



### COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE AGENDA

**Date:** Wednesday, 18 January 2023

**Time:** 6.30 pm

**Venue:** Virtual

You can view the agenda online by using a smart phone camera and scanning the code below:



10 January 2023

#### PART 1

1. Apologies for Absence
2. To receive Disclosures of Interest on any matters before the Committee
  - i) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests
  - ii) Other Interests
3. Any matters referred to the Committee under the call-in procedure
4. Minutes of the previous meeting (**Pages 3 - 6**)
5. Select Committee Work Programme (**Pages 7 - 8**)
6. Derbyshire Police
7. Parkwood Annual Review
8. Renters Reform Bill (**Pages 9 - 14**)
9. Private Sector Housing Update (verbal)
10. Any questions referred to the Executive Member (Democratic Services to be advised of any questions at least 4 days prior to the meeting)

#### MARK TRILLO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

##### Membership of Community Select Committee

Councillor R Quinn (Chair)	Councillor K Sizeland (Vice-Chair)
Councillor R Abbotts	Councillor E Burton
Councillor J Collins	Councillor O Cross
Councillor S Gardner	Councillor J Haken
Councillor M Hall	Councillor E Kelly

Councillor K Kirkham

Councillor S Young



## COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE

**Meeting: Wednesday, 16 November 2022 at 6.30 pm in Virtual Meeting**

Present: Councillor R Quinn (Chair)

Councillors E Burton, J Collins, S Gardner, E Kelly, K Kirkham, K Sizeland and S Young

Councillors Barrow, Lomax, A McKeown, Thrane and Todd were also in attendance.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors O Cross and M Hall

**23/24 ANY MATTERS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE UNDER THE CALL-IN PROCEDURE**  
(Agenda Item 3)

None

**23/25 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**  
(Agenda Item 4)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2022 be approved as a correct record.

**23/26 SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**  
(Agenda Item 5)

An update to the Handy Van Service was requested.

A report around parking responsibilities / enforcement was also requested.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the above, the Select Committee Work Programme be noted.

**23/27 PC REFURB - PRESENTATION**  
(Agenda Item 6)

Helen Melhuish gave a presentation which outlined the work of PCrefurb, whose aim was to bridge the digital divide in High Peak and Tameside. This was done through the refurbishment of donated IT equipment to be provided to those in need, together with teaching basic digital skills. The service was provided through volunteer engagement and also reduced environmental waste through IT reuse and recycling. The group was set up in 2018 through the Life Skills Project run by The Bureau and has since being

registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and a Microsoft Refurbisher. Equipment distribution has increased and outreach home visits begun. In 2020 a five year grant was received from the National Lottery and the organisation was approached by T&G NHS to develop and deliver the Digital Wellbeing Project which delivers digital skills training and/or equipment to the digitally excluded in Tameside and Glossop. Corporate and referral partnerships were also developed. This year, NHS funding has been secured for the continuation of the Digital Wellbeing Project, the organisation's infrastructure is being strengthened and the group was awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service which is the highest award for voluntary groups in the UK. Now the organisation has a Board of Trustees, seven staff members, 70+ volunteers, 60+ referral organisations and established corporate supporters and partners. In terms of impact, the organisation had received over 800 referral requests, distributed 1288 items of equipment and provided over 702 hours of digital skills training which had benefitted thousands of people. Challenges included funding, premises, appropriate equipment donations and supporting clients with connectivity issues due to the cost of living. Future plans, subject to funding, included increased digital skills training, further develop partnerships, further support job seekers.

In response to a query, members were advised that there is information on the website around which items of equipment are appropriate to donate to enable the equipment to be reused. It was also confirmed that PCrefurb were working with Zink to support the distribution of equipment to refugees.

Opportunities for the council to link up with the charity were discussed. The Leader made reference to work being undertaken by Customer Services around Digital Isolation, and there may be opportunity for joint work around digital training, which would be explored in the near future. In addition, the Council's IT strategy is due to be reviewed which would establish whether there is any surplus equipment that could be donated. Future challenges around space and transport was discussed.

Helen was thanked for her attendance and presentation.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

**23/28**

## **AES ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW - PRESENTATION**

(Agenda Item 7)

Kevin Melling from AES, was in attendance to provide members with an overview of AES Service Delivery and performance during 21/22 and a look forward to future developments.

Regarding employees, there had been some difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff but this had not particularly impacted service delivery and the situation was now improving. In response, to a query, measures being undertaken to address recruitment and retention of staff were set out. A 'Grow your own' approach to training for Team Leaders and HGV drivers

and been established to protect and create jobs. Pressures around inflationary pressures and covid recovery issues were reported.

Services had been maintained throughout the pandemic with collections delayed rather than suspended and all fleet inspections and MOTs had been completed despite covid and supplier challenges. Collective in-cab technology was now live, which gives real time information, and ICT systems had been introduced to digitally record playground and open space inspections. Work had continued within communities and schools and AES had been shortlisted for two awards.

Performance results were reported with the waste and fleet outturn performance being reported as 99.96% successful collections. The recycling outturn was 47.5% against a target of 50.5% due to changes in work patterns. Around Street Cleansing, Grounds and Parks, over 230 community clean up campaigns and 99.6% annual playground inspections had been undertaken. Flytipping had increased.

Regarding finance, AES had £484,000 in retained reserves and £859,000 had been returned to the authority. Additional management fee payments had also been agreed due to the pay award and covid 19 costs. Total combined savings of £1,088,000 were reported to 31.3.22.

Future developments included HVO roll out during the second half of 22/23 to deliver economies of scale, carbon reduction and improved air quality. Open space management and diversity matters continue including the #NoMowMay pilot. Contracts and procurement work is on-going and reference was made to global supply chain pressures and on-going consideration of Resources & Waste Strategy, further information on which was awaited. An update around the journey towards carbon neutral 203 was given. Commercial challenges and opportunities were being investigated together with the potential for wider growth and expansion.

In response to a query regarding the trial of recycling bins, members were advised that the results of the trial showed that there was a lot of contamination, market research was being undertaken around intelligent bins and underground systems.

Regarding the lack of incentives for business recycling, it was noted that once the National Resource and Recycling Strategy was launched, all small businesses with 6 or more employees would be obliged to recycle which would provide commercial opportunities for AES.

It was queried whether the use of peat in land management could be stopped altogether, a response on which would be forwarded to members.

Discussion ensued around the use of cameras to deter flytipping and information on the particular area would be forwarded to AES direct.

Reference was made to the proposed nature walks around Hogshaw, information would be provided around how to access the Community Value Pot.

Kevin was thanked for his ~~at~~ **Page 5** and presentation.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

**23/29 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING UPDATE - VERBAL UPDATE**  
(Agenda Item 8)

This item would be deferred to the next meeting.

**23/30 ANY QUESTIONS REFERRED TO THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER**  
(Agenda Item 9)

None

**23/31 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**  
(Agenda Item 10)

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business as there may be disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

**23/32 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**  
(Agenda Item 11)

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2022 be approved as a correct record.

The meeting concluded at 7.40 pm

**CHAIRMAN**

## COMMUNITY

Chairman: Councillor Quinn  
 Vice Chairman: Councillor Sizeland  
 Lead Officer: M Trillo

Date	Items	Contact Officer	Purpose/Method of Consideration
18-Jan-23	Parkwood Annual Review	Parkwood	
	Private Sector Housing Update	Mike Towers	
	Derbyshire Police	Insp Anna Woodhouse	
	Renters Reform Bill	H Core	
8-Mar-23	High Peak CVS Annual Report	High Peak CVS	
To add in	Environmental Agency – Flooding and Enforcement		
	New Waste and Recycling Approach	R Wilks	
	Arts and Cultural Strategy	D Smith	
	Update from Health around ICS		
	Car Parking		

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## HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Community Select Committee

18 January 2023

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Renters Reform Bill</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR:</b>	<b>Councillor Fiona Sloman - Executive Councillor for Housing and Licensing</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Helen Core - Head of Housing Services</b>
<b>WARDS INVOLVED:</b>	<b>All</b>

#### 1. Reason for the Report

1.1 To brief members on the Renters Reform Bill.

#### 2. Recommendation

2.1 That members note the content of this report.

#### 3. Executive Summary

3.1 The Renters Reform Bill seeks to remove so-called 'no fault evictions' in the private rental sector, creating increased security for those choosing this tenure option.

3.2 It further seeks to address maintenance and quality of maintenance within the sector, brining standards in line with those of social housing.

3.3 The numbers of landlords choosing to let privately is declining. There is concern that this will make it harder for landlords to regain their property if they choose to - for example if they experience a change in financial circumstance – then this will diminish the availability of available accommodation yet further.

#### 4. How this report links to Corporate Priorities

4.1 This report links to Aim 1 - Supporting our communities to create a healthier, safer, cleaner High Peak.

#### 5. Alternative Options

5.1 The Bill is likely to pass into law during 2023. There are no alternative options.

## 6. Implications

6.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)  
None

6.2 Workforce  
None

6.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment  
None

6.4 Financial Considerations  
None

6.5 Legal  
The Renters Reform Bill will become law in 2023

6.6 Climate Change  
None

6.7 Consultation  
None

6.8 Risk Assessment  
Not applicable

Martin Owen

**Executive Director (Finance and Customer Services)**

### **Web Links and Background Papers**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1083378/A\\_fairer\\_private\\_rented\\_sector\\_web\\_accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1083378/A_fairer_private_rented_sector_web_accessible.pdf)

### **Contact details**

Helen Core  
Head of Housing Services  
helen.core@highpeak.gov.uk

## 7. Background

7.1 In its 2019 manifesto, the Government promised a “better deal for renters”, to include abolishing ‘no fault evictions’ and only requiring one ‘lifetime deposit’ to move with the tenant. The manifesto pledged to protect tenants from revenge evictions and rogue landlords, and to strengthen ‘good’ landlords’ rights of repossession. Later that year, in the Queen’s Speech in December 2019, the Government announced the progression of a Renters’ Reform Bill to “deliver a fairer and more effective rental market”.

7.2 The Queen’s Speech on 10 May 2022 revisited the Renters’ Reform Bill, outlining its objectives and stating its intention to shortly publish a White Paper setting out more detail on proposals for “landmark reform” in the private rented sector.

7.3 The main elements of the Bill are:

### 7.3.1 *Abolishing ‘no fault’ evictions by removing section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 and reforming the grounds for possession*

As the law stands currently, a landlord may achieve vacant possession of their property by serving a valid ‘section 21 notice’ on their tenant to bring the assured shorthold tenancy to an end. Currently, no reason needs to be given for service of a section 21 notice.

### 7.3.2 *Applying the legally binding Decent Homes Standard in the Private Rented Sector for the first time ever*

The Decent Homes Standard, introduced by the Department for Communities and Local Government, is under review currently and its outcomes will be announced later this year. The current criteria for a “decent home” are:

- It must meet the current statutory minimum standard for housing;
- It must be in a reasonable state of repair;
- It must have reasonably modern facilities and services; and
- It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

### 7.3.3 *Reforming current legislation to give landlords more rights to gain “legitimate” possession of their property through the courts*

Whilst removing “no fault” evictions, the Bill aims introduce new, stronger grounds for repeated incidences of rent arrears and reducing notice periods for anti-social behaviour, ensuring landlords can regain their property efficiently when needed.

### 7.3.4 *Introduce a new Ombudsman for private landlords to prevent court intervention*

The Bill outlines plans to introduce a new Ombudsman for this specific purpose, so that disputes can be resolved without the need to go to court,

which is often costly and lengthy, and ensure that when residents make a complaint, landlords take action to put things right. The Ombudsman is expected to cover all rented properties let by private landlords to ensure that when tenants make a complaint, landlords take steps to resolve the reported issues.

#### *7.3.5 Introducing a new property portal to help landlords understand their obligations*

The Bill proposes a property portal to help landlords understand their obligations, give tenants performance information to hold their landlord to account as well as aiding local authorities. Local authorities will have access to the portal, which, in turn, should hopefully combat inadequate performance by landlords.

### **8. Implications for Renters**

- 8.1 The Bill is largely good news for tenants within the private sector. Charities such as Shelter and The Big Issue strongly support the Bill, citing the devastating effects that section 21 notices can have on tenants. The Bill means that every private renter has added security in their home, without the worry of eviction due to changes in the landlord's wishes or circumstances which are beyond the tenant's control. Many private tenants are fearful of reporting repairs or dangerous living conditions as they are afraid of eviction if they complain (so called revenge eviction).
- 8.2 Applying the legally binding Decent Homes Standard in the Private Rented Sector, meaning the same rights are enjoyed by social and private tenants is also positive, giving tenants safer, better quality and better value homes.
- 8.3 The Bill outlines plans to introduce a new Ombudsman so that disputes can be resolved without the need to go to court, and ensuring that when residents make a complaint, landlords take action to put things right. The Ombudsman is expected to cover all rented properties let by private landlords to ensure that when tenants make a complaint, landlords take steps to resolve the reported issues.

### **9. Implications for Landlords**

- 9.1 The Bill is, potentially, less attractive to landlords, especially those who have just one or two properties. Many Landlords may see the removal of section 21 notices as an unwelcome barrier to regaining possession of their property, for example if they experience a change in circumstances and need to return to or sell the property.
- 9.2 The application of the Decent Homes Standard, whilst morally and ethically sound, will see an increased burden of cost for some landlords, who may choose to dispose of rather than invest in their portfolio.
- 9.3 The bill is not entirely focused on the tenant's rights, with some measures also being taken to protect the landlord. One problem the Bill aims to

address is to reform possession grounds for landlords, introducing new, stronger grounds for repeated incidences of rent arrears and reducing notice periods for anti-social behaviour, ensuring that they can regain their property efficiently when needed. There is, however, no provision for changes in personal circumstances, meaning renting out the property is no longer viable.

- 9.4 The Bill proposes a property portal to help landlords understand their obligations, give tenants performance information to hold their landlord to account as well as aiding local authorities. Local authorities will have access to the portal, which in turn should hopefully combat inadequate performance by landlords.

## **10. Likely Impact on Homeless Service Provision**

- 10.1 Data from HMRC indicates that individuals declaring rental income for 2020-21 dropped by around 50,000 compared to the previous year, whilst total income dropped by 11% (£5 billion) between 2016 and 2021 despite rising rental prices.
- 10.2 This is in line with anecdotal information and first-hand experience that many landlords have chosen to “sell up” following the eviction ban in 2020 prompted by the Covid pandemic; increased costs and difficulties in collecting rental income have made this a much less attractive investment and many landlords with a small portfolio have decided this is no longer viable.
- 10.3 As Members are aware from previous briefings, we are seeing significantly higher levels of demand for social housing, coupled with incredibly low turnover of stock. This in turn means an increased reliance on the private rented sector to meet the needs of those requiring housing.
- 10.4 When making an offer of accommodation to discharge duties under homeless legislation, we seek to achieve a “settled outcome”; accommodation that is reasonable to occupy and likely to be available for more than 6 months. During 2021/22 34.3% of homeless cases resulting in a settled outcome involved a move into privately rented accommodation. Any sizeable reduction in the availability of such accommodation will have a negative impact on the number of cases achieving a settled outcome.
- 10.5 The Bill may combat some of the reticence prospective tenants have in accepting a private tenancy as the security and quality issues have been addressed. This may in turn result in less pressure on the limited social housing stock available.
- 10.6 The Government has indicated that there will be a six-month lead-in before the Bill is implemented. However, there is concern that this may lead to a “flurry” of section 21 notices being served prior to the end of “no fault” evictions.

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