consideration should be sought in order to fund other opportunities for new housing in the HRA.</p> <p>Lucy Clothier, Principal Accountant Tel: 01453 754343 Email: lucy.clothier@stroud.gov.uk</p>

Legal Implications	Should the land not be redeveloped and retained by the Council, the consent of the Secretary of State is required if it is intended to dispose of the land at less than the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained. Such consent will be automatic if the decision to sell at an undervalue is for example, for the social well being of the district. Where there are opposing bidders, the Council's decision maker should take reasonable steps to see how far each will go to commit itself to the highest offer they are each prepared to make. (Ref:drc06/06) Tel: 01453 754369 Email: karen.trickey@stroud.gov.uk
Report Author	Alison Fisk, Head of Asset Management Tel: 01453 754430 Email: alison.fisk@stroud.gov.uk
Options	Other options are to retain and repair the properties, or repair and dispose of as shared ownership properties
Performance Management Follow Up	Demolition notices served by the 23 rd June 2017, tenants decanted by December 2017, subject to suitable properties becoming available.
Background Papers/ Appendices	Appendix A – Properties at Gloucester Street/Bradley Street, Wotton-Under-Edge

1. Background

1.1. This site comprises four, 3 bed-semi-detached properties, set in large gardens (see plan at Appendix A). There are 2 major voids requiring works costing in excess of £37,500 per property, one has been vacant for over a year and the other for 7 months. The other 2 properties are tenanted but will require similar levels of investment. A survey of one of these properties has shown a significant problem with rising and penetrating damp.

1.2. Committee approved the Property Obsolescence Procedure Guide at its meeting in December 2016. This provides a consistent, auditable approach when reviewing and appraising stock requirements.

1.3. The Guide also sets out the indicators and triggers for review of a property or property type and expenditure thresholds where repairs or improvements are necessary. These properties have been reviewed both because they may give rise to future development opportunities and due to the estimated cost of repairs. The cap on expenditure for this size of property has been set at £30,000 in the guide.

2. Matters for Consideration

2.1. The site has potential for redevelopment at a higher density (between 6-8 homes) subject to planning permission. It may be possible for the Council to redevelop the site itself, if funding can be identified or

dispose of it to a Housing Association or other Registered Provider, potentially using Right to Buy receipts to part fund a scheme (as is being delivered nearby on Fountain Crescent).

2.2. If neither of these options proves viable or achievable in a reasonable timescale, the Council could dispose of the site on the open market. Any capital receipt will be used to reinvest in new or more sustainable stock within the Housing Revenue Account.

3. Recommendation

3.1. It is recommended that the Council's decanting policy is applied for the remaining tenants and demolition notices are served to protect the Council's position. This follows the process the Council has followed on all of its properties that have been brought forward for redevelopment by itself or by other parties.

3.2. It is also recommended that the site is then redeveloped either by the Council itself, a Registered Provider or by disposal on the open market.

3.3. In order to provide reassurance and clarity for tenants early on, if similar opportunities are identified in the future, it is also recommended that before proposals become public, the decision to apply the decanting policy and to serve notices is delegated to officers in consultation with members.