Dorset Council

PEOPLE AND HEALTH OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 16 MARCH 2026

Present: Cllrs Jindy Atwal (Vice-Chair), Beryl Ezzard, Mike Parkes and Byron Quayle

Apologies: Cllrs Louise Bown, Alex Fuhrmann, Ryan Holloway, Stella Jones, Steve Murcer and Jon Orrell

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):
George Dare (Senior Democratic and Governance Officer) and Steven March (Service Manager for Housing Standards)

Officers present remotely (for all or part of the meeting):
Iain Sim (Interim Corporate Director for Housing)

42. **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Louise Bown, Alex Fuhrmann, Ryan Holloway, Stella Jones, Steve Murcer and Jon Orrell.

43. **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Mike Parkes declared a pecuniary interest in Item 7- Housing Standards and Tenants Rights Enforcement Policy (Minute 48) as he was a landlord of a residential property in Dorset. He would not participate in the debate and would leave the meeting room for the duration of the item.

44. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2026 were confirmed and signed.

45. **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

46. **Councillor Questions**

There were no questions from councillors.

47. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

48. **Housing Standards and Tenants Rights Enforcement Policy**

Cllr Mike Parkes left the meeting due to his pecuniary interest.

The Service Manager for Housing Standards introduced the report and gave a presentation, which is attached to these minutes. The presentation included the background to the new policy, new duties for the council and new breaches and criminal offences, the likely impact of the Renters Rights Act and the new policy, and Dorset Council's response to how it would be implementing it.

Committee Members discussed the report, and the following points were discussed:

- Confidence levels in staff capacity to be able to deal with the expansion of enforcement.
- The need for additional funding from the council to support the service, because government funding is not likely to be sufficient.
- How the financial position would be monitored to ensure the service was sufficiently funded.
- How the changes to tenants' rights were being communicated with landlords and tenants, and the requirement for existing tenancies to receive information from landlords on their new rights.
- The requirement for landlords to register on a landlord database, which would raise funding for the council.

During the discussion, the committee made the following recommendation to Cabinet.

Proposed by Cllr Quayle, seconded by Cllr Ezzard.

Recommendation: That the financial arrangements are reviewed on a monthly basis, and that this is reported to the committee Chair and Vice-Chair, to ensure that the service is sufficiently funded, and that this reported back to the committee in 6 months from implementation.

Following this recommendation to Cabinet, the committee considered the recommendations set out in the report and made the following decision.

Proposed by Cllr Ezzard, seconded by Cllr Atwal.

Decision:
To recommend to Cabinet that:

1. The Housing Standards and Tenants Rights Enforcement Policy 2026 be approved and adopted.

2. Delegated authority be given to the Cabinet Member for Health and Housing, in consultation with the Interim/Corporate Director for Housing and Community Safety, to make minor changes to the Housing Standards and Tenants Rights Enforcement Policy 2026 including:

    a. the need to amend the policy to account for known future enactments which form part of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 implementation of the Renters Rights Act 2025; and,

b. approval of operational procedure notes including but not limited to a methodology for determining the amount of Civil Financial Penalties under this policy for breaches of up to £7,000 and offences of up to £40,000.

49. **Committee's Work Programme and Cabinet's Forward Plan**

The committee noted its work programme and the Executive Forward Plans.

50. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 6.30 - 7.42 pm

Chairman

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