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Agenda

Housing, Health and Communities Committee Meeting

Date: Tuesday, 14 July 2026
Time 7.00 pm
Venue: Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT

Membership:

Councillors Lloyd Bowen, Hayden Brawn, Ann Cavanagh, Alex Eyre, Kieran Golding, Alastair Gould, Angela Harrison (Vice-Chair), Peter MacDonald, Peter Marchington, Pete Neal, Tom Nundy, Hannah Perkin (Chair), Carrie Pollard, Sarah Stephen and Karen Watson

Quorum = 5

Pages

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2. Apologies for Absence

3. Minutes

To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 May 2026 (Minute Nos. 20-21) as a correct record.

4. Declarations of Interest

Councillors should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their families or friends.

The Chair will ask Members if they have any disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) or disclosable non-pecuniary interests (DNPIs) to declare in respect of items on the agenda. Members with a DPI in an item must leave the room for that item and may not participate in the debate or vote.

Aside from disclosable interests, where a fair-minded and informed observer would think there was a real possibility that a Member might be biased or predetermined on an item, the Member should declare this and leave the room while that item is considered.

Members who are in any doubt about interests, bias or predetermination should contact the monitoring officer for advice prior to the meeting.

5. Matters Arising

Update from the Chair on any matters from the previous meeting or upcoming agenda items relating to this committee.

6. Chairs Briefing

Items for Noting

Questions for the Police and Crime Panel

Items for Decision by the Committee

Issued on Monday, 6 July 2026

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Chief Executive, Swale Borough Council,
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT

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Housing, Health and Community Committee Forward Decisions Plan – July 2026

Report title, background information and recommendation(s)	Date of meeting	Open or exempt	Lead Officer and report author
Leisure Centre Contract Award	September 2026	Open	Lead Officer: Jay Jenkins Head of Service: Martyn Cassell
Housing Enforcement Policy	TBC	Open	Lead Officer: San Nyunt Head of Service: Charlotte Hudson
Beachfields Phase 2	TBC	Open	Lead Officer: Martyn Cassell Head of Service: Martyn Cassell
Play Strategy	TBC	Open	Lead Officer: Jay Jenkins Head of Service: Martyn Cassell

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Housing Health and Communities Committee	
Meeting Date	Tuesday 14th July 2026
Report Title	Crisis & Resilience Fund (CRF)
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing & Communities
Lead Officer	Sarah-Jane Radley, Community & Regulatory Services Manager
Classification	**Open**
Recommendations	1. The committee is asked to **note** the contents of the report.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

1.1 The report provides members with an overview of the of the Crisis & Resilience Fund (CRF) which has replaced Household Support Fund (HSF) and sets out the approach to localised delivery.

2 Background, Context and Proposals

2.1 The Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) has been made available to local authorities (LAs) in England to support low-income households who encounter a financial shock and to support activity that builds individual and community financial resilience.

2.2 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) allocate the funding to Kent County Council (KCC), who then distribute a proportion to district authorities based on a formula established under the Household Support Fund (HSF). The funding covers the period from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029 (inclusive) and is allocated to Swale Borough Council (SBC) on an annual basis by KCC.

2.3 For the current financial year, SBC has received an allocation of £438,000.00. This funding must be fully spent by 31 March 2027, with no provision for carry forward.

2.4 Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP), now called Housing Payments, currently managed by the Revenues and Benefits team will merge with CRF by the end of year 3 in preparation for LGR however, no changes have been made to the current process in year.

2.5 The primary objective of CRF is to both provide a safety net for those on low incomes who encounter a financial shock and to invest in building local financial resilience to enable individuals and communities to better deal with crises in the long-term, reducing crisis need.

2.6 Authorities are encouraged to invest in ‘Resilience Services’ that contribute towards improving the financial resilience of individuals. Financial resilience refers to the ability of individuals to withstand and recover from financial shocks – such as sudden income loss or unexpected expenses. The purpose of building financial resilience is to enable individuals to better manage future financial shocks and reduce the need for crisis support. Several factors can contribute to, or impact financial resilience including financial literacy, digital exclusion, community and social networks and income, savings and debt.

2.7 CRF will focus on three main outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Provision of effective crisis support – being delivered by KCC
- Outcome 2: Improving individuals’ financial resilience
- Outcome 3: Bolstering the local-level support landscape

2.8 KCC will deliver a county wide Crisis Scheme which is intended to prevent the occurrence or escalation of individuals crises. The application scheme will be a cash-first approach which means that an assessment will be made as to whether a cash payment or another form of support can be issued. This approach encourages dignity and choice and helps people to stay independent.

2.9 KCC’s delivery of a county-wide scheme enables local authorities to concentrate on Outcomes 2 and 3, which can be tailored to local needs and support the strengthening of resilience among organisations and individuals locally.

2.10 The Empowering You in Swale Strategy provides the strategic framework for addressing poverty and inequalities across the borough, and CRF delivery has been deliberately designed to align with and deliver against these core priorities, ensuring a targeted, outcomes-focused approach to reducing disadvantage and supporting resilient communities.

2.11 In previous rounds of HSF third party organisations (TPO) have been used to deliver much of the scheme through grant funding opportunities to the voluntary and community sector. This proved to be a successful way of operating as the organisations are seen as trusted and accessible services by residents, and it created a collaborative network of services who could deliver services we do not have the skills or resources to deliver.

2.12 There are some key services that we have rolled over into CRF due to their effectiveness and alignment to CRF criteria, these are:

- Fuel and Water Advisor
- Community Pantry
- Citizen Advice – Financial Resilience
- One Swale Roadshows – revised programme of events

- Loneliness project – development of year 2
- SBC Housing clients – direct support

2.13 To decrease short term, non-sustainable support available and increase long term solutions we have developed four TPO grant opportunities which have been made available to the voluntary and community sector in Swale:

Grant	**Description**
Advice services Total available: £150,000	Bids up to £25,000 • Early intervention and prevention services to reduce the need for crisis intervention • Employment or income stability support • Tailored advice for groups such as young people, older residents, carers, or those with disabilities • Support to targeted groups using evidence-base eg. Indices of Deprivation • Holistic support to target a range of requirements such as homelessness, mental health and drug and alcohol support. • Targeted interventions for young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) • Advice and support to reduce financial pressure.
Food and wrap around support Total available: £100,000	Bids up to £25,000 • Provision of food parcels accompanied by wraparound support • Educational and practical opportunities using food related activities • Transition planning from emergency food aid to sustainable, choice-based systems
Swale skills and employment network Total available: £10,000	Up to £10,000 • Establishment of a Swale Skills and Employment Network. • Stakeholder mapping and engagement. • Governance structure and terms of reference. -- • Create a coordinated, borough-wide approach to skills and employment support. • Strengthen partnership working across voluntary, public, education, and business sectors. • Identify gaps in provision and opportunities for joint delivery. • Increase the flow of external investment and funding into Swale. • Support residents to access skills development, training, and employment opportunities.
One Swale Network Total available: £10,000	Up to £10,000 • Establish three community access points acting as accessible, place-based ‘one front door’ locations.

	• Provide standardised, accessible, holistic support enabling residents to access multiple services in one place. • Strengthen collaboration between VCSE organisations, statutory partners, health services, and community groups. • Increase awareness and uptake of resilience, wellbeing, financial, and support services. • Reduce barriers to engagement by delivering services within neighbourhoods, particularly in areas of high deprivation. • Improve early intervention and prevention outcomes for households experiencing hardship. • --- • Identification and utilisation of existing community venues in Sheppey, Faversham, and Sittingbourne. • Development of an operating model, including opening hours, staffing/volunteering, and partner presence (in person or virtual). • Coordination of multi-agency involvement, ensuring a broad and relevant service offer.

2.14 A panel including external agencies will matrix score applications, to ensure fairness and transparency. At the time of writing this report there are 21 applications for funding with a value of over £250,000 in excess of the available budget, from a variety of Swale organisations. The grant application window closed on Tuesday 24th June 2026 and we hope to be able to table a summary of successful projects at the meeting.

2.15 The grants are intended to deliver a variety of person-centred services with a fair geographical spread across the borough which can be developed into longer term projects and solutions for the remaining two years of funding.

3 Recommendations

3.1 The committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

4.1 The option to do nothing has been rejected due to the current levels of deprivation and inequality within the borough.

4.2 The option to deliver the scheme in the same way as we have previously delivered HSF was considered, however, CRF guidance is clear that this fund is about delivering long term resilience and so we have diversified the offer to ensure that we can support residents into longer term solutions.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 A workshop has been delivered at the Cost of Living Group where the group considered a variety of options and discussed the key issues being faced by residents and how CRF could be utilised.

6 Implications

Issue	**Implications**
Corporate Plan	Links to a number of Corporate Plan priorities: • Community: supports community resilience and improves welfare of residents • Health & Housing: Tackles health inequalities within the borough and improves residents' health and wellbeing. • Economy: Improving opportunities for residents to access skills & employment. • Running the Council: Working in partnership with a variety of agencies to improve sustainability and resilience. • Environment: Tackling fuel poverty and supporting residents to become more energy efficient.
Financial, Resource and Property	This grant is to be used in the period 1st April 2026 up to the 31st March 2027 inclusive. This includes payments made, or committed, between the period 1st April 2026 and 31st March 2027. There is no carry forward of this grant into 2027/28 beyond honouring any expenditure committed before 31 March 2027. SBC has received an allocation of **£437,864.28** for the current financial year. **DRAFT Budget allocation** (NOTE subject to grant allocations) • Fuel & Water Advisor: £26,000 • Community Pantry: £36,000 • Citizen Advice: £15,000 • One Swale Roadshows: £3,000 • Loneliness: £10,000 • VCS Grants : £295,000 • SBC Housing: £10,000 • SBC Admin: £11,000 • Contingency: £32,000

	Administration costs for the Community & Partnerships Team resources to deliver, monitor and evaluate the scheme will be reclaimed within each financial period. The majority of the scheme will be delivered through third party organisations (TPO) namely the voluntary and community sector within Swale via SBC grants.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	None identified at this stage
Crime and Disorder	This work aims to reduce crime and disorder by engaging local communities in a variety of projects and links to the Community Safety Plan due to the correlation between crime and disorder and poverty.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	This work aims to provide residents access local services that can support the sharing of information and resources such as energy vouchers to reduce fuel poverty and support residents to become more energy efficient within their homes.
Health and Wellbeing	This work aims to tackle high levels of health inequalities within the borough and increase life expectancy.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	This work is closely linked to the safeguarding of residents including vulnerable children and adults. Partners will have relevant policies and procedures.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage
Local Government Reorganisation	CRF is currently a multiyear funding scheme, with completion due March 2029.

7 Appendices

7.1 N/A

8 Background Papers

CRF Guidance Crisis and Resilience Fund: Guidance for local authorities in England (1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029) - GOV.UK

SBC Grant opportunities (CRF) Grants and Funding - Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF)

Empowering You in Swale Strategy Strategies and policies - Empowering You in Swale

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Housing, Health, and Community Committee	
Meeting Date	14th July 2026
Report Title	Temporary Accommodation (TA) Spend – Scrutiny Report
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing and Communities
Lead Officer	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing and Communities
Classification	**Open**
Recommendations	The committee is recommended: 1. To scrutinise the performance report and controls in place to manage the TA budget. 2. To agree to amend the TA policy to have a formal review every 3 years.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides the Housing, Health, and Community Committee with an update on the current performance in relation to TA and current budget position, the report also discusses the current risks and controls in place to manage the TA budget.

2 Background

2.1 The Council has a Housing Options Improvement Programme (HOIP) in place to manage and control the spend on TA. The costs of TA to Council's are increasing nationally and there is a risk to the overall financial position of the Council if it is not monitored and managed effectively.

2.2 The Housing, Health and Communities Committee have made some significant investment in interventions to support the control of the TA budget, the most significant are the TA Purchase Programme and an investment in additional staff to work with enabling clients to move effectively through the system. Both these interventions have been implemented.

Performance Information

2.3 **Table 1 - Statutory Temporary Accommodation Placements – Total Households on last day of period**

	22/23	23/24	24/25	Q1 25	Q2 25	Q3 25	Q4 25
No. in Statutory TA	337	305	281	273	282	300	322

SBC Own Stock	3	3	38	44	42	48	43
Homeless Hostel	8	14	11	8	10	6	6
Housing Assn	79	84	73	76	81	73	75
B&B and Nightly Let	247	204	159	145	149	173	196
No. outside Statutory Duty (RSI Funded)	54	22	23	29	21	21	19

Table 2 - Statutory Temporary Accommodation Flow (2025/26)

Statutory placements	Households placed in TA for first time	Households left TA	Adjustments for households who move between statutory and RSI and not continuously in TA	Households at month end
April	15	34	plus 3	265
May	27	20	less 3	269
June	27	20	less 3	273
July	32	25	plus 2	282
August	23	22	less 4	279
September	25	23	plus 1	282
October	22	15	plus 3	293
November	23	26	plus 2	292
December	26	14	less 4	300
January	36	23	plus 2	315
February	28	16	plus 2	329
March	42	52	plus 3	322

Table 3 - Length of Time in Temporary Accommodation – Over 6 months (2025/26)

Length of time in temporary (6 Months +)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
6 months - 12 months	35	62	81	69
12 months - 18 months	50	44	26	46
18 months - 2 years	27	25	30	27
2 years+	58	74	69	66

Table 4 - Temporary Accommodation Purchase Programme – Stock Owned

Number of temporary accommodation units owned by Swale Borough Council	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD 25/26
Total	50	53	55	55	55
Bedroom size					
1 bed	7	7	7	7	7
2 bed	37	39	39	39	39
3 bed	6	7	9	9	9
4 bed	0	0	0	0	0
Area					
Sittingbourne	39	42	44	44	44
Sheerness	10	10	10	10	10
Faversham	1	1	1	1	1
Property type					
Bungalow	1	1	1	1	1
Flat	18	18	18	18	18
House	29	32	34	34	34
Maisonette	2	2	2	2	2

Table 5 - Housing Register – Household and Lets

	22/23	23/24	24/25	Q1 25	Q2 25	Q3 25	Q4 25
No. of households on Housing Register	1,433	1,730	1,816	1,884	2,021	2,046	2,069
No. of lets through housing register.	297	423	388	116	79	81	106

Table 6 - Affordable Homes Delivered

	22/23	23/24	24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26	Total 25/26
New Affordable Homes	208	289	228	35	28	53	81	197

2.4 Demand for Housing Options services has remained high during Q4, which has continued into this financial year. The reason for presentations remains consistent, with the top 3 reasons, which equate to 75% of cases continuing to be end of private sector tenancy, asked to leave by friends and family and domestic abuse.

2.5 The Housing Register demand is continuing to increase with limited lets becoming available.

Financial Monitoring

2.6 The 2025/26 financial year saw the outturn position for homelessness services as £367k overspend. The most significant contribution to this was the increase in households in TA from Q3 onwards and the associated costs of Nightly Let provision.

Affordable Housing Pipeline

2.7 There are currently 839 affordable homes in the pipeline where an RP has been identified, and the site is underway or due to be underway shortly. This is a mixture of s.106 homes and additional delivery.

2.8 There are currently 195 affordable homes secured through s.106 agreements but without an RP currently identified.

2.9 In addition the Council is developing 51 affordable homes at Cockleshell Walk.

Temporary Accommodation Audit and TA Policy

2.10 An audit of temporary accommodation was conducted in February 2026. Overall, it was found that the Council has **sound** controls in place to fulfil its statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation to homeless individuals, and to support those threatened with homelessness.

2.11 The Audit did pick up that the TA Policy should be reviewed annually and was last agreed by Committee in October 2024. A desktop review has been undertaken, and no amendments are currently suggested. It is therefore recommended that the policy be amended to have a formal review every 3 years and the policy is amended to reflect this. A copy of the existing policy is shown in Appendix I.

Temporary Accommodation Cost Action Plan

2.12 Due to the significant increase in households in TA over the past six months a thorough review has taken place of the HOIP and a revised TA Management Action Plan has been created for 2026/27. This is being monitored by EMT quarterly and a summary of actions will be included in this report.

2.13 The main objectives of the plan are as follows:

- Reduce TA cost pressure
- Increase supply and availability of council-owned TA
- Improve move-on and discharge from TA
- Stabilise rough sleeping and complex needs pathways
- Strengthen performance, compliance and resilience
- Align strategy, partners and delivery

2.14 A committee level action plan is included in Appendix II

Risks and Issues

2.15 The following have been identified as the current risks and issues:

- Demand for homelessness services across the country is still high and is anticipated to continue.
- Delivery of Affordable Housing remains an issue and is not at the scale and pace required to meet the historic demand or increasing current demand.
- RPs have scaled back delivery programmes due to viability and capacity within the sector.
- Renters Rights Act is predicting some landlords exiting the market.
- We are increasingly seeing demand for hospital discharge support and suitable accommodation.
- The reduction in grant funding over the next three years will likely see an impact on service provision, unless alternative funding or service improvement work realises further impacts.
- Affordability remains a significant concern for residents being able to access the private rented sector.

3 Proposals

3.1 To scrutinise the performance report and controls in place to manage the TA budget.

4 Alternative Options

4.1 None

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 None.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Health & Housing - To aspire to be a borough where everyone has access to a decent home and improved health and wellbeing. Running the Council - Working within our resources to proactively engage with communities and outside bodies to deliver in a transparent and efficient way
Financial, Resource and Property	This report looks at the performance monitoring in relation to the TA budget.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	Local housing authorities have a duty to secure accommodation for unintentionally homeless households in priority need under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). Households might be placed in temporary accommodation pending the completion of inquiries into an application, or they might spend time waiting in temporary accommodation after an application is accepted until suitable secure accommodation becomes available.
Crime and Disorder	None at this stage.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None at this stage.
Health and Wellbeing	None at this stage.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The TA budget has been identified as a corporate risk, due to demand on the service and the budgetary impacts.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.
Local Government Reorganisation	None identified at this stage.

7 Appendices

Appendix I – TA Policy 2024

Appendix II – TA Management Action Plan – Executive Summary

Committee Summary Action Plan

This summary action plan draws together the key priorities from the wider Temporary Accommodation Management Action Plan. It is intended to provide Committee with a clear overview of the main areas of focus, the outcomes being sought, current delivery status, and the issues requiring continued oversight.

Priority theme	Committee-level action	Expected outcome	Indicative timescale	Status
Reduce TA cost pressure	Progress county wide approach to TA, pricing and placement options to reduce reliance on nightly-paid accommodation and improve cost control.	Reduced exposure to high-cost placements, clearer provider standards, and improved budget forecasting.	Q2–Q3 2026/27	Amber
Increase supply and availability of council-owned TA	Improve mobilisation, void turnaround and governance for council-owned TA, including evaluation of current programme and determine if future scheme is viable including staffing implications.	More homes available for placement, reduced void time, and an evidence-based decision on future delivery model.	July 2026 onwards	Amber/Green
Improve move-on and discharge from TA	Strengthen allocations practice, establish a focused TA move-on task force, and improve use of PRS, LIS and final accommodation offer routes.	Reduced length of stay, improved throughput, and increased successful move-on from TA.	Q1–Q3 2026/27	Amber/ Green
Stabilise rough sleeping and	Complete contract reviews, Housing First transition arrangements, complex case	Clearer pathway provision, reduced support gaps, and	Q1–Q2 2026/27	Green

complex needs pathways	pathway design, and shelter/day provision options.	improved outcomes for households with complex needs.		
Strengthen performance, compliance and resilience	Embed a performance culture through agreed KPIs, forecasting, statutory review improvement, training, quality assurance and workforce wellbeing arrangements.	Improved statutory compliance, better management information, clearer accountability and more resilient service delivery.	Q1–Q2 2026/27 and ongoing	Green
Align strategy, partners and delivery	Refresh the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and strengthen strategic relationships with Registered Providers and key partners.	Clear strategic direction, improved social housing pipeline management, and stronger alignment with funding and outcome requirements.	Q2–Q3 2026/27	Green

8 Background Papers

8.1 There are no background papers.

Housing, Health & Communities Committee	
Meeting Date	14th July 2026
Report Title	Temporary Accommodation Programme Evaluation
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing & Communities
Lead Officer	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing & Communities
Classification	**Open**
Recommendations	1. Members are asked to note the evaluation report. 2. To request that the modelling is reviewed based upon the evaluation findings and on a housing needs based portfolio and for a further programme to be considered as part of the Capital programme.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides members with an update on the initial evaluation of the Temporary Accommodation Purchase (TAP) programme. It reviews the delivery mechanism and capital costs and looks at the effectiveness as a cost saving mechanism in providing TA.

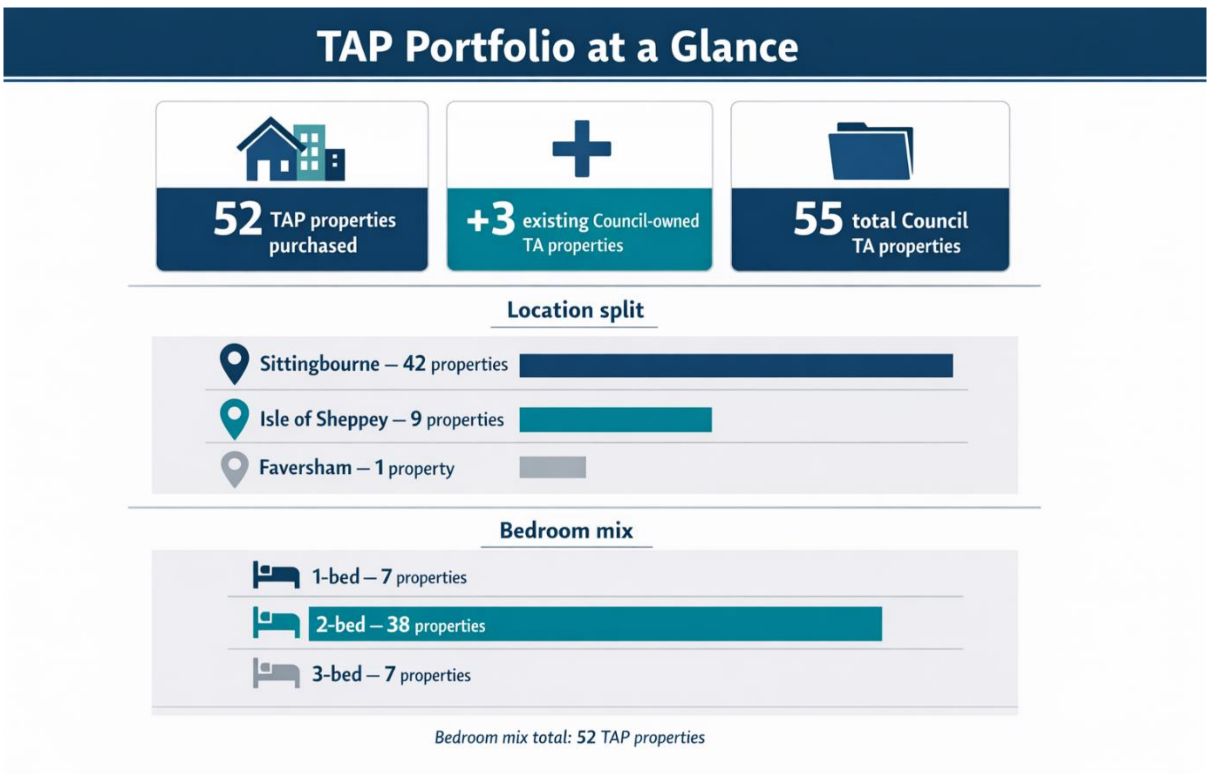
2 Background, Context and Proposals

2.1 At the 17th January 2023 Housing and Health committee, members agreed the purchase of up to 50 properties for use as temporary accommodation within the borough of Swale, supported by a capital budget allocation of £11m. The report also sought agreement to recommend to Policy and Resources Committee that the capital programme be established over a two-year period, with delegated authority for officers to purchase properties within the agreed modelling. A further report was considered by committee on 3rd July 2025, to purchase further properties within the original budget. This has enabled 52 properties to be purchased as part of the programme.

2.2 This decision was made on the backdrop of increasing households in TA and was a key intervention as part of the Housing Options Improvement Programme (HOIP) to reduce the overall cost burden to the Council for TA. The TAP programme was an invest-to-save approach with the aim of reducing reliance on private provision, improve local availability and quality of accommodation, provide greater control over management and revenue costs and enable the Council to retain a capital asset while supporting better outcomes for households requiring TA.

2.3 In addition to the Capital Budget identified by the Council, the government provided match funding towards TA purchases through the LAHF funding programme. We have successfully received funding from three rounds of the programme which has increased the size of the programme and has also enabled us to purchase some 3-bedroom properties as well as the original proposal for one- and two-bedroom properties. The first round focused on TA to support Homes for Ukraine households where host arrangements had broken down and were now entitled to TA, the remaining rounds were for general needs TA. Funding from KCC Ukraine programme also contributed to these properties.

2.4 52 properties have been purchased within the programme; this is in addition to the 3 properties that the Council already owned. Bringing the overall Council portfolio to 55 properties. Of the 52 properties as part of the TAP programme, 42 are in Sittingbourne, 9 on Isle of Sheppey and 1 in Faversham. The properties comprise of 7 one bed properties, 38 two bed properties and 7 three-bedroom properties.



2.5 The original model assumed that we would outsource the management of the TA properties, however when the team undertook research with other Council's it was apparent that these arrangements had not worked with outsourced providers for a range of reasons, and they eventually brought the services back in house. Taking their experience and advice, we therefore decided to manage the TA properties internally and staff within the restructure were identified to support these functions. This did cause an initial delay in mobilising the properties fully as we did not have the processes, systems and contracts or staffing resource in place that an existing provider would have. The team have done an excellent job rising to the challenge and ensuring that the properties are suitable as occupation for TA, however, this has taken longer than originally anticipated and put additional pressure on the team.

2.6 We have had 11 first lets during 2025/26. The average time for contractor works was 45 days and a further 26 days from void works to occupation. We have had 30 re-lets during 2025/26, it has taken on average 47 days for the void works and a further 18 days from void works to occupation. The team are now working towards a 30-day void turnaround time.

2.7 The other change in the model was that we factored Housing Benefit (HB) in at the 90% of the 2011 TA rate, however, we became aware that we are able to claim the current and full rate of housing benefit for our own properties, The TA Policy was amended by the Housing and Health Committee on 22nd October 2024 to enable us to charge the relevant rent and claim the revised HB level.

2.8 To progress the purchase programme a small internal project team was created for delivery. This included recruiting a project surveyor who was recruited through an agency to identify suitable properties and manage the client-side conveyancing process with the legal team. We managed to recruit an experienced surveyor who had delivered a similar programme for another Council and had extensive local knowledge of the Swale borough. Mid Kent Legal Services also recruited an additional property lawyer to handle property transactions both for Swale and Maidstone (who were operating a similar programme). The Affordable Housing Manager was the project lead day to day supported by other team members, this was incorporated into their existing roles. We also instructed a local conveyancing firm to undertake RICS Home survey Level 2 on all the properties.

Finance Evaluation

2.9 The table below summarises the total cost of the TAP programme and shows an underspend on the overall programme. So, there is scope within the current programme to purchase another 2 or 3 properties. Further properties have not been purchased at this time due to team and contractor capacity and a need to review the programme acquisitions to date.

Table 1 - Capital Programme Summary Costs – 52 Properties

Capital Programme	
Property Purchase	£11,545,281
Professional and Other Fees	£845,242
Grant	-£2,457,000
Capital Programme	-£11,000,000
Balance	**-£1,066,477**

2.10 Monitoring the true revenue costs throughout 2025/26 has been difficult due to extended void periods, delayed correct housing benefit being applied and furniture and equipment needed for TA. This was rectified during Q4 and the 2025/26 financial year provides the most accurate financial data set in assessing a typical operational year. The annual operating costs within the TA model based upon the portfolio purchased and the original 3 properties equate to £742k, which averages £13,497 per property for 2025/26

2.11 **Table 2 – 2025/26 TAP Revenue Costs**

2025/26 TAP Running Costs	
Council Tax on voids	£18,389
Insurance	£4,155
Service Charges & Ground rent	£49,946
Utilities	£5,842
Furniture	£29,652
Maintenance	£227,179
Sinking Fund	£46,000
Staffing	£94,101
Capital Financing /MRP	£686,000
Rent	-£418,916
Balance	**£742,349**

2.12 The purchase prices were higher than the initial assumptions, therefore the savings were not as high as anticipated. However, if we had procured nightly let provision based upon the median costs of TA for the equivalent portfolio the net costs to Swale after HB and allowing for a void period of 6%. This would have cost us £1m. Therefore, this demonstrates that this programme has made a saving of £257k.

2.13 The project team reviewed the project at both delivery stage and current operational processes; they looked at what worked well and lessons learnt and challenges. The following are the key areas:

2.14 **Summary of What Worked Well**

- The use of a local surveyor provided strong market knowledge and enabled timely identification and acquisition of suitable properties.
- Dedicated legal support (when in place) supported effective coordination and smoother transaction processes.
- Later flexibility in the programme enabled the acquisition of larger family homes, improving alignment with housing need.
- Properties acquired were, overall, fit for purpose following completion of works and met required standards.

- Feedback from households placed in TA purchased properties has been very positive.
- Repairs and maintenance arrangements worked effectively, supported by good contractor communication.
- Compliance requirements (gas, electrical, fire and EPC) have been consistently met and monitored.

2.15 **Strategic Lessons Learnt**

- Future acquisition should be based on housing need rather than delivery against a fixed numerical target.
- Flats within privately managed blocks create additional legal, financial and management complexity and should be minimised where possible.
- A dedicated housing management function is required to ensure sustainable delivery and effective oversight of an expanded portfolio.
- Early involvement of all relevant services (Property, Legal, Finance, Housing and Insurance) is essential.
- Maintenance contractor capacity must align with programme scale, particularly to support void turnaround and responsive works.

2.16 **Table 4 - Operational Lessons**

Theme	Issue / Learning	Future Action
Legal Processes and Governance	Staff turnover in the in-house legal team led to delays towards the end of the programme. The absence of a clearly documented delegated authority framework also created delays in exchange and completion decisions.	Future phases should establish standardised legal processes, clear decision-making routes and delegated authority arrangements from the outset.
Transaction Timing and Coordination	Completion dates, particularly on Fridays, created operational pressures across Finance, Legal and operational teams, although staff supported delivery flexibly where required.	Set clear expectations on completion scheduling to improve coordination and reduce operational risk.
Property Inspection and Quality Assurance	Not all properties were inspected by council officers due to limited capacity.	Ensure consistent inspection processes and sufficient resourcing for pre-acquisition checks to help reduce void works and contractor input after purchase.
Compliance Expertise and	Limited in-house experience of residential compliance requirements required	Embed property and compliance expertise at programme design stage.

Programme Design	additional work during programme delivery.	
Maintenance Contractor Capacity and Voids	Contractor capacity was stretched, particularly where specialist works required subcontracting. This contributed to delays in void turnaround times.	Consider multiple or larger contractors to support programme scale and ensure first occupation is achieved more quickly.
Resource Pressures	Operational delivery relied on existing teams absorbing additional responsibilities, including maintenance coordination, furniture provision, compliance administration and financial management.	Provide dedicated resourcing to support any expanded programme.
Property Condition and Risk	Some properties required significant works post-purchase, including rewiring, new kitchens and bathrooms. Issues such as damp have created ongoing maintenance challenges to ensure compliance.	Strengthen pre-acquisition risk due diligence to mitigate future condition and compliance issues.
Market and Location Constraints	Acquisitions in higher value areas such as Faversham were limited by cost. Some locations were less suitable for demand, while Sittingbourne was identified as preferable.	Future acquisition strategies should balance affordability, demand and geographic spread.

2.17 **Table 5 - Evaluation of Programme Objectives**

Evaluation Criteria	Review / Assessment	Objective Met
Invest-to-save approach	The programme was designed as an invest-to-save intervention, using capital investment to reduce ongoing revenue pressures associated with temporary accommodation. The initial findings demonstrate that from an operational cost it is less than private provision. The Council also retains the asset.	Yes
Reduced reliance on private provision	The acquisition of council-owned properties has increased the supply of accommodation directly available to the Council and reduced the need to rely	Yes

	solely on private sector or externally procured temporary accommodation.	
Improved local availability	The programme has increased the number of temporary accommodation units within the borough, supporting placements closer to residents' existing communities, schools, employment and support networks.	Yes
Improved quality of accommodation	Properties acquired through the programme have been brought up to required standards before occupation, improving the quality and suitability of accommodation available for households requiring temporary accommodation.	Yes
Greater control over management and revenue costs	Direct ownership gives the Council greater control over property management, compliance, maintenance and cost management, although the evaluation also highlights the need for dedicated resources to manage the portfolio effectively. The Council does carry the risk of long-term voids.	Partially
Retention of a capital asset	The programme has enabled the Council to retain long-term capital assets while also increasing the supply of accommodation available for operational housing need.	Yes
Better outcomes for households	The programme supports better outcomes by providing more stable, locally based and good-quality temporary accommodation for households, with positive feedback reported from those placed in purchased properties.	Yes

2.18 **Overall Conclusion**

The TA Purchase Programme has demonstrated that a direct acquisition model can provide good quality, cost-effective temporary accommodation. However, successful expansion will depend on a needs-led acquisition approach, strengthened operational capacity, robust governance arrangements, and adequate contractor and staffing resources. The original model would need to be reworked based upon an in-house adequately staffed management model and intelligence provided by the initial programme.

3. Recommendations

3.1 Members are asked to note the evaluation report.

3.2 To request that the modelling is reviewed based upon the evaluation findings and on a housing needs based portfolio and for a further programme to be considered as part of the Capital programme.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

4.1 Not applicable

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 The project team were consulted to inform the evaluation process.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Health & Housing - To aspire to be a borough where everyone has access to a decent home and improved health and wellbeing. Running the Council - Working within our resources to proactively engage with communities and outside bodies to deliver in a transparent and efficient way
Financial, Resource and Property	This report provides an evaluation on the Capital programme to purchase Temporary Accommodation, and the assets acquired as part of this. It also details the operational annual costs of running the TAP during 2025/26
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	Local housing authorities have a duty to secure accommodation for unintentionally homeless households in priority need under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). Households might be placed in temporary accommodation pending the completion of inquiries into an application, or they might spend time waiting in temporary accommodation after an application is accepted until suitable secure accommodation becomes available.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None identified at this stage.
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this stage.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this stage.

Risk Management and Health and Safety	The TA budget has been identified as a corporate risk, due to demand on the service and the budgetary impacts. Health and Safety forms part of the property management process.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.
Local Government Reorganisation	Housing acquired by Swale will be transferred to the new authority when the unitary councils are established.

7 Appendices

7.1 None

8 Background Papers

8.1 Temporary Accommodation (TA) Purchase 17th January 2023 Report

8.2 Temporary Accommodation (TA) Purchase Programme 3rd July 2025 Report

Housing, Health & Communities Committee	
Meeting Date	14th July 2026
Report Title	Rough Sleeper Services
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing & Communities
Lead Officer	Roxanne Sheppard, Housing Advice Service Manager
Classification	**Open**
Recommendations	1. The Committee to note the service offer for rough sleepers as prioritised by the member working group. 2. To invite Riverside to a future meeting to scrutinise the implementation and impact of The Quays + model.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides members with an update on the outcomes from the member working group that took place on the 14th May 2026, which was established to review the delivery options for rough sleepers and whether a night shelter provision should be established.

2 Background, Context and Proposals

2.1 At the April 2026 HHC committee, members considered a report detailing work to date that had been conducted on establishing a night shelter within Swale. It highlighted a range of options and the complexities of this approach, and that it needed to be considered in relation to the wider service offer that was already or could be in place for rough sleepers in the borough. It also explained that the current delivery model was not fit for purpose for the volume of clients and staffing ratio.

2.2 As reported at the last HHC committee the grant for Rough Sleeping has been merged into a wider Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant for 2026/27 and a three-year allocation has been secured, this funding sees the grant reducing significantly year on year. (£70k reduction for 27/28 and a further £31k the following year). Rough sleeping services are the only non-statutory part of the service. This grant also restricts the use of spend on Temporary Accommodation (TA).

2.3 The funding allocated to rough sleeping in 2025/26 was £705k This funds the staff within the RSI team, temporary accommodation placements for this cohort and move on support. In addition, we commission Riverside to provide a supported housing scheme (The Quays an 84-bed supported housing scheme) and the Housing First intensive support for intrenched rough sleepers. Therefore, assumptions have been made that we will continue to allocate a similar level of grant to these services, but the service offer is integrated where possible into the main service.

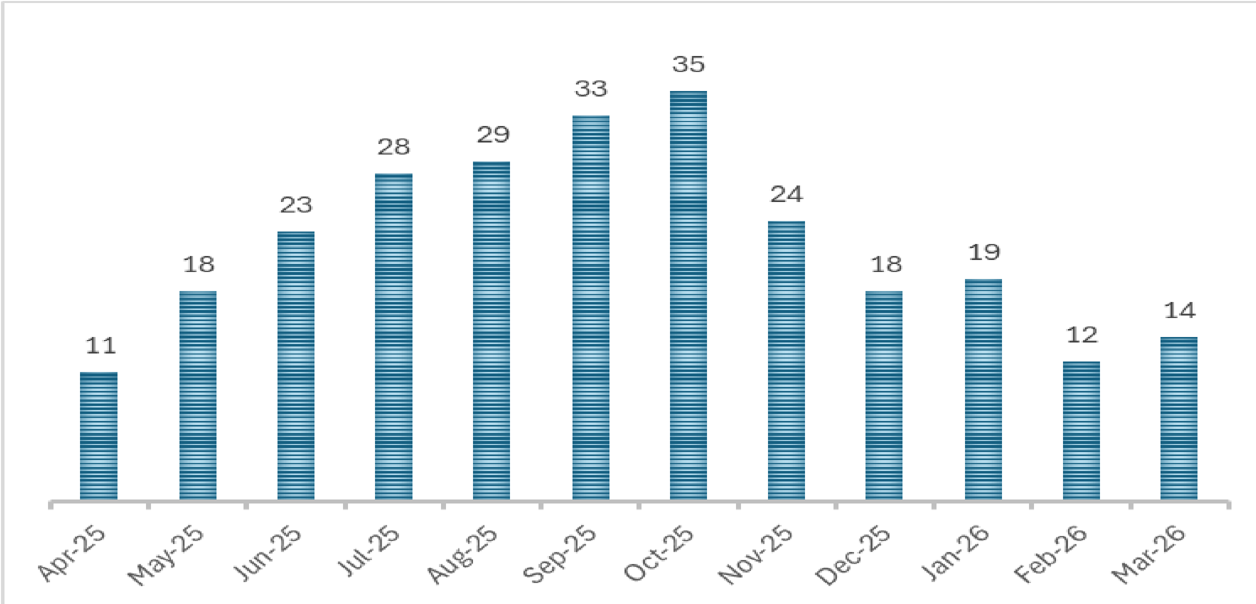
2.4 The working group was held on 14th May 2026 and comprised of Cllr. Neal, Cllr Perkin, Cllr. Pollard and Cllr. Watson and was supported by officers. Members were provided summaries of spend and outcome information for 2025/26 as a basis for the discussion and the research information on a range of night shelter options. All the services were prioritised using the MoSCoW method (Must, Should, Could, Won't).

2.5 The table below shows the services that were provided and spend during 2025/26 on supporting rough sleepers in the borough, both on the street and in accommodation. Due to changes in grant conditions, we cannot directly provide standalone TA but we can provide supported housing with this grant.

Summary of spending and provision 2025/26

Category	**Amount (£)**
Staff	153,629
Queenborough Road	44,264
Temp Accommodation	159,301
Housing First	127,260
The Quays	183,764
Rent in advance / deposits	37,896
TOTAL	**706,114**

Numbers of verified Rough Sleepers 2025/26



2.6 HHC committee had asked officers to explore the introduction of a night shelter in Swale to support rough sleepers during the winer months. Extensive research had taken place by the Community and Partnership team in conjunction with the VCSE and delivery partners to review delivery options available for a night shelter. All options would require a large volunteer base, would cost in the region of £157k and operate for approx. 4 months of the year on a 7 night a week basis. The occupancy was around 8 – 10 bed spaces per night.

2.7 The operating models explored and considered are shown in the table below.

Option	Summary	Outcome
Rotating church model	Churches host on rotation	Not viable locally due to limited engagement from enough churches and resource intensity required to set-up each evening.
St Michael's shelter	Male-only, 8–10 capacity	Good engagement from the Church, concerns were raised by Police due to previous issues of street drinking and ASB in the vicinity of this location.
HMO model	Single building with rooms	Similar options are already in place with rough sleeper current service.
Village hall model	Partitioned shared space	Not preferred due to impact on existing provision used within halls and no suitable venue currently identified. Also concerns raised around overlap of existing uses and the needs to set up the shelter.

The Quays additional building	Use of existing site capacity	Most practical option if needed, subject to controls. Could potentially still be explored as part of work with Riverside. Further due diligence is required and funding identified.
Z-pods	Modular units	Feasibility study had previously been conducted. This would require capital investment and was out of scope for this current project.

2.8 The working group reviewed the current provision, costs and outcomes and alternative provision. The overall budget provided a significant constraint on what provision could be put in place and the balance between enhancing and changing existing provision to introducing a new scheme such as a night shelter that would provide limited spaces for the cohort. The working group therefore concluded that it would have better outcomes and more impact to enhance and amend current provision, rather than establish new services at the current time.

2.9 The table below shows the options considered, funding allocation and rationale for service provision.

Service Option	**Allocation**	**Description**	**Rationale**
Outreach team	£156k	This is the core team of the manager and 2.5FTE and provide support to those on the streets and oversee clients in the service.	Core engagement and support at first point of contact. Viewed as essential core part of the service.
Queenborough Road and Support Team*	£134k	This is a small 8 bed scheme that provides intensive support to clients. The support team staff will also support those in TA and HMOs.	Proven effective model with excellent outcomes for those who have been through the scheme. The bed spaces are similar to those that could be offered in a night shelter and is enhanced model of the HMO night shelter model that was considered.
The Quays (Continue current service offer)	£0 – Funded The Quays+ instead	An 84-bed supported housing hostel that provides 24 hour support to their clients.	The scheme has limited support staff which directly impacts on the outcomes that can be achieved. An enhanced model has been provided as an

			option to improve outcomes.
The Quays +	£266k	An enhanced model that would separate the current scheme and create 2 specialist areas one as a recovery area and another for complex cases, providing additional support and enhanced pathways.	By increasing investment in the existing scheme, it will enable more direct support to clients, this would provide better value for money. With increased outcomes and move on, this would also support the statutory services as it is also a good prevention pathway to prevent individuals having to rough sleep in the first place.
TA & HMOs *	£80k	A small budget to provide accommodation outside of main schemes, these clients will also be supported by the support team.	Flexibility to manage seasonal demand and meet individual needs.
Housing First transition	£44k	Funding towards services that support existing housing first clients, to ensure resilience and access this function will form part of the wider support team functions.	Support existing clients on housing first to have long-term support.
Rent in advance	£40k	A small budget to support the move on pathway for this cohort.	Assists with overcoming the financial barriers of accessing private rented accommodation for this cohort.
Night shelter	£0 Not Funded	To create a new night shelter provision in Sittingbourne.	This was agreed not to progress and focus on existing provision. The provision of a range of supported housing options

			provides longer-term support once the service is accessed.

2.10 One of the main benefits of a night shelter that has not been addressed with the agreed service provision, is the wider approach the at the VCSE can provide to engaging with rough sleepers and offering a base for multi-agency support in a more informal setting. To address this a bid has been submitted to MHCLG to the Ending Homelessness in Community Fund, for a day centre. A day centre will offer a multi-agency service, as well as a relaxed safe space for individuals to attend. (provided food, support, advice and friendship). Citizens Advice have led on the bid in conjunction with Forward Trust and Riverside. Unfortunately, we have just had confirmation that the bid was unsuccessful, consideration is now being given to other ways to establish this work.

2.11 The working group also requested that with a significant increase in funding to Riverside to provide an enhanced offer at The Quays, they would like a Scrutiny Overview towards the end of this civic year. Therefore, it is recommended that Riverside is invited to a future HHC Committee meeting.

3 Recommendations

3.1 Note the outcomes of the member working group.

3.2 To invite Riverside to a future meeting to scrutinise the implementation and impact of The Quays + model.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

4.1 These were considered by the working group.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 The proposals have been compiled in conjunction with partners and the rough sleeper team and presented to the working group.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Health & Housing - To aspire to be a borough where everyone has access to a decent home and improved health and wellbeing.
Financial, Resource and Property	The rough sleeper services currently are funded through grant funding of £705k

Legal, Statutory and Procurement	SWEP is humanitarian duty rather than a statutory duty. Rough sleeper services are non-statutory.
Crime and Disorder	Locations of rough sleeping has been the subject of a range of ASB reports and the location of a night shelter has to carefully consider the overall impact.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None identified
Health and Wellbeing	Any intervention that takes individuals away from the street will directly benefit their health and wellbeing.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	Rough sleepers by their nature are vulnerable individuals and safeguarding processes will be integrated into all service options.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The final proposals will take into consideration risk and health and safety management.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.
Local Government Reorganisation	None identified at this stage.

7 Appendices

7.1 None

8 Background Papers

Winter Shelter for Rough Sleepers Committee Report April 2026