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Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Housing & Safer Neighbourhoods
Date	16 October 2017
Present	Councillor Lisle (Executive Member)

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## **20. Declarations of Interest**

At this point in the meeting, the Executive Member was asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interests which he had in the business on the agenda. No additional interests were declared.

## **21. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meetings held on 14 August 2017 and 18 September 2017 be approved and signed as correct records.

## **22. Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation scheme.

## **23. Introduction of Civil Penalty Notices for Housing Act Offences**

The Executive Member considered a report which sought approval for a policy to enable the Council to implement new powers on civil penalties introduced by the Housing and Planning Act 2016. These would be for offences under the Housing Act 2004 and would be an alternative to prosecution. The policy would bring the Council's powers in line with national guidance, would only apply to offences committed after April 2017 and would require the same standard of proof as a criminal prosecution. The proposed policy covered the Council's approach to implementation and the method for calculating the value of penalties, to a maximum value of £30k.

The use of civil penalties would be quicker than prosecution, and would be decided by a panel with specific knowledge and experience of housing matters. Penalty receipts would be invested by the local authority in the private housing sector, and the policy would evidence the Council's commitment to tackling the worst elements of landlord behaviour in the private rented sector.

Option 1 (to introduce civil penalties) was recommended. Not to do so (Option 2) would mean the loss of an additional tool to improve the lives of people living in private rented accommodation and ensure that private landlords did not benefit from ignoring their obligations.

- Resolved: (i) That Option 1 be approved and that civil penalties be introduced as an alternative to prosecution.
- (ii) That the policy attached as Appendix A to the report be approved and adopted.

Reason: To enable the Council to use the civil penalties as an alternative to prosecution for specific penalties under the Housing Act 2004.

Cllr S Lisle, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 4.00 pm and finished at 4.13 pm].