

People & Health Overview Committee

2 February 2026

Dorset Council Tenancy Strategy 2026 - 2031 For Recommendation to Cabinet

Cabinet Member:

Cllr G Taylor, Health and Housing

Local Councillor(s): All

Senior Leadership Team:

J Price, Executive Director of People - Adults

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Statutory Authority: The Localism Act 2011

Report status: Public

Executive summary (maximum of 500 words)

1. Dorset Council is required to publish a tenancy strategy in accordance with The Localism Act 2011.
 - 1.1 Registered providers of social housing (RPs) must formulate their own tenancy policies. The purpose of this strategy is to outline and give guidance on the council's preferred approach for RPs to consider when formulating their policies. RP policies must include details on the types of tenancies, the circumstances under which they will be granted, the terms for which they will be granted and conditions under which further tenancies will be granted.
 - 1.2 Dorset Council is a local authority registered provider. It owns and manages housing stock that is low-cost rental accommodation including for rough sleepers but does not have a housing revenue account. This strategy will be considered by Dorset Council when setting relevant policies.
 - 1.3 The council plan approach recognises RPs as strategic and operational partners and their essential role providing social housing, good housing management and tenant support in the Dorset Council area.

- 1.4 The strategy promotes RPs providing the most secure tenancies to social housing tenants. Recognising local challenges for the economy such as outward migration, and recruitment and retention compounded by high house prices, an effective homeless prevention approach is vital together with clear regard for community cohesion. This tenancy strategy reflects these council strategic priorities.
- 1.5 Relevant to this strategy, since 1 April 2012 (as amended), RPs are required under Consumer Tenancy standard to:
- co-operate with local authorities' strategic housing functions and assist local authorities to fulfil their duties to meet identified local housing needs. This includes assistance with local authorities' homelessness duties, and through meeting obligations in nominations agreements.
 - seek to allocate homes that are designated, designed, or adapted to meet specific needs in a way that is compatible with the purpose of the housing.
 - take action to prevent and tackle tenancy fraud.
 - provide tenants required to move with timely advice and assistance about housing options before the tenancy ends.
 - publish clear and accessible policies which outline their approach to tenancy management, including interventions to sustain tenancies and prevent unnecessary evictions and tackling tenancy fraud.
- 1.6 As part of the preparation of this strategy, we considered The Dorset Council Plan Priorities, the Housing Strategy, the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and the Dorset Council Housing Allocation. This strategy aims to support these council's commitments and the prevention of homelessness.
- 1.7 The council's temporary accommodation is not covered by this strategy because temporary accommodation is not a long-term solution for households and is covered by separate policies.

2. **Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 That the People & Health Overview Committee recommend the Dorset Council Tenancy Strategy 2026 – 2031 to Cabinet for approval.

3. Reason for the recommendation(s)

- 3.1 This strategy fulfils the council's legal obligations under The Localism Act 2011 by explaining its expectations and outlining the approach we would like RPs to take when creating their own tenancy policies.

4. The report

- 4.1 The councils Homeless & Rough Sleeping Strategy's objectives to minimise and prevent homelessness are reflected in the Tenancy Strategy. It explains expectations on providing secure tenancies and supporting the allocation of social housing to those in the greatest need.
- 4.2 RPs are required to publish tenancy management policies that cover tenancy sustainment and preventing evictions. These activities can help minimise and prevent homelessness. This strategy describes our expectations on these matters including tenant support, relationships, equality, risk, collaboration with partner organisations (including the council), anti-social behaviour, abandonment, harassment and debt.
- 4.3 The strategy supports the Housing Strategy vision that 'our residents have access to affordable, suitable, secure homes where they can live well as part of sustainable and thriving communities'.
- 4.4 The strategy recognises the Renters Right Act and that this strategy will be reviewed to reflect the forthcoming enactment arrangements and requirements.
- 4.5 The strategy encourages RPs to only grant fixed term tenancies (prior to any Renters Right Act enactment changes) in exceptional circumstances and describes our expectations regarding assured short-hold tenancies. Data and insight included in the strategy illustrates that RPs are aligned to our expectations about the length of fixed term tenancies granted and the circumstances they are granted in. Overall, fixed term tenancies are much less likely to be granted now in the Dorset Council area than 5 years ago. The strategy includes a list of useful terminology including fixed term tenancies.
- 4.6 The strategy encourages RPs to offer the longest feasible tenancy possible and grant assured tenancies which are the most secure type of tenancy. This is particularly important for tenants with children. Assured tenancies are also known as lifetime tenancies given for the lifetime of the tenant.
- 4.7 The strategy supports the Dorset Council Housing Allocation Policy by encouraging RPs to offer the most secure form of tenure possible, supporting

the priorities of the allocation policy to make best use of stock and prioritising those in most need for an allocation of social housing.

- 4.8 The data and insight included in the strategy is relevant data on social house lettings provided by RPs in the Dorset Council area on their lettings to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2024. It reflects tenancy terms, tenancy lengths, and fixed term tenancy lengths.
- 4.9 The data illustrates that RPs are aligned with our expectations and most tenancies granted are lifetime tenancies. A small number of RPs have consistently granted fixed term tenancies in small numbers and the council will seek assurance in accordance with this strategy when fixed term tenancies are granted.
- 4.10 Expectations on tenancy renewals are included and suggest a proportionate approach based on tenants' personal circumstances, reasonable adjustments, valid reasons for not renewing a current tenancy, and how RPs can support the tenant to find an alternative home when a tenancy is not renewed.
- 4.11 RPs are required to publish their own tenancy policies. Information must be included about certain decisions, complaints and how they provide advice to tenants to find an alternative home if they decide not to grant another tenancy. This strategy describes our expectations on these matters including being proportionate and having consideration for the needs of the whole household, the neighbourhood and community.
- 4.12 RPs tenancy management policies must also include tackling tenancy fraud, and this strategy lays out how we expect RPs to do this including taking a proactive, transparent and collaborative approach.
- 4.13 This strategy helps encourage sustainable communities. It ensures that social housing is provided in a fair and consistent way across the Dorset Council area, and that social housing tenants are provided with the most secure form of accommodation available.
- 4.14 It aims to encourage RPs with stock in the Dorset Council area, to develop and administer their own user-friendly policies, that adhere to this tenancy strategy and legislative requirements.
- 4.15 As part of the development of this strategy, we held a workshop with RPs who hold stock in the Dorset Council area. The workshop provided RPs with an opportunity to set out what they thought should be the priorities for the Dorset Council Tenancy Strategy. A copy of the draft strategy was sent to all RPs who hold stock in the Dorset Council area for comment. RP consultation feedback is reflected in the strategy.

4.16 The strategy aims to ensure that RPs offer tenancy types in accordance with the preferences Dorset Council set out in its tenancy strategy. These preferences are based on the priorities agreed from discussions with RPs and informed by the priorities of the council's strategies and policies referenced.

4.17 An action plan forms part of the strategy's monitoring and review arrangements.

5. Alternative options considered

5.1 None

6. Legal considerations

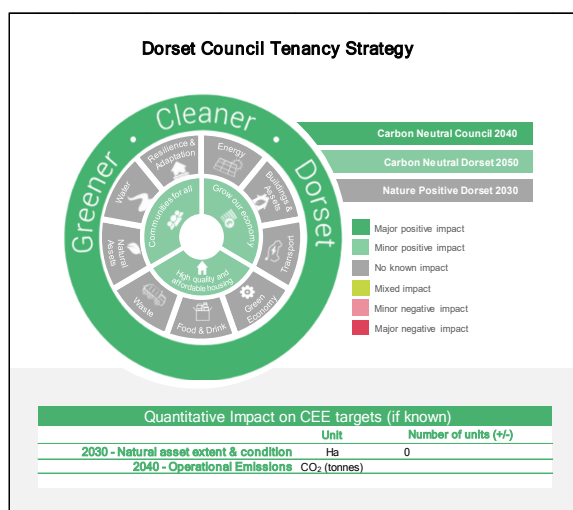
6.1 Section 150 of The Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities in England to prepare and publish a tenancy strategy. This indicates the council's expectations for all registered providers of social housing with accommodation in their area and provides guidance on their preferred approach to tenure and affordability.

7. Financial implications

7.1 None

8. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

8.1



ACCESSIBLE TABLE SHOWING IMPACTS	
Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy Commitments	Impact
Energy	No known impact

Buildings & Assets	No known impact
Transport	No known impact
Green Economy	No known impact
Food & Drink	No known impact
Waste	No known impact
Natural Assets & Ecology	No known impact
Water	No known impact
Resilience and Adaptation	No known impact
Corporate Plan Aims	Impact
Grow our economy	minor positive impact
High-quality and affordable housing	minor positive impact
Communities for all	minor positive impact

TABLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS	
Recommendations	Responses -will this be incorporated into your proposal? How? And if not, why not?
Energy	
No recommendations found for this category	
Buildings & Assets	
No recommendations found for this category	
Transport	
No recommendations found for this category	
Green Economy	
No recommendations found for this category	
Food & Drink	
No recommendations found for this category	
Waste	
No recommendations found for this category	
Natural Assets & Ecology	
No recommendations found for this category	
Water	

No recommendations found for this category	
Resilience & Adaptation	
No recommendations found for this category	

9. **Well-being and health implications**

- 9.1 Secure and suitable housing can positively impact people's quality of health by reducing long-term and chronic health conditions and has been associated with better mental health outcomes and improved overall well-being.
- 9.2 Secure and suitable housing can positively impact on people's ability to engage in the work environment. Secure social housing can help increase positive impacts on employment rates and access to secure employment.
- 9.3 Secure and suitable housing can help provide a stable and consistent environment for learning, reduce negative impact on children's academic performance and health.
- 9.4 Community cohesion can be positively impacted by providing secure and suitable housing. It can help to create a sense of community, reduce social inequality, promote inclusivity, and helps build trust in local services.

10. **Other implications**

- 10.1 Other council services such as Children's Services or Adult Social Care may need to provide services or support to tenants of social housing. Secure housing can support the council to deliver the best services possible, and this strategy is clear about what the council would like RPs to consider in relation to families with children and older people.

11. **Risk implications**

- 11.1 **HAVING CONSIDERED:** the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

12. **Equalities**

- 12.1 This strategy outlines the council's expectations of RPs when setting their tenancy policies. The council expects all RPs to comply with the Equality Act 2010.

12.2 An equality impact assessment was completed during the development of this tenancy strategy. There were no negative impacts identified and individuals with protected characteristics should be considered within the activity described. Decisions about the type of tenancy to grant will be informed by law and dictated by the type of housing a person will be occupying. Some types of social housing require fixed-term tenancies to be offered due to stipulations within capital funding for developing the accommodation rather than the characteristics of people who may be occupying the accommodation.

12.3 The Equality and Human Rights Commissioner can act against a registered provider of social housing if they act in a discriminatory (directly or indirectly) way when providing services.

13. **Appendices**

13.1 Appendix 1 – The Dorset Council Tenancy Strategy 2026 - 2031

Appendix 2 - Fixed Term Tenancy Statistical Analysis

Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment

14. **Background papers**

Localism Act 2011, Part 7, Chapter 2, Tenancy Strategies (sections 150-153) and Flexible Tenancies (sections 154-155)

Tenancy Standard of the Regulator of Social Housing, April 2024 (section 2.3 Tenure (sub-section 2.3.1-2.3.6))

Human Rights at home 'Guidance for social housing providers. Human Rights Commissioner 2011

Dorset Council Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy

Dorset Council Housing Allocation Policy

Wilson, W (2018) Social Housing: flexible and fixed-term tenancies. Housing of Commons Library. London

Watts, B., Fitzpatrick S. (2018) Fixed term tenancies: revealing divergent views in the purpose of social housing. Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh

(2013) How to develop your tenancy policy. Chartered Institute of Housing. Coventry

Garvie, D. (2012). Local decisions on tenure reform. Local tenancy strategies and the new role of local housing authorities in leading tenancy policy. Shelter. London

Larner, D. Pipe. (2012) The practical implications of tenure reform. Chartered Institute of Housing. Coventry.

Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H (2011). Security of tenure in social housing: an international review. Heriot-Watt University. Edinburgh.

15 Report sign-off

- 15.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s).