

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Date: Tuesday, 14 April 2026

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Autun Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: Councillors: Lin Martin-Haugh (Chair), Lloyd Briscoe, Coleen De Freitas, Alistair Gordon, Claire Parris, Ceara Roopchand, Loraine Rossati, Carolina Veres and Tom Wren

Start / End Start Time: 6.00pm

Time: End Time: 6.35pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Peter Clark, Lynda Guy, Ellie Plater and Tom Plater.

Councillor Tom Wren declared an interest as he was a Landlord within the Town.

2 MINUTES - 27 NOVEMBER 2025

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 27 November 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 PAVEMENT LICENSING POLICY

The Committee was presented with the draft Pavement Policy, which set out the Council's approach to the granting, monitoring and enforcement of pavement licences across Stevenage (excluding the Town Centre).

It was noted that the Licencing Authority had consulted informally with Stevenage Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council for comments on the policy.

A question was raised as to why the Town Centre was not included within the scope of the policy. Officers advised that the Town Centre was managed separately by the Town Centre Management and Estates Teams and therefore fell outside of the policy's remit.

Members raised concerns regarding the limited reference to equalities within the report and queried whether any consultation had taken place with disability groups. Officers confirmed that no public consultation had been undertaken. It was noted that accessibility considerations were addressed within the policy (Section 6.10), including distances between furniture and pedestrian routes, and the use of tap barriers.

In response to questions regarding enforcement, officers confirmed that a proportionate approach would be taken, working with businesses to resolve issues where possible. Officers also confirmed that inspections would be carried out to ensure compliance with licence conditions.

Members noted that the Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix 4) was missing, and officers confirmed that it would be circulated to Members.

The Committee was advised that licences would be issued for a period of two years, with a phased approach to implementation. Businesses operating under the previous policy were being encouraged to become compliant in advance to reduce any impacts when they needed to renew their licence.

Questions were raised regarding permanent structures, and it was noted that they would not fall under the scope of the Pavement Licence and would instead require planning permission.

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report and therefore it was **RESOLVED** that:

- That the General Purposes Committee agrees to recommend the proposed Stevenage Borough Council Pavement Licensing Policy 2026 (attached at appendix A) to Cabinet.
- That the General Purposes committee agrees that minor inconsequential amendments to this policy may be made by the Assistant Director of Planning and Regulation, in consultation with the Cabinet Member/Portfolio Holder for the relevant service area.

4 **RENTERS' RIGHTS ACT 2025 ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

The Committee considered the draft Renters' Rights Act Enforcement Policy relating to private rented sector housing under the new provisions of the Renters' Rights Act 2025.

It was noted that the policy set out how the Council would enforce the new provisions and apply the regulatory powers under the Act.

A question was raised as to whether the legislation and enforcement policy would apply to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), and officers confirmed that that the policy would apply to them.

Discussions took place regarding dwellings that had been purchased and had the potential to be converted into supported living accommodation. Officers advised that this would constitute a change of use and would therefore be a planning matter. It was noted that issues relating to the care and support provided, together with the management of the premises, could have wider impacts on the surrounding area.

It was further noted that where supported living accommodation met the criteria for a licensable HMO, this would be considered through the Council's licensing process.

Officers clarified that further discussions regarding individual cases would be followed up outside of the meeting and that Councillors were encouraged to share any additional information with officers.

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report. It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- That the General Purposes Committee agreed the proposed Stevenage Borough Council draft Renters' Rights Act 2025 Enforcement Policy (attached at Appendix A).
- That the General Purposes Committee recommend the Stevenage Borough Council draft Renters' Rights Act 2025 Enforcement Policy to Cabinet.

5 **CIVIL PENALTY POLICY**

Officers presented the revised Civil Penalty Policy, which outlined the Council's approach to assessing and determining civil penalty levels for regulatory breaches under the Renters' Rights Act 2025 and existing legislation relating to private rented sector housing standards.

Members questioned whether there were powers to prevent landlords of licenced HMOs from continuing to operate when there were repeated breaches of legislation. Officers noted that it would be possible to revoke a licence where sufficient evidence of breaches had been established.

The Committee supported the recommendations in the report. It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- That the General Purposes Committee agrees the proposed Stevenage Borough Council Civil Penalty Policy (attached at Appendix A).
- That the General Purposes Committee recommend the Stevenage Borough Council Civil Penalty Policy to Cabinet.

6 **URGENT PART I BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part I Business.

7 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. Under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1-7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006.

2. That Members consider the reasons for the following reports (if any) being in Part II and determine whether or not maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

8 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part II Business.

CHAIR