

**BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
26th MAY 2026**

**BRIEFING NOTE
RENTERS' RIGHTS ACT 2026**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Committee and Council may be aware of the reforms introduced by the Renters' Rights Act 2026 and the implications for tenants, Landlords, and enforcement bodies. As a private Landlord, Tavistock Town Council must abide by the new requirements as introduced by the Act or face the penalties which could be imposed for non-compliance.

Please see below a link to the Government website for more details;

[Explainer: everything you need to know about the new Renters' Rights Act – MHCLG in the Media](#)

1.2 The Renters' Rights Act 2026 represents the most significant reform of the private rented sector in England in decades with implementation having taken place on 1st May 2026, with further reforms due to be phased in from late 2026 to 2028.

2. MAJOR IMPACT AREAS

2.1. There are some areas of the new legislation which will impact the Council, as a Landlord, more than others due to the type, location and Listing of the Council's housing stock. These are;

a) No discrimination – it will no longer be possible to refuse a new tenant if they have children. As Councillors may be aware, the flats above the Duke Street shops (Nos. 9, 14 and 15) do not have any outside space, and historically the Council has not recommended these units for people with children under the age of 10. However, this will no longer be an acceptable reason for refusal;

b) Pets welcome – again, due to the lack of outside space, the units listed above are not really suitable for pets (especially dogs). However, again, this will no longer be acceptable as a reason for refusal;

c) Greener homes by 2030 – it is intended that by 2030 all privately rented homes must meet new energy efficiency standards (EPC rating C or above), except where properties may be exempt such as listed

buildings or properties where improvements are not cost effective. The intention of this is it will mean better insulation, lower bills and greener living for tenants.

However, as Councillors will be aware, the Council's entire residential housing stock is located within Listed Buildings.

Whilst the Council will undertake the works it is able to e.g. installing LED lighting and, where possible, more efficient heating, it may not be possible to achieve the required rating as it will not be possible to install double-glazing/sufficient insulation etc. in these Listed Buildings.

This, therefore, will make it more difficult to achieve the 'C' rating which will eventually be required, so may result in the Council applying for Exemption Certificates for the properties it cannot improve to that standard.

2.2 The other major changes introduced by the Act will not impact the Council, as it already meets these requirements;

a) No more 'no-fault' evictions – the Council has never tried to evict a tenant without a valid reason;

b) An end to fixed contracts – the Council has always provided written Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreements (ASTs) to its residential tenants, (initially for 6 months and then rolling) so the move to Assured Periodic Tenancy Agreements (APTs), which have no end date, will not negatively impact the Council;

c) Fairer Rent Rules – going forward, Landlords will only be able to raise rents once a year and tenants will be able to challenge any proposed increase. Historically, the Council has not increased rents on multiple occasions within a year;

d) No more bidding wars – in future, Landlords must not seek to obtain more than the advertised rent for a property. This is not a practice the Council has ever entered in to;

e) A maximum of one month's rent upfront – the Council has only ever requested one month's rent upfront, which is then lodged with the Government's Deposit Protection Scheme as a deposit for the duration of the tenancy.

3. REQUIRED ACTIONS BY LANDLORDS

3.1 a) Prior to the implementation of the Act, Landlords were advised to write to their tenants to provide them with details of the upcoming

changes to their tenancies. This was not mandatory, but was considered 'best practice'.

I wrote to the residential tenants the Council manages directly on 14th April, 2026 (see Appendix 1). SeaMoor Lettings had previously confirmed they would write to the tenants in the Market Road Cottages, as they now 'let' these units on behalf of the Council;

b) Between 1st May and 31st May 2026, Landlords are required to send a copy of the Renters' Act Information Sheet to their tenants. Proof of delivery and receipt is required, so the documents to the Council's tenants were hand delivered on 5th May, with the tenants being requested to confirm to the Council that they had received the Information Sheet (see Appendix 2 and 3), by no later than 11th May. If no such confirmation had been received, then a further copy would be provided in order to ensure that the Council had been compliant.

4. RECOMMENDATION

4.1 That the Committee and Council note and endorse the current position and associated course of action as set out above.

4.2 The instructions of the Committee and Council are sought.

Jan Smallacombe
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Tavistock Town Council

May 2026