

People and Health Overview Committee
15 September 2025
Questions from Councillors

Question 1 - Submitted by Cllr Robin Legg

Newell House, Sherborne has been unoccupied for more than two decades. It is becoming increasingly derelict and a location for antisocial behaviour. Only last week the police wrote to Dorset of their concerns and warned that the Fire and Rescue Service regard the listed building as at high risk of arson attack. How will the proposed empty homes strategy be used to bring Newell House into residential occupation?

Question 2 - Submitted by Cllr Robin Legg

Recently the BBC conducted a survey of local authorities to establish the number of long term empty homes in each and whether the problem was getting worse. The article inferred that many authorities were more interested in the increased council tax revenue generated by empty properties than solving the empty homes crisis. Dorset's response to the BBC's Freedom of Information enquiry showed a significant deterioration between 2019 and 2025. The number of homes empty for at least twelve months rose from 6,404 to 7,716 in that five year period. An increase of 20.5%. Long term empty commercial properties saw an even steeper increase of 55.0% How can members be confident therefore that the empty homes strategy proposed by officers will bring improvement?