Agenda

Policy and Resources Committee Meeting

Date: Wednesday, 17 June 2026
Time 7.00 pm
Venue: Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT

Membership: Councillors Mike Baldock, Monique Bonney, Lloyd Bowen (Vice-Chair), Charles Gibson, Tim Gibson (Chair), Alastair Gould, Angela Harrison, James Hunt, Elliott Jayes, Mark Last, Ben J Martin, Julien Speed, Mike Whiting, Ashley Wise and Dolley Wooster.

Quorum = 5

Pages

Recording and Privacy Notice
Swale Borough Council is committed to protecting the security of your personal information. As data controller we process data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation.

This meeting may be recorded. The recording will be retained in accordance with the Council's data retention policy and may be published on the Council's website. By entering the chamber and by speaking at a meeting, whether in person or online, you are consenting to being recorded and to the recording being published.

When joining a meeting online, your username will be visible to others in attendance. In joining the meeting you are consenting to us processing your username. You may use a pseudonym as your username but the use of an inappropriate name may lead to removal from the meeting.

If you have any questions about how we look after your personal information or your rights under the legislation, please email dataprotectionofficer@swale.gov.uk.

1. Emergency Evacuation Procedure

Visitors and members of the public who are unfamiliar with the building and procedures are advised that:

(a) The fire alarm is a continuous loud ringing. In the event that a fire drill is planned during the meeting, the Chair will advise of this.

(b) Exit routes from the chamber are located on each side of the room, one directly to a fire escape, the other to the stairs opposite the lifts.

(c) In the event of the alarm sounding, leave the building via the nearest safe exit and gather at the assembly point on the far side of the car park. Do not leave the assembly point or re-enter the building until advised to do so. Do not use the lifts.

(d) Anyone unable to use the stairs should make themselves known during this agenda item.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Minutes

To approve the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meetings held on 17 December 2025 (Minute Nos. 586 – 590), 13 January 2026 (Minute Nos. 596 – 600), and the Ordinary Meetings held on 11 March 2026 (Minute Nos. 795 – 804) and 13 May 2026 (Minute Nos. to follow), 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

Items for Noting by the Committee

Items for Decision by the Committee

Issued on Tuesday, 9 June 2026

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in alternative formats. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, please contact **democraticservices@swale.gov.uk**. To find out more about the work of this meeting, please visit www.swale.gov.uk.

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Policy and Resources Committee Forward Decisions Plan – 17 June 2026

Report title, background information and recommendation(s)	Date of meeting	Open or exempt	Lead Officer and report author
Risk Management Update – Q3 & Q4	TBC	Open	Lead Officer: Emma Jones Head of Service: Kathy Woodward
Local Plan Submission	TBC	Open	Lead Officer: Stuart Watson Head of Service: Joanne Johnson
Regulation 19 - Draft for Consultation	TBC	Open	Lead Officer: Stuart Watson Head of Service: Joanne Johnson

This page is intentionally left blank

Policy and Resources Committee	
Meeting Date	17 June 2026
Report Title	Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – Results of Public Consultation and Adoption.
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Joanne Johnson Head of Place
Lead Officer	Ian Harrison Planning Manager (Planning Applications)
Classification	**Open**
Recommendations	1. That members note the responses received to the public consultation undertaken in relation to the Draft HMO SPD; and 2. That members recommend the HMO SPD (as set out in Appendix I) to Full Council for adoption.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

1.1 This report sets out the background to the recommendations made by the Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group (PTPWG) during its meeting on 27th May 2026. That Working Group noted the responses received to the public consultation undertaken in relation to the Draft HMO SPD and recommended that Policy and Resources Committee (P&R) recommend the HMO SPD (as set out in Appendix I) to Full Council for adoption.

1.2 At the Policy and Resources Committee on 11th March 2026, it was agreed that the Draft HMO SPD be published for public consultation.

1.3 The purpose of this report is to present a summary of the responses received during the four week consultation which ran from 30th March 2026 to 29th April 2026 and to recommend the document proceeds to Full Council for adoption.

2 Background

2.1 The report for the PTPWG meeting of 27th May 2026 set out the full background to the matter, including providing a link to the applicable minutes of the Full Council meeting of 1st October 2025, the report to and minutes of the PTPWG meeting of 22nd January and the report to and minutes of the P&R Committee meeting on 11th March 2026.

2.2 At the Full Council Meeting on 1st October 2025, a motion was brought relating to the *"Management and Regulation of HMOs in Swale".* Amongst other measures, it was resolved to "*Refer this matter to the relevant Committee to develop a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) addressing:*

- *A maximum threshold for HMOs within defined areas or individual streets to avoid over concentration*

- *Minimum off-street parking requirements for HMOs to reduce pressure on local roads*

- *Proper waste and recycling storage and management for all HMOs*

- *Minimum room sizes and standards in line with national guidelines"*

2.3 It was also resolved that there would be consultation with residents, ward councillors, parish councils, area committees, and other stakeholders to ensure the proposed SPD was responsive to community concerns while supporting access to affordable housing.

2.4 A full commentary explaining the approach taken in meeting the requirements of the motion has been provided within the reports that were presented to PTPWG on 22 January 2026 and P&R Committee on 11 March 2026. Links to those reports are provided as background papers.

2.5 In summary, the following timetable has generally been followed with the only noteworthy exception being the change of the consultation period to the dates that are specified above, and the agreement to hold an Extraordinary Full Council to adopt the SPD, rather than utilise an Urgent Decisions Committee.

Stage	**Date**
Presentation of this report to the Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group.	22 January 2026
Circulation of Draft HMO SPD to Members of the Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group for comment.	Late February 2026
Seek approval from the Policy and Resources Committee to consult on the Draft HMO SPD.	11 March 2026
Undertake a four week consultation in respect of the Draft HMO SPD.	23 March 2026 to 20th April 2026
Extraordinary meeting of the Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group to recommend post-consultation draft for adoption.	Mid / Late May 2026
Policy and Resources Committee Meeting to recommend post-consultation draft for adoption.	Mid June 2026
Urgent Decision Committee for adoption.	Late June 2026

2.6 The Council has now undertaken the four week consultation. This was undertaken through a link to the document and the Council's planning policy consultation system being provided on the Council's website. Letters and emails notifying key consultees of the consultation were sent on 30th March. The detail of the consultation is provided within the Consultation Statement which is available at Appendix II.

2.7 The Consultation Statement also provides a summary of each of the comments received and also details how the public consultation was undertaken, as required by Regulation 12 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

2.8 Having considered each of the comments received in detail, it is not considered that any changes are required to the Draft HMO SPD.

3 Proposals

3.1 That members note the responses received to the public consultation undertaken in relation to the Draft HMO SPD; and

3.2 That members recommend the HMO SPD (as set out in Appendix I) to Full Council for adoption.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

4.1 There are a number of alternative options. These have been considered and are set out with their advantages and disadvantages below. None are recommended by PTPWG:

- **Alternative Option 1:** Recommend that the Full Council adopt an amended version of the HMO SPD.

- **Alternative Option 2:** Prepare a form of guidance note other than an SPD.

- **Alternative Option 3:** Prepare a supplementary plan under the new Local Plan system.

- **Alternative Option 4:** Do not seek to adopt an HMO SPD.

Table I: Alternative Options Available

Alternative Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
Alternative Option 1 Recommend that the Full Council adopt an amended version of the HMO SPD.	• This approach would provide the opportunity for the comments made to be addressed in an alternative manner.	• Changes could undermine the consultation and the soundness of the SPD. • Amendments might not align with the scope of the Full Council motion. • Amendments might exceed the scope of Planning Control.
Alternative Option 2 Prepare a form of guidance note other than an SPD	• Would reduce the relevance of the existing time constraints around the adoption of SPDs.	• Would not fulfil the stated resolution of the Council. • Unlikely that any other document would carry comparable weight and, as such, would have reduced effectiveness.
Alternative Option 3 Prepare a Supplementary Plan under new Local Plan system.	• Any such document would be likely to carry more weight than an SPD	• Uncertainty around compatibility with existing or emerging development plans and the applicable procedures. • Timeline would not align with the aims of the Full Council resolution.
Alternative Option 4 Do not prepare or seek to adopt an HMO SPD (i.e. do nothing).	• Requires no further resources. • Places the Council at the smallest possible risk in terms of challenge.	• Would not fulfil the stated resolution of the Council. • Planning applications for HMOs would continue to be considered with limited guidance available as to how the policies of the development plan will be applied, providing less certainty for applicants and not ensuring that

Alternative Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
		HMOs are provided in preferable ways. • A potential uplift in applications for HMOs would not be reflected within the Council's suite of guidance documents.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 Details of the public consultation exercise that has been undertaken can be found at Appendix II. This included notifying Councillors, Parish and Town Councils and other interested parties and consultees, internal bulletins, press releases and publicity on the Council's website and social media pages. 12 responses were received and they have been fully considered within the Consultation Statement at Appendix II.

5.2 The Motion requested Area Committees be consulted on the draft SPD. There were no Area Committees scheduled during the consultation window, and the time constraints were such that the consultation period could not be moved to cover an Area Committee cycle. However, widespread publicity aimed to ensure that those who would likely or potentially express a view at an Area Committee were aware of the opportunity.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The HMO SPD would support the delivery of all of the Corporate Plan priorities: • Community • Economy • Environment • Health and housing • Running the Council The Plan contains a specific objective to 'progress a Local Plan with local needs and capacity at its heart.'
Financial, Resource and Property	There would be financial and resource implications associated with adopting the HMO SPD relating primarily to officer time and costs associated with consultation. This is within the base budget.

Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The preparation and adoption of an SPD is carried out under a national legislative and regulatory framework.
Crime and Disorder	There are no direct crime and disorder impacts arising from this recommendation. However, the HMO SPD contains guidance that would influence the location of HMOs which, in some parts of the country, have been considered or identified to correlate to anti-social behaviour. Examples of this are detailed in comparable SPDs that cover the areas of South Gloucestershire, Maidstone and Wigan.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	There are no environment and climate/ecological emergency impacts arising from this decision. However, the HMO SPD addresses matters that affect the local environment including parking, refuse storage and living conditions.
Health and Wellbeing	There are no direct health and wellbeing impacts arising from this decision. However, the HMO SPD attempts to positively affect the health and wellbeing of local residents.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	There are no Health and Safety Risks identified at this stage. A risk could arise from the HMO SPD being found to be unsound or ineffective in any respect but, at this stage, there is not considered to be a risk.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.
Local Government Reorganisation	The recommendation has little impact on Local Government Reorganisation other than it may increase the degree of divergence within the guidance that is in place within any newly created authority.

7 Appendices

7.1 Appendix I – HMO SPD.

7.2 Appendix II – Consultation Statement

8 Background Papers

8.1 Minutes of Full Council Meeting of 1st October 2025

8.2 Report to Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group – 22 January 2026

8.3 Minutes of Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group – 22 January 2026

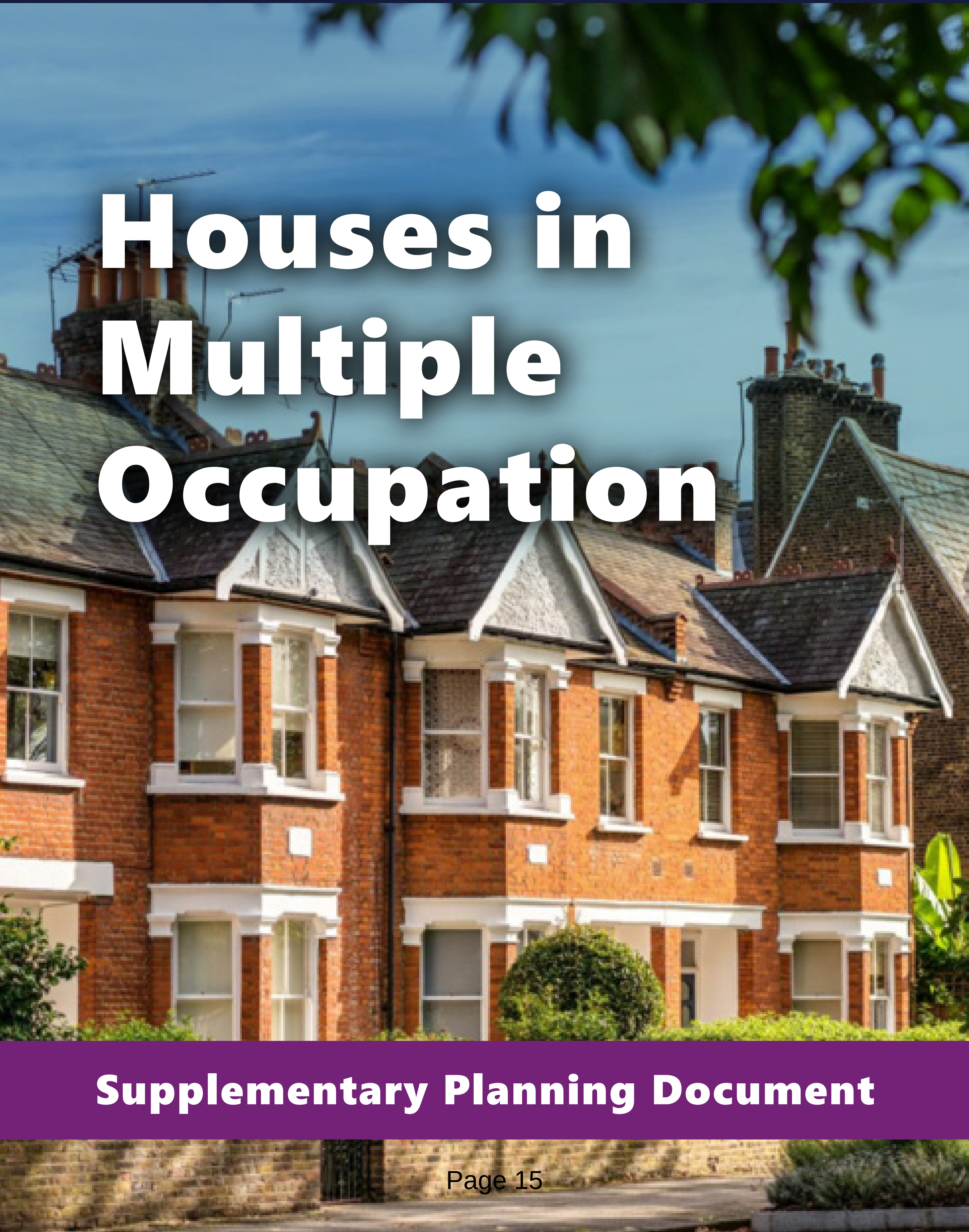
8.4 Report to Policy and Resources Committee – 11 March 2026

8.5 Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee – 11 March 2026

8.6 Report to Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group – 27 May 2026

This page is intentionally left blank

Swale
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Houses in Multiple Occupation

Supplementary Planning Document

Supplementary Planning Document, Houses in Multiple Occupation

1 Introduction

1.1 Swale Borough Council is actively seeking the provision of housing to meet the identified needs of the Borough's residents. As will be set out within this document, this is integral to Bearing Fruits 2031 - The Swale Borough Local Plan (Adopted July 2017) which is part of the Council's Development Plan.

1.2 Whilst there is limited definitive evidence available of a need for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), the Council's Housing Market Assessment identifies that single person households are relatively unlikely to afford market housing and the Council has declared an affordable housing emergency. In addition, there is evidence that demonstrates an increase in the supply of HMOs. In combination, it is considered that the evidenced need for accommodation that is comparatively cheaper and available to rent and the increase in the supply of HMOs suggests that HMOs are forming an increasing part of the Council's Housing stock.

1.3 The evidence base indicates that buildings of various types can become HMOs, albeit most appear to have resulted from the conversion of dwellings. Whilst most dwellings are or were designed for occupation by family units, HMOs are very likely to have a higher adult population and are likely to be used more intensively as a result of bedrooms being formed in place of rooms that were initially envisaged to be used for other purposes. Similarly, buildings used for other purposes previously might not have envisaged residential use at all. As a consequence, there can be instances where the differing occupation of a building and the impacts of accommodating an alternative mix of residents can have implications especially on

- the character and appearance of an area;
- parking provision within the locality; and
- the living conditions of the intended occupiers of the HMO and residents of the surrounding area.

Purpose of the HMO Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

1.4 In light of the above, the purpose of the HMO SPD is to guide the application of the Council's existing policies in respect of applications for HMOs. This covers the following matters:

- The avoidance of the over concentration of HMOs;
- The availability of adequate parking;
- The provision of storage for waste and recycling and its management, and
- The provision of adequate room sizes for future residents.

Status and Scope

1.5 The SPD cannot introduce new policies but will identify matters that should be addressed by an applicant in order to demonstrate compliance with existing policies of Bearing Fruits 2031 - The Swale Borough Local Plan (Adopted July 2017) hereafter referred to as 'The Local Plan'.

1.6 Similarly the document will provide an indication of how the Council will approach applications for HMOs and how these approaches relate to the existing policies of The Local Plan.

1.7 Once adopted as an SPD, this document will be a material planning consideration for the Council when determining planning applications involving the provision of HMOs.

2 HMOs Within the Planning System and Key Definitions

2.1 It is considered appropriate to provide a summary of how the planning system controls the change of use of a building to an HMO. It is anticipated that this might assist some future applicants.

2.2 Where an HMO use is introduced, experience demonstrates that it is often reported to the Council's Planning Investigations Team. An additional purpose of this specific section is, therefore, to provide a reference point for those persons who become aware of an HMO being introduced or wish to comment on an application related to an HMO, whether that be a Certificate of Lawfulness or an application for Planning Permission.

Development

2.3 Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 defines development and, for the purposes of this SPD, it is relevant that it includes building operations and material changes of use of land. The word 'material' is addressed further below.

2.4 From this basis, where the use of a building materially changes, it will constitute development. Section 55 of the T&CP Act 1990 highlights that this is not applicable where the new use falls within the same Use Class as the former use.

2.5 Where a material change of use occurs, to be lawful, it would either need to be Permitted Development or granted planning permission following the submission of a planning application.

2.6 Permitted Development is development that is enabled by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (The GPDO). Of specific relevance to changes of use are the Classes within Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the GPDO which mean that certain changes can occur when needing planning permission.

Definition of an HMO - Section 254 of the Housing Act 2004

2.7 As will be set out below, the planning legislation that is relevant to HMOs links to the definition that is provided by Section 254 of the Housing Act 2004. A shortened and summarised version of this definition is as follows:

2.8 A building or a part of a building is a "house in multiple occupation" if: -

(a) it meets the "the standard test" which comprises of the following criteria:

1. one or more units of living accommodation that are not self-contained flats;
2. the occupiers do not form a single household;
3. it is the accommodation is occupied by persons as their main residence;
4. the occupiers residential use is their only use of the premises;
5. rents are paid by at least one occupier; and
6. two or more occupiers share one or more basic amenity, or the living accommodation is lacking one or more amenity

(b) it meets "the self-contained flat test" which is as per (2) to (6) above and it consists of a self-contained flat.

(c) it meets the conditions in subsection(4) (https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/34/section/254) ("the converted building test") which is as per (1) to (5) above and the building has been converted.

(d) an HMO declaration is in force in respect of it under section 255; or a declaration can be made where the above tests are met other than (4) but their use represents a significant use.

There is an additional sub-section (e) that relates to converted blocks of flats, but this is not relevant to Use Class C4 as will be set out below and is therefore of limited relevance to planning.

Classification of HMOs

Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order 1987 (as amended)

2.9 This legislation (hereafter referred to as the Use Classes Order) categorises uses of land. Those that fall outside those classes are deemed to be "Sui Generis" i.e. they are effectively a bespoke use of land that is not categorised and, as such, any material changes of use of that land would need planning permission.

2.10 Of relevance to this HMO SPD are the following use classes, for which shortened versions of the formal definitions have been provided:

Use Class C3 – Dwellinghouses

2.11 Use as a dwellinghouse (whether or not as a sole or main residence) by:

a. a single person or by people to be regarded as forming a single household;
b. not more than six residents living together as a single household where care is provided for residents; or
c. not more than six residents living together as a single household where no care is provided to residents (other than a use within Class C4).

Use Class C4 – Houses in Multiple Occupation

2.12 Use of a dwellinghouse by not more than six residents as a "house in multiple occupation"

2.13 Interpretation – *"For the purposes of Class C4 a "house in multiple occupation" does not include a converted block of flats to which section 257 of the Housing Act 2004 applies but otherwise has the same meaning as in section 254 of the Housing Act 2004."*

Sui Generis – Other Uses that are outside the Use Classes

2.14 In relation to HMOs this means the use of a dwellinghouse by more than six residents as a "house in multiple occupation"

Permitted Development

2.15 The following section of the abovementioned GPDO applies to the conversion of dwellings (Use Class C3) to HMOs that fall within Use Class C4. A shortened version of the Permitted Development is provided.

Class L of Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.

Permitted Development:

Development consisting of a change of use of a building—

a. from a use falling within Class C4 to a use falling within Class C3;
b. from a use falling within Class C3 to a use falling within Class C4.

Development is not permitted by Class L if it would result in the use—

a. as two or more separate dwellinghouses falling within Class C3 in relation to any building previously used as a single dwellinghouse; or
b. as two or more separate dwellinghouses falling within Class C4 in relation to any building previously used as a single dwellinghouse.

Guidance Related to Permitted Development

2.16 Where a development falls within the scope of Permitted Development, it can lawfully occur without any involvement by the Planning Service at Swale Borough Council. There is no need to apply for planning permission.

2.17 Often a person will choose to submit an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness for a Proposed Use or Development (often referred to as a CLOPUD or LAWPRO). Such an application seeks confirmation that the proposal is Permitted Development and the application has to be considered only in respect of whether or not the development could have lawfully occurred on the date that the application was submitted.

2.18 Alternatively, if development has already occurred, a Certificate of Lawfulness for an Existing Use of Development (a CLEUD or LDCEX) can be sought.

2.19 Seeking a Certificate of Lawfulness is entirely optional. The only consideration to be made by the Planning Service for those types of applications is whether the development is lawful. Planning merits and national and local planning policies, including this SPD, would not be relevant to such an application.

Planning Permission

2.20 Other than where a development is Permitted Development, planning permission is required.

2.21 In summary, changing a building to a Large HMO (Sui Generis Use) i.e. an HMO with 7 or more residents, needs planning permission.

2.22 Alterations to the number of residents within a Large HMO could represent a material change of use meaning planning permission might also be required.

2.23 The conversion of buildings in any other use to HMOs of any size would also need planning permission.

Physical Works

2.24 In many instances, the conversion of a dwellinghouse to an HMO will involve building operations.

2.25 Such works might be able to occur under the terms of Classes A (extensions and alterations other than the roof), B (roof extensions), C (other roof alterations), E (outbuildings) of Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the GPDO. The reason for this being that buildings with a lawful use as a dwellinghouse retain their Permitted Development rights.

2.26 If the building operations exceed those Permitted Development rights, planning permission is required.

2.27 The abovementioned Permitted Development Rights relating to building operations are not applicable to flats.

2.28 Section 56 of the T&CPA highlights that internal works within a building are not development and do not require planning permission.

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.

2.29 Notwithstanding the above, if a building is a listed building, consent may be required for internal works under the terms of the separate regime of control that applies to listed buildings. A change of use does not require listed building consent and so, on its own, the creation of an HMO would not need listed building consent. It is the physical works to a building that may need consent.

2.30 A site being within a Conservation Area limits building operations that can occur under Permitted Development rights, in the same way that they are partially reduced for dwellings. However, being in a Conservation Area does not create any additional limitations with respect to the creation of HMOs in terms of change of use.

Materiality of Change of Use

2.31 Above, the term 'material' was highlighted in respect of the definition of development and the inclusion within that of the change of use of land. In this regard, it is relevant to stress that not all changes of use of land will be material. Of relevance to HMOs, is that there could be circumstances where enabling an additional person to reside at a premises might not be considered to result in a material change of use. This would be for determination in the circumstances of a specific case, as what might be material in one case, might not in another.

Restrictions on Permitted Development Rights relating to the Change of Use of Land.

2.32 At this time, there are no area-based restrictions in Swale on the ability of property owners to utilise the Permitted Development right set out above in respect of changes of use to create HMOs.

2.33 However, as part of the same Council motion that sought the preparation of this SPD, the Council requested that steps are taken towards making a direction under the terms of Article 4 of the GPDO which would have the effect of removing Permitted Development rights relating to Class L of Part 3 and the creation of HMOs.

2.34 Such a restriction on Permitted Development rights would materially alter the above commentary as the Permitted Development opportunity would not be applicable and planning permission would be required for all HMOs that fall within Use Class C4 as well as those Large HMOs that fall outside the Use Classes Order.

Breaches of Planning Control

2.35 Where development has occurred that requires planning permission and no such planning permission has been obtained, interested parties are invited to notify the Council's Planning Investigations Team. To do so, it is requested that the following webpage is used: https://swale.gov.uk/planning-and-regeneration/planning-breaches-and-enforcement/report-a-breach-of-planning-consent#h2

2.36 Investigations of breaches will occur in accordance with the Council's Planning Enforcement Strategy. This can be found at: https://swale.gov.uk/your-council/strategies-and-policies/planning-enforcement-strategy

2.37 It is hoped that interested parties may have found this document before reporting a development that has or is in the process of occurring. In such instances it is helpful that regard is had to the content of this SPD before reporting a development.

2.38 Where a development or building operations are occurring and there is a suspicion that a breach of planning control will occur, formal enforcement action will seldom be considered until a breach of planning control has definitively occurred.

3 Planning Policies (Local and National)

3.1 The development plan in effect within the Swale Borough includes Neighbourhood Plans and the Kent Waste and Minerals Local Plan (2024 to 2039). It also includes Bearing Fruits 2031 - The Swale Borough Local Plan (Adopted July 2017) which is the primary source of planning policy relating to development throughout the Swale Borough.

3.2 As far as it is relevant to this SPD, Local Plan Policy ST1 (Delivering sustainable development in Swale) states that "*all development proposals will, as appropriate:*

7. Deliver a wide choice of high quality homes by:

a. meeting the full, objectively assessed need for housing in the housing market area;

b. providing housing opportunity, choice and independence with types of housing for local needs; and

c. keeping vitality within rural communities with identified housing needs, proportionate to their character, scale and role.

8. Achieve good design through reflecting the best of an area's defining characteristics.

9. Promote healthy communities through:

a. location of development to achieve safe, mixed uses and shared spaces;

b. rejuvenation of deprived communities."

3.3 Local Plan Policy CP3 (Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes) states that the Council and others *"shall work towards the delivery of a wide choice of high quality homes that extend opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities."* It goes on to state that "*development proposals will, as appropriate:*

(2) tailor the purpose and objectives of housing proposals to the issues present within local housing market areas;

(5) achieve a mix of housing types, reflecting the findings of the current Strategic Housing Market Assessment or similar needs assessment;

(6) meet the housing requirements of specific groups, including families, older persons, or disabled and other vulnerable persons; and

(8) achieve sustainable and high quality design in accordance with Policy CP4 and Policy DM19."

3.4 Leading on from the above, Policy CP4 (Requiring good design) states "*that all development proposals will be of a high quality design that is appropriate to its surroundings."* It goes on to state that *"development proposals will, as appropriate:*

1. Create safe, accessible, comfortable, varied and attractive places;

2. Enrich the qualities of the existing environment by promoting and reinforcing local distinctiveness and strengthening sense of place;

5. Retain and enhance features which contribute to local character and distinctiveness;

7. Achieve a mix of uses, building forms, tenure and densities;

10. Use densities determined by the context and the defining characteristics of the area

11. Ensure the long-term maintenance and management of buildings, spaces, features and social infrastructure;

12. Be flexible in order to respond to future changes in use, lifestyle, and demography;

3.5 Policy DM14 (General development criteria) sets out that *"All development proposals will, as appropriate:*

3. Accord with adopted Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance

5. Reflect the positive characteristics and features of the site and locality

7. Be both well sited and of a scale, design, appearance and detail that is sympathetic and appropriate to the location;

8. Cause no significant harm to amenity and other sensitive uses or areas;

10. Achieve safe vehicular access, convenient routes and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, enhanced public transport facilities and services, together with parking and servicing facilities in accordance with the County Council's standards."

3.6 Finally, Policy DM7 (Vehicle Parking) states that *"when prepared, the Swale Vehicle Parking SPD will provide guidelines for:*

1. Car parking standards for residential development, which will

a. take into account the type, size and mix of dwellings and the need for visitor parking; and
b. provide design advice to ensure efficient and attractive layout of development whilst ensuring that appropriate provision for vehicle parking is integrated within it.

3. Cycle parking facilities on new developments, of an appropriate design and in a convenient, safe, secure and sheltered location."

3.7 At the Neighbourhood Plan level, there are no specific policies within the Boughton and Dunkirk Neighbourhood Plan (2023) which address HMOs. However, policies H1, H8, T3 and E1 are considered to align with The Local Plan insofar as they address the provision of housing to meet local needs whilst minimising environmental impacts, providing adequate parking and ensuring that development respects and enhances local character, environmental quality and amenity value.

3.8 Similarly, the Faversham Neighbourhood Plan (2024) does not include any policies that specifically address HMOs. However, policies FAV3 and FAV10 are considered to align with The Local Plan insofar as they address meeting local housing need and achieving development that compliments the existing townscape and character and represents sustainable design in various stated respects.

3.9 The abovementioned Local Plan policies are considered to be aligned with paragraphs 8, 63, 96, 109, 111, 112, 131 and 135 of the NPPF.

3.10 Moreover, although it has been published in draft and is the subject of current public consultation, it is relevant that the policies appear to align with policies, DP3, P3, TR2 and TR4 of the Consultation Draft NPPF that was published on 16 December 2025.

3.11 In this context, it is considered sound for an SPD to guide the circumstances where HMOs will be supported as they will achieve the outcomes set out within these policies.

4 Existing HMO Stock and Potential Effects of HMO stock

<u>Existing HMO Stock</u>

4.1 Identifying the existing HMO stock with reliance solely on planning records is problematic given that, as set out above, many can be formed without needing planning permission and without recourse to the Council's Planning Service. In short, many could have been created without the Planning Service knowing, especially where there are a lower number of residents that might not attract the same amount of attention as larger HMOs. Notwithstanding this, the Council's planning application, local plan monitoring and planning enforcement records have been reviewed and this has enabled several HMOs to be identified. Other Council records have also been utilised including the HMO License Register.

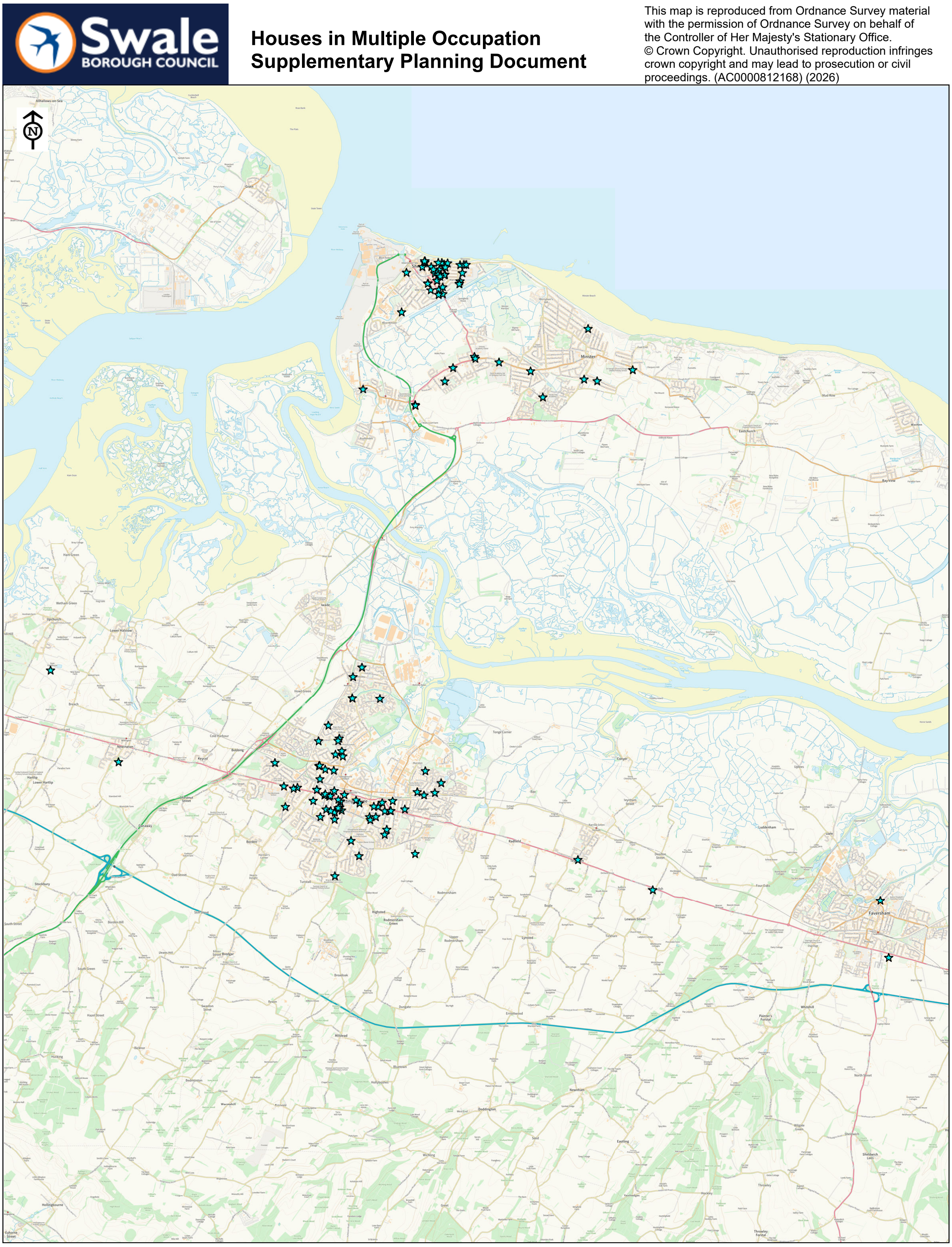
4.2 Some records will need to be reviewed further and, as this search process can only represent a snapshot in time, the stock of HMOs will evolve. It is, however, anticipated that a register of known HMOs can be kept up-to-date through the collaboration of the respective teams within the Council.

4.3 This research to date indicates that there are 126 HMOs within the Swale Borough.

4.4 Evidence sourced from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) indicates that when the 2021 Census was undertaken, there were 61 Small HMOs and 14 Large HMOs in the Swale Borough. In total there were, therefore, 75 HMOs.

4.5 It therefore appears that there has been an increase of 51 HMOs in approximately 5 years, a 68% increase above the 75 HMOs that were recorded in the Census.

4.6 The map below shows that there is a degree of dispersion to the location of HMOs:


Swale
BOROUGH COUNCIL
Houses in Multiple Occupation
Supplementary Planning Document
This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. (AC0000812168) (2026)

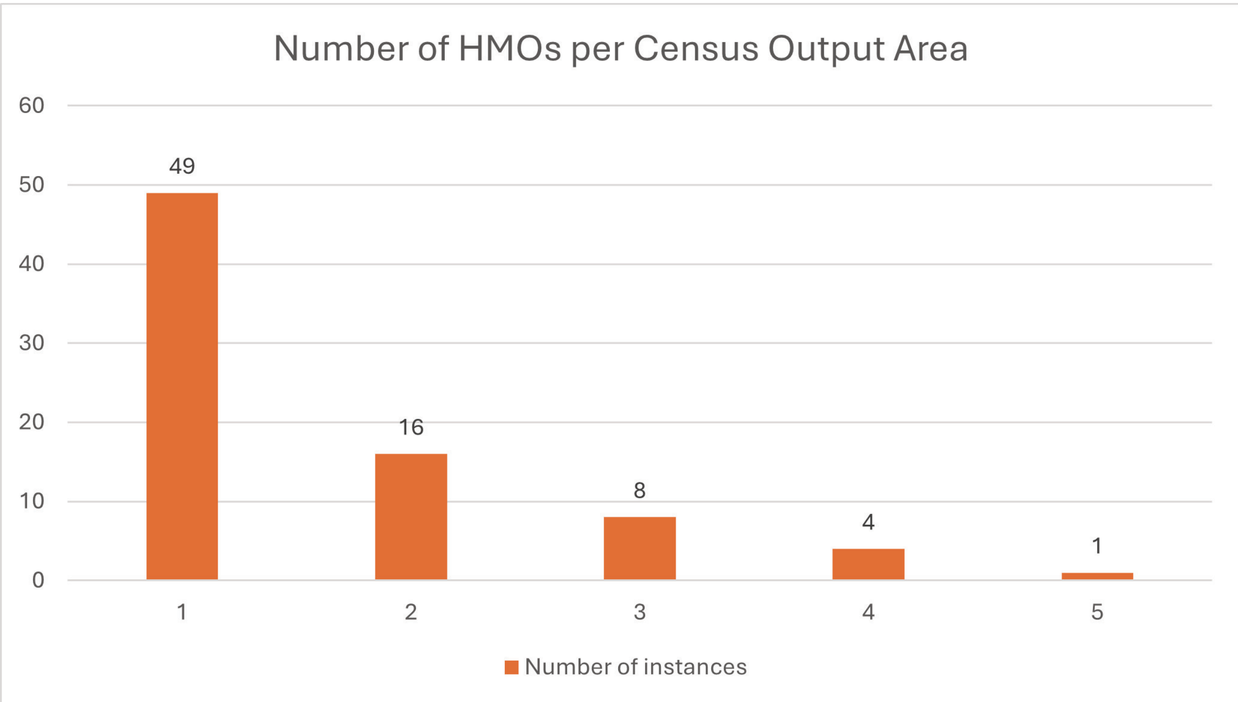
Picture 4.0.1

4.7 On a ward level, the 126 HMOs that have been identified are broken down as follows:

Ward	HMO's	Ward	HMO's	Ward	HMO's
Abbey	1	Milton Regis	8	Sheppey Central	5
Borden and Grove Park	6	Minster Cliffs	1	Teynham and Lynsted	2
Chalkwell	12	Murston	4	Watling	1
Hartlip, Newington and Upchurch	2	Queenborough & Halfway	8	Woodstock	3
Homewood	15	Roman	16		
Kemsley	3	Sheerness	39	TOTAL	126

Table 4.0.1

4.8 At a more localised level, Census data can be broken down to Output Area (OA) level which are generally areas of between 40 and 250 households with resident populations of between 100 and 625 people. Through separating the 126 identified HMOs into the Output Areas, the following dispersal of HMOs has been established:



Picture 4.0.2

Number of HMOs per OA	1	2	3	4	5
Number of instances	49	16	8	4	1

Table 4.0.2

4.9 The OA area with the most HMOs is in Sheerness, near and around the junction of Marine Parade, Broadway, and Alma Road. There are 158 households within that area and, as such, 5 HMOs amounts to 3.16% of the households being HMOs.

4.10 If combined with an adjacent OA to the west which is one of those that has 4 HMOs, there are 344 households and 9 HMOs in that area, amounting to 2.62%.

Potential Effects of an HMO Stock

4.11 The number and quality of HMOs in the borough has been cited as a matter that requires further consideration and, in this regard, the Full Council meeting on 1 October 2025 provides a useful steer of the matters that are considered to require attention.

4.12 It is noted that the motion for Full Council and the debate of that motion identified the following potential impacts of HMOs:

- Impacts on local amenity;
- Increased parking demand;
- Refuse generation;
- Impacts on local infrastructure and public services;
- Impacts on housing balance and changes to the character of residential areas;
- A reduction of the supply of properties for families and single occupiers; and
- Poor living conditions for occupiers.

5 Guidance Topic 1 - Concentration of HMO's

Ensuring the Concentration of HMOs respects Character and Living Conditions

5.1 This matter is considered to align with the consideration of developments in respect of Policies ST1, CP3, CP4 and DM14.

5.2 It is considered that the avoidance of an undue accumulation of HMOs within a particular area will ensure that areas with a character defined by dwellinghouses is not unduly eroded. Moreover, it is considered that this will ensure that the developments contribute to achieving sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities as required by Policy CP3.

5.3 Furthermore, noting the potential for a material increase in the number of adult residents and the activity associated with such a population, it is considered that there is scope for there to be a different level of noise and disturbance caused, that could have an impact on the living conditions of existing residents within that area.

5.4 Noting that policy DM14 seeks to ensure development causes no significant harm to amenity and other sensitive uses or areas and that paragraph 135f) of the NPPF states that development should create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users, it is considered appropriate to seek to ensure that a suitable living environment is retained.

5.5 As demonstrated above, there is a fairly broad dispersal of 126 HMOs over 16 wards and 8 wards without any HMOs. However, there are some distinct areas where a concentration of HMOs has been identified. Such concentrations can have many implications, including the erosion of the residential character of an area.

5.6 A methodology for assessing the acceptability of a concentration of HMOs is to identify a catchment area, calculate the number of residential properties and the number of HMOs within that area and set a threshold based on the number of HMOs that are considered to be able to be accommodated without causing the erosion of the character of the area or other strains that could be contrary to the abovementioned policies.

5.7 Appendix A sets out a step-by-step approach to undertaking an HMO Concentration Assessment.

5.8 It is considered that a 100m radius from the existing front door of a dwelling is a suitable catchment area in the context that, for many, such an area would be construed as being the area in which they live and the area around their home

5.9 Having regard to the evidence above that addresses the prevalence of HMOs within an area, it is considered that a threshold of 10% is an appropriate guideline.

5.10 If the threshold of 10% is exceeded in a predominantly residential area, it is likely that a site visit will demonstrate that there is already a noticeable presence of HMOs within the locality. It would be expected that this would not be the case where fewer HMOs exist. Therefore, unless it can be demonstrated that an additional HMO beyond the 10% threshold can be comfortably accommodated within an area, it is probable that a proposal to introduce a further HMO will be found to cause the undue undermining of an existing residential character.

5.11 In more commercial or mixed-use areas where there are fewer than 10 residential properties within the Assessment Area, a 30% threshold will be applied.

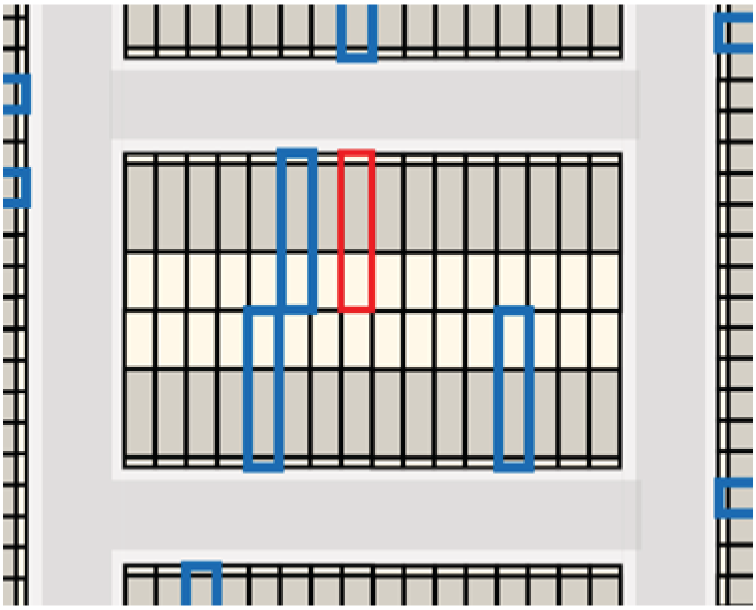
5.12 Where a building contains flats, if one of those flats is used as an HMO, the building shall be considered as a whole and that building will be counted as an HMO for the purposes of a concentration assessment.

Avoidance of Sandwiching

5.13 In the interests of providing adequate living conditions for existing residents, it is considered appropriate to avoid instances of sandwiching. Where the increased activity resulting from an HMO which has been set out above can be experienced at one side of a C3 dwellinghouse, it is unlikely to have a significantly harmful impact on the overall living conditions of those neighbouring residents.

5.14 However, where a residential dwellinghouse in C3 use is neighboured by HMOs at both sides, it is likely that there will be a sense of being surrounded by HMOs which will materially change the living conditions of those residents.

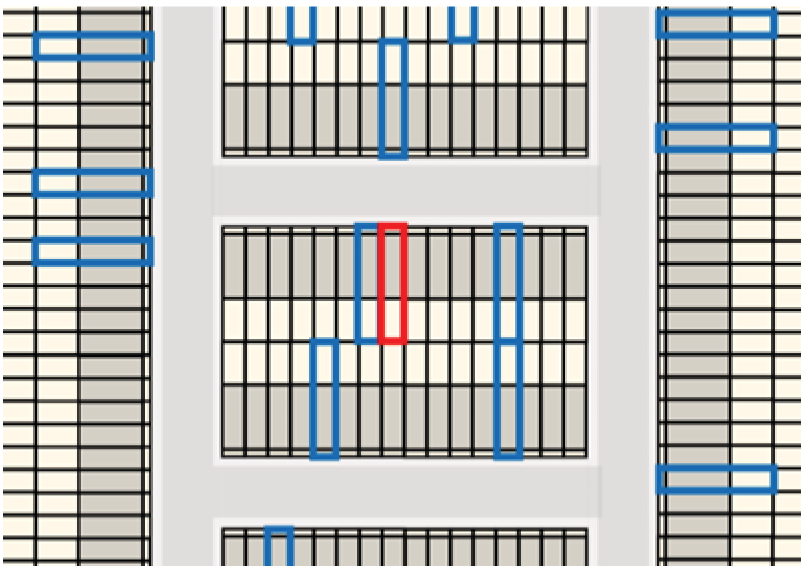
5.15 Consequently, unless it can be demonstrated that significant harm will not arise, it is likely that a situation where a dwellinghouse becomes "sandwiched" between two HMOs will not be found acceptable. An example of a likely unacceptable HMO sandwich situation is demonstrated on the diagram below:



Picture 5.0.1

5.16 In this example above, there would be a dwellinghouse falling within Use Class C3 sitting between an existing HMO (marked in blue) and a proposed HMO (marked in red). This would not be acceptable.

5.17 However, one HMO being located next to another may be acceptable:



Picture 5.0.2

5.18 This will only be considered as an issue where properties are adjacent to each other in a side-by-side format. In such an arrangement, properties are usually closer to their neighbours than properties at the opposite side of a road or where there are gardens between the buildings. Moreover, where there are attached properties, there is a greater likelihood of disturbance being noticed through the adjoining structures.

5.19 Where a building contains flats, the same approach shall also apply but on a horizontal and vertical basis. No flat should abut (to the side, above or below) more than one HMO in the interests of providing suitable living conditions for the occupiers of flats which are likely to be more constrained as a result of their configuration.

Question 1

Will the approach set out at Guidance Topic 1 (Concentration of HMOs) be effective in addressing the concentration of HMOs. If not, are there any other approaches to concentration that we should consider?

6 Guidance Topic 2 - Parking

6.1 This objective is considered to align with the consideration of developments in respect of Policies DM7 and DM14. The Council's Parking Standards currently provide no parking standards for HMOs. By setting out how parking is expected to be provided, it will allow clarity for all.

6.2 An assessment of the location of the existing HMOs within the Swale Borough indicates that many are located in areas where there is limited off-street parking and a reliance, by all, on on-street parking. Parking stress can be detrimental to living conditions and detract from the amenities of an area and, as such, it will be beneficial for such developments to be steered to locations where they can be accommodated or make adequate provisions.

6.3 Census data from the 2021 Census indicates that there were 11,119 privately rented properties in the Swale Borough. HMOs align closest with this type of property tenure.

6.4 Within that, 4,646 of the properties had just one usual resident aged 17 years or over. It is considered that this figure is relevant as most HMO rooms are occupied on a single adult basis and where there are more, this is likely to be balanced out with periods of under-occupancy elsewhere as not all properties are occupied at all times.

6.5 Within those properties, 1,793 had no access to a car, 2,571 had access to a car and 282 had access to two or more cars.

6.6 Using that data and proceeding on the basis that the two or more category would most likely have no more than two cars in the majority of cases, it can be assumed that the 4,646 persons renting privately in the Swale Borough led to car ownership amounting to approximately 3,135 cars. This amounts to a car ownership rate of 0.67 cars per person living alone.

6.7 More broadly, again based on the 2021 Census, of the 15,957 one-person households within the Swale Borough, 5,871 had no access to a car, 8,866 had access to one car, 961 had access to two and 259 had access to 3. That equates to a total of 11,565 cars which amounts to an average of 0.72 cars per person living alone.

6.8 At a Borough level, the 2021 Census indicates that 16.6% of households do not have a car or van. However, for those wards where HMOs were identified, the percentage of households without cars are as follows:

Ward		Ward		Ward	
Abbey	24%	Milton Regis	20%	Sheppey Central	12%
Borden and Grove Park	13%	Minster Cliffs	11%	Teynham and Lynsted	12%
Chalkwell	21%	Murston	21%	Watling	16%
Hartlip, Newington and Upchurch	9%	Queenborough & Halfway	17%	Woodstock	10%
Homewood	20%	Roman	27%		
Kemsley	12%	Sheerness	34%		

Table 6.0.1

6.9 Moreover, using the figures for one-person households only, the percentage of households without cars are as follows:

Ward		Ward		Ward	
Abbey	44%	Milton Regis	44%	Sheppey Central	26%
Borden and Grove Park	34%	Minster Cliffs	33%	Teynham and Lynsted	31%
Chalkwell	41%	Murston	44%	Watling	37%
Hartlip, Newington and Upchurch	28%	Queenborough & Halfway	36%	Woodstock	31%
Homewood	44%	Roman	52%		
Kemsley	28%	Sheerness	55%		

Table 6.0.2

6.10 At a more local level, using the data for the Output Areas where HMOs have been identified, 26.9% of households do not have access to a car, 41.3% of households have access to one car, 23.2% have access to 2 cars and 8.6% have access to 3 cars.

6.11 Proceeding on the basis that each room is occupied independently and is therefore tantamount to an individual household, both elements of evidence support a case that approximately 2 out of 3 occupiers would have access to a car and be located in areas where there is slightly over 1 car per household on average.

6.12 By extension, it is logical to state that car parking should be available at a rate of 0.66 car parking spaces per bedroom, rounded up to the nearest whole parking space. This would mean that a 3 bed HMO would need 2 spaces, a 4 bed HMO would need 3 spaces, 5 and 6 bed HMOs would need 4 spaces, a 7 bed HMO would need 5 spaces, 8 and 9 bed HMOs would need 6 spaces and a 10 bed HMO would need 7 spaces.

6.13 It is noted that the reality is that most HMOs are proposed where the form of the original building, the plot it sits within and the area generally, makes this level of parking provision unlikely in most cases.

6.14 To that end, on-street parking may be a requirement. In that scenario, it is recommended that any application is accompanied with evidence to demonstrate that parking spaces on-street within the vicinity of the site are likely to be available to accommodate the uplift from the existing use (based on the Council's adopted parking standards).

6.15 A Parking Survey, using a methodology such as the Lambeth Methodology, would be an appropriate way to demonstrate the adequate availability of on-street parking. Other approaches could be considered if they provide a robust assessment of parking availability.

Car Parking Permits

6.16 The Swale Parking Permit Policy is available at https://swale.gov.uk/your-council/strategies-and-policies/parking-policy

6.17 This restricts the provision of parking permits and, as such, reliance on parking permits within Controlled Parking Zones is unlikely to be practical for HMOs with more residents than allowed for by the parking policy.

Question 2

Will the approach set out at Guidance Topic 2 (Parking) be effective in ensuring that parking availability is not unduly altered. If not, are there any other approaches to parking availability that we should consider?

7 Guidance Topic 3 - Waste and Recycling Storage and Management

7.1 This objective is considered to align with the consideration of developments in respect of Policies CP4 and DM14, particularly through ensuring that development causes no significant harm to amenity and other sensitive uses or areas and creates safe, accessible, comfortable, varied and attractive places.

7.2 Whilst the provision of refuse storage facilities will primarily be addressed by the Council's Environmental Services team, the role of the HMO SPD is to ensure that refuse storage is provided in a manner that represents high quality design, as required by the abovementioned policies. The provision of discreet and accessible refuse and recycling storage will encourage its use and avoid an expanse of containers being kept at sites and within streets in prominent, visually unfortunate or obstructive arrangements.

7.3 For an HMO that is to be converted from a dwelling, where there are no more than 5 residents, the recycling storage arrangements would be no greater than would arise from the existing dwelling. As such, there would be no additional requirements to provide refuse and recycling storage. For guidance, it is recommended that the property would be entitled to the following provisions and it is recommended that arrangements are made within proposals for their storage and for them to be made available for collection and returned to their storage locations at the appropriate times:

- 1 x 180ltr refuse bin
- 1 x 240ltr recycling bin (with a 2nd provided if needed)
- 1 x 23ltr food bin (with a 2nd provided if needed)
- 1 x 5ltr food caddy

7.4 Where a HMO would have 6 or more persons, it might introduce the need for a larger 240ltr refuse bin or an additional 180ltr refuse bin to be provided. In addition, where there is more than one kitchen, additional 5ltr food caddies can be provided.

7.5 Where the alteration of the use of the building is likely to result in an uplift in the number of bins kept at a site (other than the 5ltr caddies which should be kept within kitchens), it will be expected that plans accompany any application to demonstrate how these will be stored. All such storage should be provided within the building or the plot and it will be expected that the storage will be discreet and/or visually acceptable in the context of the character and appearance of the site and the locality.

7.6 In addition, any management arrangements required to ensure that bins are presented to suitable collection locations and subsequently returned to their storage positions should be detailed within supporting submissions.

7.7 Conditions may be imposed to ensure the provision of adequate storage and management arrangements.

Question 3

Will the approach set out at Guidance Topic 3 (Waste and Recycling Storage and Management) be effective in ensuring that adequate waste/refuse storage and management arrangements are in place. If not, are there any other approaches to waste/refuse storage that we should consider?

8 Guidance Topic 4 - Room Sizes

8.1 This objective is considered to align with the consideration of developments in respect of Policies ST1, CP3 and CP4 by meeting the housing requirements of specific groups, creating accessible and comfortable places, being flexible in order to respond to future changes in use, lifestyle, and demography and delivering a wide choice of high-quality homes.

8.2 Minimum bedroom sizes and standards for licensable HMOs are already in effect under the terms of the Housing Act 2004. However, the HMO SPD will be applicable to all planning applications for HMOs, including those that might not require a licence.

8.3 The Council will expect any planning applications submitted for HMOs to demonstrate room sizes that accord with the National Standards that are currently set out, any standards that replace those standards or any local standards adopted by the Council's Private Sector Housing team, whichever are the largest. At present, the minimum room sizes for bedrooms (taken from the Housing Act) and shared kitchens (taken from the Council's HMO standards) are:

Occupancy	Minimum Bedroom Size for HMO
One child under the age of 10	4.64 square metres
One occupant over 10 years of age	6.51 square metres
Two occupants over 10 years of age	10.22 square metres

Table 8.0.1

Number of People Sharing a Kitchen	Minimum Kitchen Size
1 to 3 people	5 square metres
4 people	6 square metres
5 people	7 square metres
6 people	9 square metres
7 to 10 people	11 square metres

Table 8.0.2

Question 4

Will the approach set out at Guidance Topic 4 (Room Sizes) be effective in ensuring that that bedrooms and kitchens will be of acceptable size. If not, are there any other approaches to room size that we should consider?

9 Other controls, relevant legislation and contacts

9.1 This SPD has been prepared solely from a planning perspective. HMOs and building operations are, however, also controlled by other legislation:

The Housing Act 2004 (Requirement for a Licence)

9.2 This legislative regime is wholly separate from planning. At the time of writing, the Housing Act 2004 effectively states that:

9.3 *A HMO falling within the scope of requiring a license is one that —*

(a) is occupied by five or more persons;

(b) is occupied by persons living in two or more separate households; and

*(c) meet(i)the standard test under section 254(2) of the Act (*https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/34/section/254*)*

(ii) the self-contained flat test under section 254(3) of the Act but is not a purpose-built flat situated in a block comprising three or more self-contained flats; or

(iii) the converted building test under section 254(4) of the Act.

9.4 When granting a licence conditions can be used to control various matters including:

- Gas Safety Certificates;
- Electrical Appliances and Furniture Safety Standards;
- Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm provision;
- The provision of Terms of Occupation to Occupiers;
- Minimum sleeping room sizes;
- Anti-Social behaviour management conditions;
- Repairs; and
- Training of license holders.

9.5 The Licence Application process involves assessing the suitability of the licence holders (fit and proper persons test) and assessing the suitability of the property (shared bathing and toilet facilities and wash hand basins in rooms, kitchen facilities and fire safety facilities and equipment).

9.6 Full details of the approach to HMO Licensing at Swale Borough Council can be found at https://swale.gov.uk/business-licensing-and-procurement/licences-permits-and-consents/houses-in-multiple-occupation.

The Building Act 1984 and The Building Regulations 2010

9.7 Extensions, alterations and works within a building might require approval under the terms of the Building Regulations.

9.8 This is an entirely separate legislative function and the Planning Service at Swale Borough Council operates under a Memorandum of Understanding with the South Thames Gateway Building Control Body (details of which can be found at https://www.stgbc.org.uk).

9.9 Where works are considered to conflict with Building Regulations, they can be brough to the attention of the Building Control Body at the abovementioned website.

9.10 As set out in an earlier section of this SPD, internal works do not require planning permission and so any requirements resulting from the Building Regulations do not affect the assessment of a development from a planning perspective.

Party Wall Act / Civil Matters

9.11 Under the terms of the Party Wall Act 1996, neighbouring landowners are afforded certain protection in some respects. Details of which can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-resolving-disputes-in-relation-to-party-walls/the-party-wall-etc-act-1996-explanatory-booklet.

9.12 Damage, encroachment or any other comparable unauthorised use of a person's land without their consent is a matter for the respective landowners to address between themselves. Swale Borough Council has no remit to enforce property boundaries, resolve disputes or address any disagreements in these respects.

Ventilation

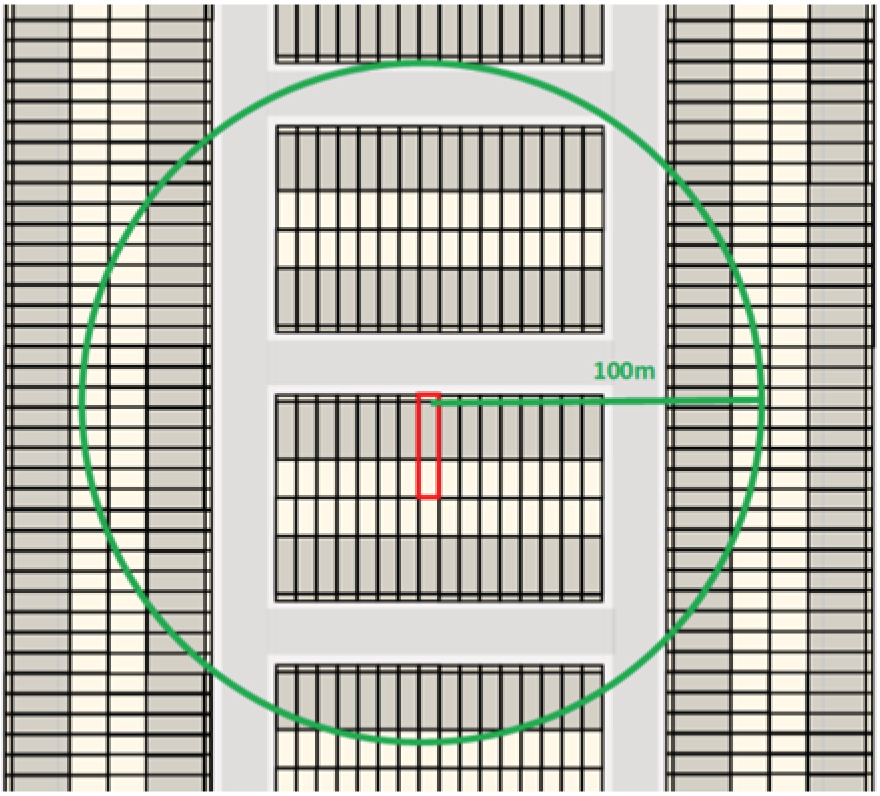
9.13 The ventilation of buildings is addressed through the Building Regulations, in particular Approved Document F.

9.14 It is acknowledged that, in the event of there being inadequate ventilation, there could be consequences with respect to the formation of damp and mould. Should that be the case, it is hereby highlighted that the Council's website (https://swale.gov.uk/housing-council-tax-and-benefits/housing/damp-and-mould/tackling-damp-and-mould-advice-for-tenants) provides assistance and guidance that may be of use to occupiers of such properties within these conditions.

10 Appendix A - HMO Concentration Assessment

Step 1 – Establish Assessment Area

10.1 Identify the location of the proposed HMO and the position of its front door and the spread of a 100m Assessment Area from that centre point.



Picture 10.0.1

Step 2 – Count the number of dwellinghouses within that Assessment Area

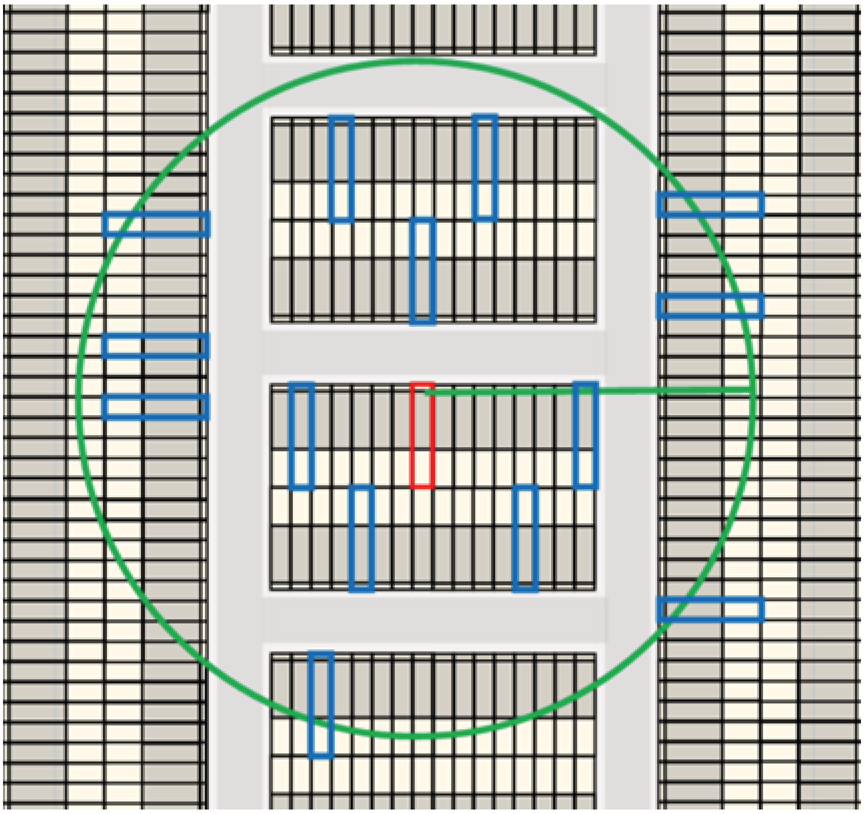
10.2 This includes all dwellings and parts of the planning unit of those dwellings (gardens) that fall within the 100m Assessment Area.

10.3 All buildings other than dwellings and flats are discounted.

10.4 As a working example, there are 146 dwellings in the Assessment Area shown above.

Step 3 – Establish the location of other HMOs within that Assessment Area

10.5 To do so, the Council will use Council Tax, HMO License and Planning records. (These have been demarked in blue on the following diagram. There are 14 currently present in the Assessment Area shown below)



Picture 10.0.2

Step 4 – Undertake Assessment

10.6 Calculate whether the existing or resultant situation would meet the 10% threshold of residential properties (or 30% in an area of mixed use or commercial properties with fewer than 10 residential properties).

10.7 Using the working example above, where there are 146 dwellings within the Assessment Area and 14 HMOs, the addition of an HMO would bring the total to 15 and so the number of HMOs would exceed the 10% threshold.

Question 5

Will the HMO SMD be effective in terms of maintaining the local character of the different areas within the Swale Borough?

Question 6

Will the HMO SPD be effective in terms of maintaining living conditions for existing residents of an area?

Question 7

Are there any other issues that we need to consider?

Appendix II

CONSULTATION STATEMENT

Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document (HMO SPD)

1. Introduction

As required by Regulation 12 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, this Consultation Statement has been prepared in respect of the consultation undertaken with regard to the Council's Draft HMO SPD. A Consultation Statement is required to be prepared to detail the consultation undertaken during the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This statement outlines the consultation that has occurred and the comments received and addresses whether they should be reason to alter the Draft HMO SPD.

2. Purpose and Scope of the HMO SPD

The purpose of the HMO SPD is to guide the application of the Council's existing policies in respect of applications for HMOs. This covers the following matters:

- The avoidance of the over concentration of HMOs
- The availability of adequate parking.
- The provision of storage for waste and recycling and its management.
- The provision of adequate room sizes for future residents.

3. Status of SPD

The HMO SPD would become a material consideration in planning applications.

4. Consultation Process

A two-stage internal engagement and public consultation process has been conducted.

Internal Engagement:

- Internal discussions involved an early draft of the HMO SPD being made available to colleagues within the Council's Private Sector Housing Team and Environmental Services Team.
- Moreover, the paper was presented to the Council's internal Senior Management Team meeting on 26 February 2026. That meeting was attended by, amongst others, representatives of the Council's Housing, Finance, Communications, Environment and Leisure and Environmental Health teams.
- Feedback from these departments informed the preparation of the draft SPD before wider public consultation.
- The Draft HMO SPD was also made available to members of the PTPWG prior to it being presented to the Council's P&R Committee on 11th March 2026. An opportunity was made for Councillors to comment on the draft HMO SPD within the formal meetings and, at the request of a Councillor at the PTPWG meeting, an informal discussion was undertaken prior to the publication of the Draft HMO SPD on the P&R agenda.

Public Consultation (Formal Consultation Period)

- The draft HMO SPD was published for a four-week public consultation period, beginning on 30th March 2026 and ending on 29th April 2026.
- Notifications were sent to consultees, local councillors, Parish and Town Councils, and other interested parties.
- The document was available to view through a link on the Council's web-site and a hard copy would have been available on request at the council office.
- The consultation period was publicised through internal bulletins, press releases and publicity on the Council's website and social media pages.

Using the Council's online consultation tool, in the interests of focusing the consultation responses to the content of the Draft SPD, seven questions were provided:

1. Will the approach set out at Guidance Topic 1 (Concentration of HMOs) be effective in addressing the concentration of HMOs. If not, are there any other approaches to concentration that we should consider?
2. Will the approach set out at Guidance Topic 2 (Parking) be effective in ensuring that parking availability is not unduly altered. If not, are there any other approaches to parking availability that we should consider?
3. Will the approach set out at Guidance Topic 3 (Waste and Recycling Storage and Management) be effective in ensuring that adequate waste/refuse storage and management arrangements are in place. If not, are there any other approaches to waste/refuse storage that we should consider?
4. Will the approach set out at Guidance Topic 4 (Room Sizes) be effective in ensuring that that bedrooms and kitchens will be of acceptable size. If not, are there any other approaches to room size that we should consider?
5. Will the HMO SMD be effective in terms of maintaining the local character of the different areas within the Swale Borough?
6. Will the HMO SPD be effective in terms of maintaining living conditions for existing residents of an area?
7. Are there any other issues that we need to consider?

5. Comments Received

Comments were received from 12 interested parties. These are summarised within the table below and an Officer Response is provided in respect of each comment.

Many of the responses addressed matters beyond the questions that are set out above and, as such, it is not considered prudent to utilise those questions as the basis for summarising the consultation responses. Where those questions have been responded to, this will be made clear in the summary below. Given the nature and number of the responses received, it is considered sensible to summarise the responses and respond to each, rather than group them by topics.

It is noted that where similar exercises have been undertaken, it has been deemed appropriate to highlight where changes to the relevant document are required or not required. In this instance, having had full regard to the comments made, it is not considered that any changes are required and therefore, in the interests of efficiency, this has not been marked on each comment response.

Minster-on-Sea Parish Council	**Officer Response**
Minster-on-Sea Parish Council provided a commentary on each of the component parts of the HMO SPD, setting out that they are supportive of the SPD.	Comments Noted

The response discussed the role that HMOs play in meeting the need of some residents, whilst also acknowledging the shortcomings of such accommodation and the need to ensure that it is provided in an appropriate manner.	Comments Noted
Queenborough Town Council	**Officer Response**
All HMOs should require planning permission and should pass through all the "correct planning permission conditions" which include parking, noise, party wall and room size considerations. HMOs needing planning permission will ensure that town and parish Councils are able to comment on their formation.	The need for planning permission would not be affected by the adoption of the HMO SPD. Room size and parking adequacy considerations are to be addressed by the SPD. However, the other matters raised fall outside the scope of planning.
Sheerness Town Council	**Officer Response**
The response discussed the role that HMOs play in meeting the need of some residents, whilst also acknowledging the shortcomings of such accommodation and the need to ensure that it is provided in an appropriate manner.	Comments Noted
The response noted that Sheerness has a comparatively high number of HMOs relative to the remainder of the Borough and suggests that this causes pressure on services such as waste collection, social services and social care. It is considered that when concerns are raised in the planning process, they are given insufficient consideration. Resources should be provided in the areas that HMO exist to provide the services required to serve residents.	The allocation of resources to serve the needs of communities exceeds the scope of this SPD.
It is suggested that the inappropriate use of Permitted Development Rights should be considered further and that enforcement action should be taken by Swale Borough Council.	The use of permitted development rights by any person is not unreasonable as, by definition, it is their right to do so. After investigating a breach, enforcement action will be taken where it is expedient to do so, in line with the Council's Enforcement Strategy. There has to be a sound basis for taking enforcement action and it is respectfully suggested that there is often a misalignment of what persons think should be enforced against and when enforcement action can actually be reasonably taken.
It is highlighted that a recent motion of SBC's Full Council meeting has been supported by Sheerness Town Council.	Comments Noted

It is highlighted that at a recent SBC meeting, it was suggested that no HMO applications should be considered until the impact of HMOs and work being undertaken by SBC, including in relation to the HMO SPD, has been concluded.	The Council has no power to stop applications being submitted and is duty bound to determine applications as soon as practical. A hiatus cannot reasonably be introduced and, to do so, would put the Council at risk of appeals on the grounds of the non-determination of applications.
Support is given for the controls proposed in relation to the concentration of HMOs that are set out in the SPD. It is considered that the concentration thresholds are already exceeded and, therefore, there should be no more HMOs in Sheerness.	The support is noted, but the suggestion that the threshold is already exceeded is not the finding of Officers. The suggestion that there can be no more HMOs throughout Sheerness is not agreed, particularly as the assessment method proposed is more localised than on a ward level.
The waste management elements of the HMO SPD are noted but it is considered that fly tipping should be prevented and that there should be fines and charges for those responsible to avoid other resources being spent on waste management.	The comments made in relation to fees and charges and the means of addressing fly-tipping, go beyond the scope of the HMO SPD.
Stronger support and action should be provided and the SPD should go further to achieve this.	The HMO SPD has addressed all matters that it is considered reasonable to address, for the reasons given in previous papers.
Historic England	**Officer Response**
No Comment.	Noted.
National Highways	**Officer Response**
No Comment	Noted.
Natural England	**Officer Response**
No Comment	Noted.
Hayley Hope	
No HMO should be approved within an Infrastructure Capacity Assessment in order to address deficiencies relating to primary school places, SEND provision and highway capacity.	There is no overarching policy basis to require this. Officer experience is that very few children reside in HMOs and, as such, most of the matters raised go beyond the scope of this SPD.
A Community Asset Contribution (Community House) should be provided by developers of significant projects. Properties should be donated, placed into Community Land Trusts and made available as a hub for mental health support, community larders, youth groups, the elderly and disabled. Their operation should also be funded for three years by developers.	In the context of HMOs, it is very unlikely that such a provision would meet the tests for planning obligations that are set out at section 122 of the CIL Regulations.

Brownfield land should be prioritised, with HMOs only being considered on previously developed land.	All known HMOs in the Borough have been brought about through the conversion of an existing building or the redevelopment of previously developed land. The use of previously developed land is already promoted within local and national planning policies.
All HMOs should meet the highest energy efficiency standards (EPC A/B) and the SPD should make Voltage Optimisation technology mandatory. This would make energy usage cleaner, reduce waste and reduce bills.	There is no overarching policy basis to require this. Policy DM19 will continue to be applicable to applications for HMOs and it is not considered that there is grounds to require HMOs to achieve a higher energy efficiency standard than would be applied to any other type of development.
A 10% concentration cap within a 100 metre radius should be included.	This aligns with the approach set out within the SPD.
On-site waste storage must be mandatory to prevent 'bin blight' and keep pavements clear from obstruction.	This would be a requirement for larger HMOs but not smaller HMOs as the refuse storage arrangements would be no different to a dwelling and so it would be disproportionate to require provisions to be made for a HMO when such provisions are unlikely to be required for a pre-existing building (particularly as existing dwelling).
Berni Targar	**Officer Response**
There are too many HMOs. The numbers should be controlled and restricted to fit in with the area.	There is no planning policy basis or assessment of demand to say that the existing or increasing supply is exceeding the demand or need for such properties. The SPD attempts to address the concentration of HMOs.
An allegation has been made of a HMO being occupied by a person(s) who has undertaken illegal activities.	Such an allegation should be made to the police and addressing such a matter falls outside the scope of planning and the SPD.
People having lodgers has morphed into HMOs and bedsits being created.	These are three separate categories of residential provision and, whilst there can be some blurring of the distinction between them, this is a matter that falls outside the scope of this SPD which is only intended to address HMOs.
HMOs make parking inadequacies worse.	This is a matter that is addressed by the SPD.
Occupiers are short-term renters who do not engage with the local community.	The engagement of residents of any type of residential property with the local community cannot be controlled by planning.
Tyone Bland	**Officer Response**
The imposition of HMOs on the overcrowded community will make that overcrowding worse.	The HMO SPD does not propose HMOs, it seeks to ensure that they are provided in an acceptable manner.

The provision of HMOs is driven by greed and is detrimental to all.	This comment goes outside the remit of planning.
HMOs accommodate people that you would not want in your community and yet they are forced upon a community.	The HMO SPD could not control who occupies a HMO.
Greater restrictions should be applied to protect local communities so that they take priority over a person attempting to make money.	The HMO SPD is attempting to guide matters that relate to planning.
"It's not wanted on our island."	Opinion of respondent is noted.
Mr Kennedy	**Officer Response**
Question 1 - HMOs are being created in Queenborough Conservation Area, an area lived in by the elderly and young people, and are out of character with the town.	The locations where HMOs have been formed have been assessed within the HMO SPD. The effect on the character of an area is an element of the reasoning for preparing the HMO SPD.
Question 1 - Parking of vans blocks light and this is made worse by charging for car parking.	Parking in the highway is controlled under other legislation and can occur with buildings that are occupied as dwellings or HMOs. Charging for parking is outside the remit of planning.
Question 1 - The occupiers of HMOs are often single males who undertake illegal activities and are a terrible image for visitors.	The HMO SPD would not attempt to control the gender of residents of an HMO. Illegal activities should be reported to the police.
Question 2 - HMOs result in more on-street parking which compounds issues arising from the charging for car parking, including congestion.	The HMO SPD attempts to ensure that HMOs are located in areas where suitable parking is available.
Question 3 - The conversion of terraced properties means there is insufficient space for bins.	Smaller HMOs have the same refuse storage requirements as dwellings. Refuse storage provisions for larger HMOs are addressed by the HMO SPD
Question 4 - Room quality (avoiding damp and having ventilation) is as much of an issue as room size.	The HMO SPD can only build upon existing policies and cannot introduce new controls and, as such, the provision of ventilation and the avoidance of damp is not considered to be able to be within the scope of the SPD.
Question 5 - There will be no enforcement. Residents' views should be considered before allowing developments.	Planning Enforcement occurs where there are breaches of planning control and it is expedient for action to be taken. There is often a difference between what is unwanted by an interested party and what is unlawful such that enforcement action could be taken. All comments made on planning applications are considered when planning applications are determined.

Question 6 - There will be no attention to local residents or maintaining the existing character of an area.	As established, many HMOs have been formed without planning permission being required. In those instances, there is no arena for the views of local residents to be considered. The views of local residents will be considered when an application is determined, along with planning policies and all other material considerations.
Question 7- The removal of interior fittings within a conservation area has occurred.	Such works do not require planning permission.
Question 7- Combined with the introduction of parking charges SBC are making daily life quite difficult for residents	Parking fees are outside the scope of the HMO SPD.
Antony Dennant	**Officer Response**
Question 1 - Speaking as a long term resident and landlord in respect of rental properties, it is considered that the controls will be ineffective as the SPD acknowledges that there are likely to be HMOs that are unknown to the Council as they did not require planning permission.	There is an ever increasing evidence base in relation to the existence of HMOs. The Council can only act on the evidence it has available. It is relevant to note that the SPD would influence future decisions of the Council but cannot alter previous developments, whether they needed planning permission or not.
Question 1 -The HMOs that exist have had a disastrous effect on the character of Alma Road.	A purpose of the HMO SPD is to ensure that the character of areas is retained. The HMO SPD will not and cannot introduce any powers to remove any existing HMOs or re-instate the character of any areas that have been perceived to be harmed.
Question 1 -The concentration of HMOs is Sheerness is disproportionate. Rather than taking a formula approach as suggested, Officers should visit sites and neighbourhoods to see the effects of development.	Officers will already make an assessment of the effect of developments on the character of an area and will visit sites in undertaking this assessment. However, a site visit can only represent a snap-shot in time. The suggested use of a concentration cap would give a greater tool for making such an assessment than would otherwise exist.
Question 1 - Accusation are made in respect of illegal activities and criminal behaviour undertaken by HMO residents.	These matters should be reported to other authorities and are outside the scope of the HMO SPD.
Question 1 - The respondent suggests that the comments within the HMO SPD are laughable when considered in relation to Alma Road.	The respondent's perception of Alma Road cannot be a reflection of the content of the HMO SPD as it is not in effect yet. It is suggested that the HMO SPD will be a tool to assist with ensuring that development is of high quality, being an additional tool to those that currently exist.

Question 2 - Parking in Alma Road is difficult and more properties are being converted to HMOs. There is insufficient parking enforcement. There is no solution that can help that area of Sheerness, the better option would be to spread the provision of HMOs across the Borough. It is perceived that Sheerness is the "dumping ground" of the Borough and that these developments would not be proposed in Faversham.	The Council has not allocated locations for HMOs to be provided. There are numerous supply, demand and other market factors that influence where HMOs have been formed. Parking enforcement is a matter that falls outside the scope of the HMO SPD. However, the proposed parking adequacy assessments that are set out within the HMO SPD are intended to ensure that future HMOs are located where adequate parking can be provided.
Question 3 - Refuse bins are not an issue but an issue exists around the use of bags for waste which are accessible to foxes and cats. In addition, the residents of HMOs do not have the inclination to care for the property or area and, as such, are likely to dispose of items in a careless manner. Moreover, landlords are disinterested or absent with no interest in maintaining the standards of a property or the area. In combination this causes areas to become "intractable, feral state" which is distressing to those who do care and have aspirations. HMOs should not be provided unless this matter can be addressed.	The HMO SPD addresses waste provision for larger HMOs as the Council's arrangements for smaller HMOs are the same as they are for dwellings and so any change of use would not derive any additional requirements that planning could reasonably address. The final comment is noted and aligns with the aims of the HMO SPD.
A. Elliot (Rock Road Residents).	**Officer Response**
Question 1 - The SPD is a step in the right direction but more should be done to notify residents of proposed HMOs. An example is cited where a HMO was introduced under permitted development rights without warning.	When they are formed through permitted development rights, notification is not possible as the Council will not have prior knowledge. The Council does not undertake consultation in respect of applications for Certificate of Lawfulness which is the only early warning that the Council may have. This is a sound process as applications for Certificates are determined on a factual basis and not on the grounds of the assessment of planning merits, either by the Council or by interested third parties.
Question 1 - Matters relating to the Party Wall Act have been referenced and accusations have been made about the conduct of the property owners.	The Party Wall Act is not planning legislation and is outside the remit of the Council. The conduct of property owners is not hereby commented on.
Question 2 - Parking is an issue and the approach suggested would seem sensible.	Noted

Question 3 - Larger waste provisions should be made. Experiences of poor waste management leading to animals accessing waste and causing problems have been cited. It has been suggested that many residents, for many reasons, are not familiar with good waste management practices and that they should be educated.	The HMO SPD is not attempting to specify the amount of storage that should be provided as that is controlled by other departments of the Council. The SPD is, however, seeking to control the means of storing waste bins for larger properties. This is considered to be a proportionate approach to take and sound in the context of the scope of planning control. The HMO SPD is not attempting to educate residents in relation to waste management techniques as that is beyond the scope of planning.
Question 4 - An example is cited of a HMO having insufficient room sizes and soundproofing. It is suggested that the Building Regulations approval should not have been given.	Room sizes would be controlled under the terms of the HMO SPD in respect of those HMOs where planning permission is required. Soundproofing between buildings is addressed, where applicable, by other legislation and it is not appropriate for planning to attempt to replicate other legislation. The approval of building regulations falls outside the scope of the HMO SPD.
Question 5 - Neighbours should be consulted when HMOs are introduced. It is suggested that residents neighbouring a HMO should be given a Council Tax reduction. The effects of a HMO on living conditions have been cited.	Neighbours are consulted where there is an arena to do so, i.e. a planning application. This is not achievable where a person is utilising permitted development rights to introduce an HMO. The HMO SPD cannot influence Council Tax. The provision of acceptable living conditions for all parties is the aim of the HMO SPD and planning policy more generally.
Question 6 - An example is cited of the impact of the construction process for a HMO on neighbouring residents. Accusations are made about the conduct and competency of builders and it is considered that the Council showed no regard to the concerns of and harms caused to neighbouring residents. This has continued since residents have occupied the building. Existing residents should be protected.	The accusations made relate to matters that fall outside the scope of planning control. Planning enforcement action can only be taken where there is a breach of planning control and so it is respectfully suggested that the Council not taking action should only be taken to reflect that there was no action that could be reasonably taken rather than that regard was not being had to interested parties.
Question 7 - More control should be had in respect of planning and building control in order to protect existing residents.	Building Control is outside the scope of the HMO SPD. The majority of the matters that have been raised would fall outside the scope of planning and, noting that the cited example was an incident of a HMO being formed under the terms of permitted development rights, the HMO SPD would not have any effect on a comparable situation if it were to occur elsewhere.

This page is intentionally left blank

Policy and Resources Committee	
Meeting Date	17 June 2026
Report Title	PlanX Software - approach to Service Charge
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Joanne Johnson Head of Place
Lead Officer	Carly Stoddart Digital Improvement Manager
Classification	**Open**
Recommendations	1. That the Committee recommends to Full Council that the service charge for PlanX is applied in accordance with paragraph 2.9 of this report.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

1.1 The Planning Service has recently been successful in its bid to receive £23,500 of funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to purchase a subscription to PlanX, a bespoke development management platform which helps accelerate the digitisation of planning data and services, with benefits for customer service and staff time. PlanX provides Local Planning Authorities with the ability to offer digital services to customers utilising open data giving more accurate and quicker responses to customer queries in accordance with the Government's Local Digital Declaration, that is supported by Swale Borough Council as signatory, and the principles of the Council's own Data Quality Standard.

1.2 The Planning Service has chosen to use the PlanX platform as it simplifies planning processes for customers, using open-source data which can:

- Reduce confusion
- Improve access to services and information
- Increase self-service access to information
- Reduce reliance on phone and in person support
- Reduce waiting time
- Result in more efficient use of resources by allowing greater focus on planning activities
- Improve transparency

It would also enable the Planning Service to align with neighbouring and other Local Planning Authorities in Kent such as Maidstone, Canterbury and Medway who are also either already using or are in the onboarding process for using PlanX.

1.3 To enable continued use of services delivered through PlanX in future years, the platform includes a service charge paid for by the customer which contributes to the maintenance of the platform and to discounts on the annual subscription going forward. The service charge is set up so that it would be applied to submitted applications and/or service requests, such as requests for pre-application advice and requests to submitted amendments or further information in relation to live applications, that have a fee of £100 or more. For example, a request for pre-application advice for householder development proposal would be the current fee + the service charge. A proportion of this service charge is then applied as discount towards the renewal of the annual subscription. The Council can choose to opt in or opt out of this service charge.

1.4 The application of the service charge would make a significant contribution to the annual subscription cost, enabling continued provision of digitally supported services for our customers in accordance with our commitment to improving digital service delivery. This aligns with the Corporate Plan as it would enable the Planning Service to operate more cost effectively and deliver services in a transparent, responsible and efficient way.

1.5 This report sets out the benefits of opting in to the service charge.

2 Background

2.1 As part of their commitment to delivering the ambitions of the Digital Declaration, MHCLG works with Councils and industry experts as partners through the Open Digital Planning (ODP) community to develop products that are designed to improve the delivery of planning services through digital transformation. PlanX has been developed through ODP by Local Planning Authorities along with the product development company, Open Systems Lab (OSL) as a platform to deliver a wide range of services using open data provided by the relevant Council to a set standard that is consistent with other Local Authorities.

2.2 MHCLG is supporting the implementation of PlanX to assist Councils with the delivery of multiple digital services in a transparent, efficient and effective way for customers. The services created within the platform utilise spatial data provided by the Council to the required standard that is consistent with other Councils, allowing planning constraints relevant to a specific property to be checked. This improves the current situation for the customer as it provides for a more accurate, location specific response to enquiries in one place, as well as allowing connections and links through to other follow up services that the customer may like to follow.

2.2 Having received the grant funding from MHCLG, the Council is currently in the onboarding process for the implementation of PlanX. As part of that process, the Council needs to decide whether it opts in or opts out of applying the service charge. The annual subscription for PlanX depends on the size of the Council (based on the number of applications received last year) and whether it opts in or out of applying the service charge. Currently, the costs are as follows:

Table 1: Opt-in to Service Charge

Initial subscription fee	£15,000
Service charges	A service charge of £40 + VAT is applied on applications that have a service fee of £100 or more. Some of these service charges count as a discount towards the next renewal cost of PlanX. The more people using the services, the less PlanX costs. Ultimately, the goal is for PlanX to be able to pay for itself.
Estimated renewal costs	Depending on the number of service charges collected, it is estimated that the future renewal cost might be: £8,400 - £8,900 This is based on latest available data from planning authorities using PlanX.

Table 2: Opt out of Service Charge

Initial subscription fee	£25,000
Service charges	Authorities can choose to opt out of service charges for a £10k fee in addition to the subscription cost. No discounts will be applied to any future subscriptions.
Estimated renewal costs	With service charges opted out, no discounts are applied. The renewal cost will be: £25,000

2.3 By opting into the service fee, the subscription fee for subsequent years is substantially lower than when opting out given that the service charge contributes to a discount. The Council is to use £15,000 of the £23,500 MHCLG grant to pay for the first year subscription and would then be able to use the remaining £8,500 grant money towards all or a substantial part of the second year subscription fee.

2.4 For the purposes of moving towards obtaining funds to maintain the annual subscription after the first year, officers are seeking to transfer the Council's existing fee charging pre-application advice service as one of the initial services to be delivered through the PlanX platform, with other fee paying services to follow. This is to be provided alongside guidance services, such as 'find out if you need planning permission' which are free of charge to the customer. By introducing a fee charging service early on and opting into the service charge, it allows for funds to be built up contributing to a larger discount towards the subscription fee the following year. Whilst it is acknowledged by officers that the pre-application advice fee paying service alone will not generate enough of a discount to cover the entire cost of the subscription next year, this will be supplemented as stated above using the remaining £8,500 from the MHCLG grant.

2.5 As set out in the table 1 above, the result of opting in to the service charge would mean there would be an additional £40+VAT (£48) added to the existing fee for any fee charging service. This service charge is a fixed charge applicable to any fee that the Council has set at £100 or more. The service charge does not adjust relative to the overall fee for the applicable Council service.

2.6 In relation to the pre-application advice service, this would mean the service charge would be added on to most categories for pre-application advice as set out below in Tables 3 & 4 (Existing Pre-application advice and post-decision advice fee schedules).

Existing Pre-application advice and post-decision advice fee schedules

Table 3: Pre-application advice fees, inclusive of VAT.

Householder Pre-App – £360.00

Site visit at officer discretion

Minor Developments Pre-App – £989.50

A minor development is one where any of the following applies:

- Includes between 1 to 9 dwellings.
- Covers up to 0.5 hectares.
- Commercial development less than 1,000 square metres

Major Developments Pre-App – **£3,545.50**

A major development is one where any of the following applies:

- Includes between 10 to 49 houses or flats.
- Covers between 0.51 to 2 hectares.
- Commercial development between 1,000 to 4,999 square metres

Large Major Developments Pre-App – **£5,395.50**

A large major development is one where any of the following applies:

- Includes 50 - 249 houses or flats.
- Covers between 2.1 to 5 hectares.
- Commercial development between 5,000 to 9,999 square metres

Strategic Major Development Pre-App - £6,500 + Discounted PPA (see separate fee schedule for PPAs)

- Includes 250+ houses or flats.
- Covers more than 5 hectares.
- Commercial development of 10,000 square metres or more

Other Fees

Listed Building (householder) – written advice only – you will pay £150.00.

Heritage & Urban Design attendance at meeting (PER HOUR) – £260.00

NB: the Listed Building and the Heritage and Urban Design fees are in addition to those above, however written advice will continue to be provided on a case-by-case basis.

Any other advice not set out above – meeting and or written at officer discretion - hourly rates– price on application.

* **Parish Councils, Voluntary Organisations, National Charities or Charities that are not 'not-for-profit'** will be charged at 50% of the above pre-application advice fee

Design Review – To be advised at the time of request

Admin Fee – An admin fee of £75 will be applied to any refund that may have been agreed due to exceptional circumstances.

Table 4: Post decision and follow-up pre-application advice fees

Advice	**Suggested Fee**
Follow up advice – minor amendments to a proposal following initial advice.	Hourly rate – to be calculated at submission and worked out depending on the amendment or can be invoiced after and could be charged at an hourly rate or part thereof
Post decision advice – refusal	50% of relevant pre-app fee
Amendments to an approved scheme	Hourly rate – to be calculated at submission and worked out depending on the amendment or can be invoiced after

	and could be charged at an hourly rate or part thereof
Discharge of conditions	Hourly rate – to be calculated at submission and worked out depending on the number of conditions and what they cover or can be invoiced after and could be charged at an hourly rate or part thereof

2.7 Whilst this will be an increase in cost for customers, it will make a significant contribution to improved self-service for all planning customers but particularly when used in conjunction with guidance services such as, 'find out if you need planning permission'. Guidance services such as this enables a more comprehensive check of individual sites in one place on our website compared to the service the Council currently provides. Through the PlanX platform, relevant checks for the type of development proposed are made of constraints such as whether the site sits within a conservation area, is a listed building, if there is a TPO and if an Article 4 Direction is in place. Currently, customers would need to know to check these constraints and would have to make those checks in multiple places.

2.8 Should they wish to progress and continue the journey following use of a guidance service such as the 'find out if you need planning permission', the customer is easily directed to relevant onward services, some of which will be fee paying services, such as 'apply for pre-application advice' where the service charge would apply. Linking services in this way makes it easier for the customer to navigate through what can often be confusing and/or complex planning rules in one place within the Council's website. The linking of services provides a more convenient and easier way of making requests and may also increase uptake of fee paying services such as seeking pre-application advice.

2.9 It is anticipated that in addition to requests for pre-application advice, all other fee paying planning services be delivered through PlanX where possible. These services would also be subject to the service charge as described above. It is recommended the Council's website be updated to clearly state the service charge will be applied as an addition to the stated fee. This would need to be clearly stated in relation to each fee paying service as and when they are delivered through PlanX.

3 Proposals

3.1 That the Committee recommends to Full Council that the service charge for PlanX is applied in accordance with paragraph 2.9 of this report.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

4.1 To opt in and apply the service charge but adjust the existing pre-application advice fees and other non-statutory services with fees, such as the submission of amendments and further information, down by £48 for the current set fees. This would result in the service charge being absorbed into the existing fee total so ultimately although the customer would see a service charge applied, it would result in no change in terms of what they are currently paying. For the fees calculated by the hourly rate, this would need to be calculated upon request as is currently the case, but officers would need to minus the service charge from the total. This process would need to be clearly stated on the Council's website.

4.2 Officers have not recommended this option as the pre-application advice fees and other non-statutory services with fees have not been updated in this new financial year and currently remain the same as last year. The submission of pre-application advice requests for the period of 01/04/2024 - 31/03/2025 and 01/04/2025 – 31/03/2026 was stable at 141 and 140 requests across each of the two financial years respectively despite fee increases being applied within those years. On this basis it is considered that the application of the service fee to provide for improved, more accurate and efficient services is reasonable and justified. Not taking this approach would also create a budget pressure for subscription costs for year three onwards.

4.3 To opt in and apply the service charge but adjust the existing pre-application advice fees and other non-statutory services with fees such as the submission of amendments and further information, down by £48 for the current set fees for pre-app advice requests related to householder development only and for the submission of amendments and further information related to applications where the fee is currently under £299 only. The £48 that would be lost on these fees could be absorbed elsewhere by adjusting other fees. Again, this would result in the service charge being absorbed into the existing fee total for these smaller fee charging services so ultimately although the customer would see a service charge applied, it would result in no change in terms of what they are currently paying. There would be an increase in fees for larger application types.

4.4 Officers have not recommended this option for the reasons set out in 4.2, it is complicated and the service fee is linked to the use of PlanX rather than the value of the service.

4.5 To opt out of the service charge. This is not recommended as the Council would need to fund an additional £1,500 towards the first year subscription and would not benefit from any discounts on subscription fees for subsequent years. This would create an immediate budget pressure, as well as being required to fund the ongoing cost of £25,000 each year, which is currently unbudgeted.

4.6 To apply the service charge proportionately and relative to the different levels of fee within each fee paying services. Officers have not recommended this approach as it not possible under the PlanX payment structure.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 The proposal to opt in to the service charge has been discussed informally with senior officers.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The proposals would align with the Corporate Plan as it would enable the Planning Service to better operate within its resources whilst delivering the service in a transparent and efficient way.
Financial, Resource and Property	The proposal to opt in to the service charge means a lower subscription charge within the first year that is well below the £23,500 grant funding. Applying the service charge results in a discount to the following year's subscription which combined with the remaining £8,500 of grant funding means the subscription for year two will be either substantially or fully covered. It is anticipated that further fee paying planning services are introduced at the earliest opportunity during the first two years to ensure the use of PlanX becomes self funded. The improvements for customers in terms of access to more accurate information and for them to self serve leads to efficiencies in the use of officer time.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The provision of a planning function and processing applications made to the Planning Service is a statutory requirement. However, other services such as the provision of pre-application and post-decision advice, are discretionary elements of the planning function that already occurs within Swale. In accordance with Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 and Section 3 of the Localism Act 2011, the suggested approach to opt in to the service charge to recover costs associated with this work is lawful and has no other legal implications. The contract will be procured via the GCloud framework which is compliant with Contract Standing Orders. The contract will be drawn up using terms and conditions which have been approved by Mid Kent Legal Services and Finance. The benefit of applying the service charge for use of PlanX will result in the annual subscription ultimately being paid for in future

	years, therefore not drawing on the Council's budget. The service charge is considered reasonable and proportionate. The use of PlanX and its use of open-source data contributes to the provision of digital services and improving accessibility. The PlanX product has been innovatively developed between the product developer and Local Planning Authorities to achieve faster, more efficient services. Improved and more accessible data provided in a format consistent across many Local Planning Authorities results in greater opportunities for customers to access a more cost-effective, inclusive and transparent Planning Service. The use of digital workflows supports NPPS objectives around public sector innovation and modernisation and resilience in digital infrastructure.
Crime and Disorder	There are no implications for crime and disorder.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	Opting in to the service charge for PlanX would not result in any direct implications in respect of the environment and the climate/ecological emergency.
Health and Wellbeing	There are no implications for health and wellbeing.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	There are no implications for the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	There is a risk to the image of the Council arising from the introduction of a service fee that is adding more cost for applicants. However, the introduction of a fee for this service is comparable to the Planning Portal in terms of there being a service fee, difference being, the fee for the PlanX platform is that it is cheaper. It is considered that the benefits of opting into the service fee will outweigh the limited additional costs. The benefits of improved access to data and services may have positive reputational benefits. No Health and Safety issues are anticipated.
Equality and Diversity	None at this stage.

Privacy and Data Protection	None at this stage.

7 Appendices

7.1 None

8 Background Documents

8.1 Local Digital Declaration
Link: Read the Local Digital Declaration | Local Digital

Policy & Resources Committee	
Meeting Date	17 June 2026
Report Title	Financial Management Report – Outturn 2025/26
EMT Lead	Lisa Fillery, Director of Resources
Head of Service	Claire Stanbury, Head of Finance & Procurement
Lead Officer	Caroline Frampton, Principal Accountant
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. To note the reduced take from the budget contingency reserve of £572k to deliver a balanced outturn position. 2. To note the level of reserves at 31 March 2026 as detailed in table 3. 3. To note the capital slippage of £21.054m and capital expenditure of £14.791m against the revised budget as detailed in table 4 and appendix II.

1. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

1.1 This report sets out the revenue and capital outturn position for 2025/26. The report is based on service activity for the whole of 2025/26 and documents the final expenditure and income in the year, including transfers to and from reserves.

1.2 The purpose of the report is to compare the actual expenditure and income incurred in 2025/26 to the budget and to provide explanations for any variances. The report also highlights the reprofiling of capital budgets as a result of slippage on projects where budgets have already been approved.

1.3 The headline figures are:
- £585k use of reserves to deliver a balanced outturn – Table 1;
- Gross capital expenditure of £14.791m, net capital spend funded from borrowing of £1.439m – table 4; and,
- £21.054m reprofiled slippage of capital spend – appendix II.

2. Background

2.1 The Council operates a budget monitoring process at Head of Service level, with regular reports throughout the year to the Policy and Resources Committee and the Executive Management Team.

3. Proposals

Revenue Outturn

Table 1: Variance by Service

		Working Budget £'000	Projected Outturn £'000	Projected Variance £'000
Chief Executive		813	857	44
Communications & Policy		376	361	(15)
Elections, Democratic Services & Information Governance		1,172	1,203	31
Housing & Community		4,421	4,718	296
Planning		1,203	1,773	570
Environment & Leisure		8,988	9,079	91
Regeneration & Economic Development		(384)	(327)	57
Finance & Procurement		785	756	(29)
Revenues & Benefits	Shared Services	539	539	0
Environmental Health	Shared Services	684	641	(43)
Information Technology	Shared Services	1,453	1,400	(52)
Internal Audit	Shared Services	165	134	(32)
Human Resources	Shared Services	493	493	0
Legal	Shared Services	701	581	(120)
Drainage Board Levy		1,049	1,018	(31)
Corporate Overheads & Capital Financing		4,638	3,292	(1,346)
NET REVENUE SERVICE EXPENDITURE		**27,095**	**26,518**	**(578)**
Financed by:				
Budget Contingency Reserve		(1,160)	(581)	579
Revenue Support Grant		(362)	(363)	(0)
Other Grants		(2,088)	(2,087)	0
Business Rates		(12,104)	(12,104)	(0)
New Homes Bonus		(988)	(988)	(0)
Collection Fund Surplus		45	44	(1)
Council Tax Requirement		(10,439)	(10,439)	(0)
TOTAL FINANCING		**(27,095)**	**(26,518)**	**578**
NET EXPENDITURE (Contribution (to)/from General Fund)		**0**	**(0)**	**(0)**

3.1 Table 1 shows the forecast position at service level, with a further breakdown provided at Appendix I.

3.2 The variances with brackets are underspends, i.e. income received was greater than the budget or the spend was less than budget; variances with no brackets are overspends, i.e. the income was less than the budget, or the spend was more than budget.

3.3 Significant variances from budget (£20,000 or more) are explained below.

3.4 **Chief Executive overspend £44,000**
<u>Strategic Management Team £36,000 overspend</u>
The main contributing factors are professional subscriptions and development events for Councillors and senior management. The budget has been increased for 2026/27 budget to address this in future years.

3.5 **Elections, Democratic Services & Information Governance overspend £31,000**
<u>Electoral Services £56,000 overspend</u>
This is due to the increasing costs of the yearly canvass the budget has been increased in 2026/27 to address this.

3.6 **Housing & Community Services £294,000 overspend**
<u>Homelessness £367,000 overspend</u>
There are a number of contributing factors to this overspend.

The cost of temporary accommodation was forecast to be significantly above budget at quarter 2, with a predicted overspend of £550k and the outturn position has seen a significant increase to £698k. Quarter 4 saw an increase in both placement costs and the numbers of homeless placements. The increase in the need has partially resulted from the introduction of the Renters Rights Act, which saw evictions taking place ahead of the changes in legislation.

The overspend on temporary accommodation is partially offset by additional grants and contributions of £374k.

Bad debts relating to homelessness have resulted in an overspend of £43k. Work is ongoing to recover homelessness debts.

<u>Community Services £56,000 underspend</u>
The underspend in Community Services is primarily down to the Loneliness project, as that is being funded in year by UK SPF grants.

3.7 **Planning £570,000 overspend**
<u>Planning £653,000 overspend</u>
The overspend relates to agency costs and reduced planning income.

The increase in agency expenditure results from us continuing to fill the permanent vacancies created by the planning restructure, which came into effect on 1 April 2024. Attempts are ongoing to recruit to vacancies with some success, but there are still problems recruiting to more senior posts. As a result, various options are being explored such as the use of recruitment agencies, and a temporary structure change to help grow talent internally. A temporary growth request has been included in the 2026/27 budget to allow for mentoring to take place so that staff can be promoted to the senior posts internally, and the lower posts can then be recruited to.

Planning income for the year was down by £349k compared to budget. Planning application income had bounced back at the start of the third quarter from a bad

September but dropped significantly again in November. December saw an improvement but was still below the budget for the month. The fourth quarter income continued to improve but again was still below the budget for the quarter. As demonstrated planning income is incredibly difficult to predict.

Although Planning has significantly overspent, this is an improved position on the previous financial year, as a result of some of the work carried out to bring the overspend under control.

<u>Appeals £54,000 underspend</u>
Appeal costs much lower than anticipated at quarters 2 and 3, this underspend helped to offset other planning costs.

3.8 **Environment & Leisure £91,000 overspend**
<u>Leisure Services £113,000 overspend</u>
The main overspend is £158,000 on grounds maintenance, which has resulted from a savings target of £175,000 that was set but not achieved due to changes in national legislation at the time of negotiation. A contract cost reduction of £75,000 was negotiated, which has been partially achieved in 2025/26, and should be fully realised in future years. Growth of £100,000 has been included in the proposed budget for 2026/27 to reflect the actual contract cost.

Country parks and open spaces are seeing an increased need, and therefore cost, for maintenance and repairs, and there is also a reduction in income for open spaces, all of which are contributing to this overspend. There has also been a delay in achieving the savings associated with Perry Wood, as the disposal is not yet complete, although negotiations are taking place.

Additional professional property costs have been incurred to support the Sheerness pool feasibility work, which also contributes to the overspend in Leisure Services.

There are some underspends on staffing costs that help to reduce the overall overspend in this year.

<u>Environmental Services £55,000 overspend</u>
Income from garden waste scheme £63k lower than budget. This was anticipated at quarter 3. Additional costs of £135k incurred with the purchase of wheeled bins, this is offset by additional grants and lower than anticipated costs on special collections.

<u>Parking & Highways £57,000 underspend</u>
Additional income from street naming of £19k, due to a significant increase in income in the last quarter of the financial year. There was also a reduced shared service cost for the Parking Service costs of £22k due to staff vacancies.

<u>Climate Change £20,000 underspend</u>
Underspend on consultancy costs as the project has slipped into 2026/27.

3.9 **Regeneration & Economic Development £57,000 overspend**
Swale House Operations £44,000 underspend
This is mostly due to underspends on utility costs which have been forecast during the year.

Buildings Maintenance £25,000 overspend
Building maintenance costs across the estate has overspent by £72,000. This primarily relates to maintenance of Swallows Leisure Centre and public conveniences.

Asset Management £132,000 overspend
The overspend primarily relates to NNDR on empty properties and service charges on public realm at Bourne Place, along with rental incomes that were not achieved in year. This is partially offset by rent increases across the estate. The commercial rent budgets are being reviewed as part of budget setting for 2026/27.

Economic Development £56,000 underspend
The underspend in Economic Development is primarily down to vacant posts, that are proving incredibly difficult to recruit to. This is not a new situation, and various attempts have been made to recruit. Another one year growth bid has been included in the proposed budget to continue the use of interim staff until a permanent solution is found. There is also an increase in the funding this year from the UK SPF grant for staff input, but this is not an ongoing grant and so should be considered as an in-year windfall.

3.10 **Finance & Procurement £29,000 underspend**
Financial Services £32,000 underspend
The underspend is due to salary savings and vacancies within the team. Some vacant hours were being which will be reviewed as the team settles and the new financial management system is introduced.

3.11 **Revenues & Benefits break even**
Housing Benefits £27,000 underspend
Revenues & Benefits Administration £27,000 overspend

3.12 **Environmental Health £43,000 underspend**
The shared service for Environmental Health is currently carrying a vacancy, which accounts for the majority of this underspend.

3.13 **Information Technology £52,000 underspend**
IT Service £109,000 underspend
This is due to vacant posts being held within ICT Development, Network and Support and GIS teams. There is an expectation for vacant posts to be filled.

Maintenance & Licences £57,000 overspend
The overspend is due to major systems moving to the cloud. Systems with unbudgeted cloud costs in 2025/26 are Confirm, Academy, TechOne, and IKEN. TechOne budget was built in previously, but not until 2026/27. The other cost increases are part of the 2026/27 proposed budget.

3.14 **Internal Audit £32,000 underspend**
This underspend is due to vacant posts, which have been managed through a use of external providers, whilst still remaining within budget.

3.15 **Human Resources break even**
<u>HR Service £17,000 underspend</u>
<u>Corporate Training £69,000 overspend</u>
<u>Apprenticeships £52,000 underspend</u>
HR budgets have been managed holistically, with the underspend in apprenticeship costs being used to fund training for existing staff. Apprentices are still employed throughout the authority, but those in post are currently funded directly from the relevant services.

3.16 **Drainage Board Levy £31,000 underspend**
The underspend on the drainage board levy is mainly due to a small government grant received in 2025/26. This is not a guaranteed levy for future years, and therefore has not been included as part of the budget.

3.17 **Corporate Overheads & Capital Financing £1,346,430 underspend**
<u>Interest & Capital Financing £537,000 underspend</u>
With interest rates being slow to drop, interest on investments is above budget and the additional income has been used to balance the overall position.

<u>Non Distributed Pension Costs £23,000 underspend</u>
Negotiations in 2024/25 have resulted in a further reduction in our contribution to the pension backfunding position.

<u>Corporate Overheads £25,000 underspend</u>
This is primarily a result of further savings from the insurance contract that was retendered.

<u>Corporate Costs/Provisions £762,000 underspend</u>
This underspend is a result of excess budgets built up over time from inflation calculations and such like, with the biggest contributor being the waste and street cleansing contract, which was estimated at a time of hyper inflation. This has been taken into consideration during the budget build for 2026/27, when assessing the required inflation for increases to pay and contracts, along with the pension contribution required following the recent triennial revaluation, and appropriate savings have been taken.

General Fund

3.18 The General Fund is shown below. The Council's policy is to maintain a balance of at least £1.5m in the General Fund. This balance represents 11.7% of the cost of services for 2025/26 and is therefore deemed to be at an adequate level, however this position will continue to be reviewed each year.

Table 2: General Fund Balance

	£'000
General Fund balance at 1 April 2025	(3,103)
Transfers in 2025/26	0
General Fund Balance	(3,103)

Earmarked Reserves

3.19 The following transfers have been made to or from reserves in 2025/26:-

- Annual contribution has been transferred to the Elections Reserve to smooth the cost of elections over the election cycle.

- Planned transfer of transformation budget underspend to the transformation reserve, to fund future developments.

- A contribution has been made to the ICT reserve from an overall underspend across the service. This helps to fund the ongoing capital programme required to replace laptops and other hardware.

- The additional Extended Producer Responsibility grant has been added to the waste reserve. As previously reported the actual allocation for the year was not confirmed until the year end and so could not be committed to support in year expenditure. The waste reserve is intended to be used to support some ongoing revenue costs in future years and can also be used to fund specific work required to improve recycling rates as required by the EPR grant.

- Unused grants transferred to reserve for future use (where conditions of the grant allow).

- Transfer to the Local Plan reserve to fund future work on the development of the plan, smoothing out the costs.

- The actual use of the Budget Contingency Reserve to support the delivery of a balanced budget was £580,700.

- £894k was used from the business rates pool to cover planned costs in relation to regeneration of the area.

- Reserves of £292,000 were used to support capital expenditure in the year.

3.20 Table 3 below set out the earmarked reserves balances as at 31 March 2026.

3.21 Appendix III shows the earmarked reserves and their estimated use in future years.

Table 3: Earmarked Reserves

	Balance as at 1 April 2025 £'000	Contributions (to)/from reserve in year £'000	Balance as at 31 March 2026 £'000
Budget Contingency Reserve	(1,052)	(295)	(1,347)
Kent Business Rates Pool Economic Development	(2,944)	(146)	(3,090)
North Kent Housing & Commercial Growth Business Rates	(950)	194	(756)
Business Rates Volatility	(4,162)	(785)	(4,947)
Building and Asset Maintenance	(776)	62	(714)
Service Reserves	(1,506)	(6)	(1,512)
Waste and Environment	(1,592)	(1,036)	(2,628)
ICT Equipment Reserve	(376)	115	(261)
Repairs and Renewals	(366)	7	(359)
Miscellaneous	(2,879)	(584)	(3,463)
Total Earmarked Reserves	**(16,603)**	**(2,475)**	**(19,078)**
Collection Fund and Grants In Advance	(174)	0	(174)
Accounting Adjustments	(433)	0	(433)
Total Reserve	**(17,210)**	**(2,475)**	**(19,685)**

Capital Expenditure

3.22 This section of the report details actual capital expenditure and highlights any variations between the revised 2025/26 capital budget and the outturn.

3.23 Actual expenditure in 2025/26 was £14.791m which was 30% of the budget. There was capital slippage of £21.054m in terms of costs to Swale Borough Council, but a further £14.728m of grant or reserve funded spend will also be slipped into future years. A summary is set out in table 4 below and further details are shown in appendix II.

3.24 Although only 30% of the total capital budget has been spent, some of the budgets are effectively a rolling budget and will be rolled into 2026/27. This is the case for the Disabled Facilities Grant which amounted to £8.661m in 2025/26.

3.25 Major slippage is made up of the Local Housing Company (Rainbow Homes) £20.094m which will be slipped into a future year and reprofiled, and the Levelling Up funding of £5.476m.

Table 4 – Capital Outturn:-

Capital spend	2025/26 Budget		2025/26 Outturn		2025/26	Capital
	Gross £'000	Net £'000	Gross £'000	Net £'000	Variance £'000	Slippage £'000
Housing & Community	32,419	21,584	3,770	1,438	0	20,388
Regeneration & Economic Development	16,402	264	10,540	0	0	264
Environment & Leisure	1,143	402	366	0	0	402
Finance & Procurement	121	0	0	0	0	0
Information Technology	148	0	115	0	0	0
	50,233	**22,250**	**14,791**	**1,438**	**0**	**21,054**

3.26 The explanations for the significant capital variances and rollovers are shown below:

Housing and Community Services

- Disabled Facilities Grant – Funding is from Central Government and is paid via Kent County Council. The grant is part of the overall Better Care Fund which incorporates aspects of health, and the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) money which must be used on mandatory grants that the Council administers. The money should be rolled over to the following year to continue funding grants approved within the year. The spend is dependent on applications received. Once a grant is approved the applicant has 12 months to complete the work, therefore the DFG spend is a constant rolling process that crosses financial periods.

- Local Housing Company – to date there has not been any capital spend on this project in 25/26. However work has commenced in 26/27 and therefore £20.094m is recognised as capital slippage at 31 March 2026.

- CCTV Capacity – Delays in the start of the project due to finding a suitable supplier and obtaining appropriate approvals have meant that this budget needs to be slipped to 26/27. Work is progressing within the new financial year.

Regeneration & Economic Development

- Levelling Up Scheme - This is mainly funded from external grants and will be rolled into 2026/27. There were delays in starting the project for reasons beyond the control of Swale Borough Council, and then subsequent delays which have pushed completion into 2026/27.

- Rural Prosperity Fund – there have been delays in an underlying project, and the government extended the deadline for use of the grant. This has meant that the budgets for the spend and income need to be slipped to 26/27.

Environment & Leisure

- Waste Vehicle Fleet –There was always an intention to replace some of the street cleansing vehicles part way through the contract, and the slippage of £115k represents that.

- Play Areas Equipment & Improvements – This is funded from capital contributions, and works not complete at 31 March 2026 will be reprofiled into future years as work is carried out and funded from contributions received.

- Leisure Centre Contingency – this has not been required for capital works on the leisure centres during 2025/26, so will rollover to help support mobilisation to the new contract in April 2027.

Resources

- ICT Replacement – the Council operates a rolling programme of ICT equipment replacement, which is funded from reserves. Any budget amount not spent in year will be expected in future as part of this programme, and the anticipated funding will remain in reserve for future years.

3.27 The 2025/26 capital programme expenditure of £14.791m was funded as set out in the table 5 below.

Table 5 – Capital Programme Funding:-

	2025/26 Outturn £'000
Capital grants and other contributions	12,837
Capital receipts	224
Earmarked reserves	292
Direct revenue funding	0
Borrowing	1,439
Total Capital Funding	**14,791**

4. Alternative Options

4.1 None identified – this report is largely for information.

5. Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 Heads of Service and Strategic Management Team have been consulted in preparing this report.

6. Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Good financial management is key to supporting the Corporate Plan objectives.
Financial, Resource and Property	As detailed in the report.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The outturn report is not a statutory requirement, but it is a requirement of the Council's Financial Regulations.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage.
Environment and Climate/ Ecological Emergency	The report identifies a wide range of expenditure headings which support the Council's Climate and Emergency Action Plan.
Health & 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 Council's overall financial position is a key risk in the Council's Corporate Risk Register.
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, although we need to be mindful of the financial position that we transfer into the new unitary authority.

7. Appendices

7.1 The following documents are published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Detailed revenue outturn position
- Appendix II: Detailed capital outturn position
- Appendix III: Estimated use of reserves

8. Background Papers

- Council Meeting 19 February 2025
- Policy and Resources Committee Meeting 26 November 2025

This page is intentionally left blank

Detailed Revenue Outturn 2025-26

Revenue Outturn Position 2025/26			
	Budget	**Outturn**	**Variance**
Strategic Management Team	742,870	779,007	36,137
Mayoral Activities	70,450	77,994	7,544
Chief Executive	**813,320**	**857,000**	**43,680**
Communications & Policy	**375,670**	**361,110**	**(14,560)**
Electoral Services	250,850	306,676	55,826
Transformation	149,910	149,910	0
Information Governance	106,410	108,780	2,370
Democratic Services - Team	203,010	190,381	(12,629)
Democratic Services - Members	462,080	447,256	(14,824)
Elections, Democratic Services & Information Governance	**1,172,260**	**1,203,003**	**30,743**
Private Sector Housing	280,640	269,623	(11,017)
Customer Services	801,110	786,583	(14,527)
Homelessness	2,354,300	2,721,058	366,758
Licensing	(77,630)	(76,796)	834
Resilience	100,610	111,307	10,697
Community Services	962,330	906,068	(56,262)
Housing & Community	**4,421,360**	**4,717,845**	**296,485**
Building Control	160,110	141,658	(18,452)
MKS Planning	126,800	115,768	(11,032)
Appeals	88,280	34,466	(53,814)
Highsted Park	377,740	377,744	4
Planning	449,730	1,103,178	653,448
Planning	**1,202,660**	**1,772,813**	**570,153**
Environmental Services	7,227,430	7,282,222	54,792
Parking & Highways	(1,978,580)	(2,035,284)	(56,704)
Climate Change	158,110	138,027	(20,083)
Leisure Services	3,581,060	3,694,316	113,256
Environment & Leisure	**8,988,020**	**9,079,281**	**91,261**
Swale House Operations	744,160	700,064	(44,096)
Buildings Maintenance	240,500	265,103	24,603
Asset Management	(1,598,280)	(1,466,134)	132,146
Economic Development	229,540	173,882	(55,658)
Regeneration & Economic Development	**(384,080)**	**(327,084)**	**56,996**
Procurement	**83,340**	84,176	836
Accountancy	**490,850**	493,790	2,940
Financial Services	**210,630**	178,154	(32,476)
Finance & Procurement	**784,820**	**756,120**	**(28,700)**
Housing Benefits	109,590	82,397	(27,193)
Revenues & Benefits Administration	429,240	456,555	27,315
Revenues & Benefits	**538,830**	**538,952**	**122**
Environmental Health	**683,560**	640,679	(42,881)
IT Service	735,650	626,500	(109,150)
IT Maintenance & Licences	716,880	773,850	56,970
Information Technology	**1,452,530**	**1,400,351**	**(52,179)**
Internal Audit	**165,430**	133,684	(31,746)
HR Service	352,130	335,336	(16,794)
Corporate Training	51,700	120,679	68,979
Apprenticeships	88,780	36,595	(52,185)
Human Resources	**492,610**	**492,610**	**0**
Legal	**701,330**	**581,413**	**(119,917)**
Drainage Board Levy	**1,049,000**	1,018,092	(30,908)
Interest & Capital Financing	**2,160,460**	1,623,161	(537,299)
Contributions to Reserves	**15,000**	15,000	0
Non Distributed Pension Costs	**1,076,620**	1,054,020	(22,600)
Corporate Overheads	**624,420**	599,540	(24,880)
Corporate Costs/Provisions	**761,650**	0	(761,650)
Corporate Overheads & Capital Financing	**4,638,150**	**3,291,720**	**(1,346,430)**
TOTAL	**27,095,470**	**26,517,590**	**(577,880)**
Financed By:			
Use of Reserves	(1,160,080)	(580,664)	579,416
Revenue Support Grant	(362,450)	(362,717)	(267)
Business Rates	(12,104,000)	(12,104,180)	(180)
New Homes Bonus	(987,600)	(987,621)	(21)
Other Grants	(2,087,510)	(2,087,168)	342
Collection Fund Deficit	45,000	43,841	(1,159)
Council Tax Requirement	(10,438,830)	(10,439,081)	(251)
Total Financing	**(27,095,470)**	**(26,517,590)**	**577,880**
Net Total	**0**	**0**	**0**

This page is intentionally left blank

	Working Budget			Actuals YTD			Projected Variance	Slippage		
	Expenditure £	Income £	Net £	Expenditure £	Income £	Net £	£	Expenditure	Income	Net £
Disabled Facilities Grants	8,660,750	(8,660,750)	0	1,336,198	(1,336,198)	0	0	7,328,506	(7,328,506)	0
RHB2 Decent Home Loans Owner Occupier	0	0	0	2,710	(2,710)	0	0	0	0	0
Housing Renovation Grants	0	0	0	29,402	(29,402)	0	0	0	0	0
Local Housing Company	21,062,660	(968,750)	20,093,910	0	0	0	0	21,062,660	(968,750)	20,093,910
Land Regeneration/Improvement	52,060	0	52,060	0	0	0	0	52,060	0	52,060
Temporary Accommodation	2,360,868	(922,473)	1,438,395	2,360,868	(922,473)	1,438,395	0	0	0	0
CCTV Capacity	282,900	(41,161)	241,739	41,161	(41,161)	0	0	241,739	0	241,739
Housing & Community Services	**32,419,238**	**(10,593,134)**	**21,826,104**	**3,770,339**	**(2,331,944)**	**1,438,395**	**0**	**28,684,965**	**(8,297,256)**	**20,387,709**
Faversham Creek Basin	200,000	0	200,000	0	0	0	0	200,000	0	200,000
High Streets	57,000	(57,000)	0	0	0	0	0	57,000	(57,000)	0
UK SPF	0	0	0	107,266	(107,266)	0	0	0	0	0
Levelling up - Sheerness Revival	15,579,490	(15,515,330)	64,160	10,231,730	(10,231,730)	0	0	5,436,920	(5,372,760)	64,160
REPR Rural Prosperity Fund	461,720	(461,720)	0	96,754	(96,754)	0	0	250,024	(250,024)	0
Solar Panels	104,127	(104,127)	0	104,127	(104,127)	0	0	0	0	0
Regeneration & Economic Development	**16,402,337**	**(16,138,177)**	**264,160**	**10,539,878**	**(10,539,878)**	**0**	**0**	**5,943,944**	**(5,679,784)**	**264,160**
Sheerness Swimming Pool	0	0	0	17,779	(17,779)	0	0	0	0	0
Gunpowder Works Oare Fav	26,240	(26,240)	0	0	0	0	0	26,240	(26,240)	0
Car Park Ticket Machine	0	0	0	75,641	(75,641)	0	0	0	0	0
Milton Rec Changing Pavilion	0	0	0	29,418	(29,418)	0	0	0	0	0
Beach Huts	143,000	(143,000)	0	223,589	(223,589)	0	0	0	0	0
Play Areas & Improvements	519,000	(519,000)	0	0	0	0	0	519,000	(519,000)	0
Leisure Centre Contingency	287,180	0	287,180	0	0	0	0	287,180	0	287,180
Waste Vehicle Fleet	114,920	0	114,920	0	0	0	0	114,920	0	114,920
Barton´s Point Drainage Project	51,640	(51,640)	0	0	0	0	0	51,640	(51,640)	0
Tennis Court Improvements	1,144	(1,039)	105	1,144	(1,039)	105	0	0	0	0
Fencing at Milton Park	0	0	0	18,012	(18,012)	0	0	0	0	0
Environment & Leisure	**1,143,124**	**(740,919)**	**402,205**	**365,582**	**(365,477)**	**105**	**0**	**998,980**	**(596,880)**	**402,100**
Finance & Procurement	120,800	(120,800)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Information Technology	147,920	(147,920)	0	115,124	(115,124)	0	0	32,796	(32,796)	0
Resources	**268,720**	**(268,720)**	**0**	**115,124**	**(115,124)**	**0**	**0**	**32,796**	**(32,796)**	**0**
	50,233,419	**(27,740,950)**	**22,492,469**	**14,790,922**	**(13,352,422)**	**1,438,500**	**0**	**35,660,685**	**(14,606,716)**	**21,053,969**

This page is intentionally left blank

Estimated Use of Reserves 2025/26 - 2028/29	Balance 2025/26	Est use 2026/27	Balance 2026/27	Est use 2027/28	Balance 2027/28	Est use 2028/29	Balance 2028/29
General Fund Balance	(3,103,000)	0	(3,103,000)	0	(3,103,000)	0	(3,103,000)
Earmarked Reserves							
Building Maintenance Fund	(713,866)	100,000	(613,866)	100,000	(513,866)	100,000	(413,866)
Repair & Replacement Reserves	(569,555)	125,000	(444,555)	50,000	(394,555)	(65,000)	(459,555)
Civil Parking Enforcement Reserve	(78,277)	28,397	(49,880)	25,000	(24,880)	24,880	0
General Reserve A/C	(430,449)	254,322	(176,127)	150,000	(26,127)	26,127	0
Local Plan Reserve	(953,200)	155,000	(798,200)	798,200	0	0	0
Stay Put Grants Reserve	(87,894)	0	(87,894)	0	(87,894)	0	(87,894)
Staffing costs Reserve	(292,199)	50,000	(242,199)	50,000	(192,199)	150,000	(42,199)
Homeless/Housing Reserve	(77,729)	25,000	(52,729)	0	(52,729)	0	(52,729)
Council Tax/Housing Benefits Reserve	(831,146)	30,778	(800,368)	0	(800,368)	800,368	0
Waste & Street Cleansing Reserve	(2,369,283)	500,000	(1,869,283)	500,000	(1,369,283)	1,369,283	0
Business Rates Volatility Reserve	(4,947,123)	2,500,000	(2,447,123)	1,200,000	(1,247,123)	500,000	(747,123)
Financial Services Reserve	(160,000)	50,000	(110,000)	0	(110,000)	0	(110,000)
Kent Pool Economic Development Business Rates Reserve	(3,089,770)	1,500,000	(1,589,770)	602,000	(987,770)	987,770	0
Housing & Commercial Growth Business Rates Fund	(755,584)	755,584	0	0	0	0	0
Environmental Initiatives Reserve	(176,465)	45,000	(131,465)	45,000	(86,465)	45,000	(41,465)
Heritage Strategy Reserve	(110,902)	0	(110,902)	0	(110,902)	0	(110,902)
Visitor Economy Strategy Reserve	(127,556)	0	(127,556)	0	(127,556)	127,556	0
Budget Contingency Reserve	(1,347,276)	(2,610,000)	(3,957,276)	1,517,000	(2,440,276)	1,782,312	(657,964)
Other earmarked reserves	(1,960,343)	519,448	(1,440,895)	282,000	(1,158,895)	466,339	(692,555)
Total Earmarked (Excl General Fund)	**(19,078,617)**	**4,028,530**	**(15,050,087)**	**5,319,200**	**(9,730,888)**	**6,314,635**	**(3,416,253)**
Total earmarked plus general fund	**(22,181,617)**	**4,028,530**	**(18,153,087)**	**5,319,200**	**(12,833,888)**	**6,314,635**	**(6,519,253)**
Ring Fenced/accounting/collection fund							
Collection fund & grants in advance	(174,371)	61,377	(112,994)	30,000	(82,994)	82,994	0
Accounting adjustments & smoothing	(432,324)	0	(432,324)	300,000	(132,324)	0	(132,324)
	(606,695)	**61,377**	**(545,318)**	**330,000**	**(215,318)**	**82,994**	**(132,324)**

This page is intentionally left blank

P&R Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	17 June 2026
Report Title	Contract for Insurance coverage and associated service (excluding broker services)
EMT Lead	Lisa Fillery, Director of Resources
Head of Service	Claire Stanbury, Head of Finance and Procurement
Lead Officer	Charlotte Knowles, Commissioning Manager
Classification	**Open**
Recommendations	1. Agree to the first year extension of the contracts 2. Delegate authority to the Head of Finance and Procurement in consultation with the chair of Policy & Resources Committee to take up the second extension period. 3. Retender on the same basis as the current contracts

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

1.1 The current insurance contracts commenced on 31st July 2023 for an initial period of three years with two 12 month extension periods. This report seeks committee approval to extend the contracts initially by 12 months, seeks delegated authority to take up the second extension options and to retender on the same basis as the current contracts.

2 Background, Context and Proposals

2.1 In 2023, a one stage tender process was carried out based on the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT) to provide insurance coverage and associated services (excluding broker services). The tender was compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. External consultants, Gallagher were appointed to support the Authority as technical advisor throughout the process. The tender was broken into 8 Lots:

- Lot 1: Property including Computers, Contract Works, Business Interruption, Special (all) risks and Money
- Lot 2: Commercial & Industrial properties let to tenants
- Lot 3: Casualty insurance including Employers/Public/Products Liability, Officials Indemnity, Professional Negligence, Hirers Liability.
- Lot 4: Fidelity Guarantee
- Lot 5: Motor Fleet insurance
- Lot 6: Personal Accident
- Lot 7: Engineering services (Inspection and Insurance)

- Lot 8: Package encompassing Lot 1 – Property, Lot 3 – Casualty and Lot 5 – Motor Fleet.

2.2 The majority of the Lots were evaluated on 58% price, 35% quality and 7% social value with the exception of Lot 4 – Fidelity Guarantee and Lot 6 – Personal Accident & Travel which did not include social value.

2.3 On 12 July 2023, Policy and Resources Committee agreed that Lots 1,3 and 5 be awarded as a package through Lot 8 as this was the most cost effective option. It also approved the appointment of Company A (Protector Insurance) for Lots 2 and 8 from 31 July 2023 for an initial period of three years, with the option to extend by two further periods of one year, at a value of £907,328 and the appointment of Company C (Zurich) for Lots 4, 6 and 7 for the same period at a value of £58,913. The total contract value at the time of award if both extension options were utilised was estimated as £1,610,402.

2.4 This report now seeks approval to extend the contracts and to re-tender on the same basis if required.

3 Recommendations

3.1 To agree to the first year extension of the contracts.

3.2 To delegate authority to the Head of Finance and Procurement in consultation with the chair of Policy & Resources Committee to take up the second extension period, provided that the Head of Finance and Procurement is satisfied with the level of service at the time of the renewal. This would avoid re-tendering ahead of Local Government Reorganisation.

3.3 If required when the contract extensions have been applied, to retender the new contract on the same basis as the current contracts, where the insurance will be broken into Lots in order to secure the best value across the insurance portfolio. The tender would comply with the Procurement Act which requires tenders to be assessed based on the Most Advantageous Tender.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

4.1 Do nothing. This option is not recommended as the Council would not be insured and would have to face the full financial impact of any damages.

4.2 Re-contract, instead of extending. This option is not recommended as there is not sufficient time for a fully compliant tender exercise before the current contract expires.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 The Director of Resources, the Head of Finance and Procurement, Gallagher insurance brokers and the insurance manager who provides the insurance service to Swale support the recommendations.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Extending the current contract that provides a good quality service and good value for money contributes towards all the corporate priorities as it ensures that the Council hold sufficient insurance cover at a cost that is within the budget framework.
Financial, Resource and Property	The estimated value of each annual extension is **£349,282.**
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The terms and conditions of the extension/s will be the same as the current contracts. The re-tender will be in accordance with Contract Standing Orders and the Procurement Act.
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 original tender process ensured that the tenderers were fully competent to the provide the required level of service.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.
Local Government Reorganisation	Utilising both extension options would avoid a re-tender ahead of Local Government Reorganisation.

7 Appendices

7.1 None.

8 Background Papers

8.1 Procurement of Insurance coverage and associated service (excluding broker services), 12 July 2023.

Policy and Resources Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	17 June 2026
Report Title	**Performance Management** March 2026 and Quarter 4 / year-end 2025/26
Head of Service	Claire Stanbury, Head of Finance and Procurement
Lead Officer	Kirsty-Leigh Parker, Data Protection Officer & Information Governance Manager
Recommendations	1. To ***note*** the Performance Management Report at Appendix I 2. To ***review and agree*** the proposed changes to Performance Indicators at Appendix II

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

1.1 This report presents the quarterly performance management report for the fourth quarter of 2025/26 (Jan–Mar 2026) and year-end, attached as Appendix I, and the proposed changes to Performance Indicators for 2026/27, attached as Appendix II.

2 Background

2.1 The Council operates a performance management process with departments providing input as appropriate. The results are reported regularly throughout the year to the Policy and Resources Committee, and the Strategic Management Team.

2.2 Appendix I details the fourth quarter Corporate Performance Management Headlines Report summarising the status of corporate performance indicators at the end of the financial year (2025/26).

2.3 Appendix II sets out the proposed performance indicators for 2026/27.

2.4 Members are asked to review the proposed changes, recognising that proposals for new indicators are not yet finalised, for example:

2.5.1 some require further refinement and clarification;
2.5.2 some may be more appropriately suited to departmental reporting; and
2.5.3 some may not lend themselves to meaningful measurement.

3 Proposal

3.1 Members are asked to ***note*** the Corporate Performance Management Headlines Report for 2025/26 as attached at Appendix I.

3.2 Members are asked to ***review and agree*** the proposed changes to Performance Indicators as attached at Appendix II.

4 Appendices

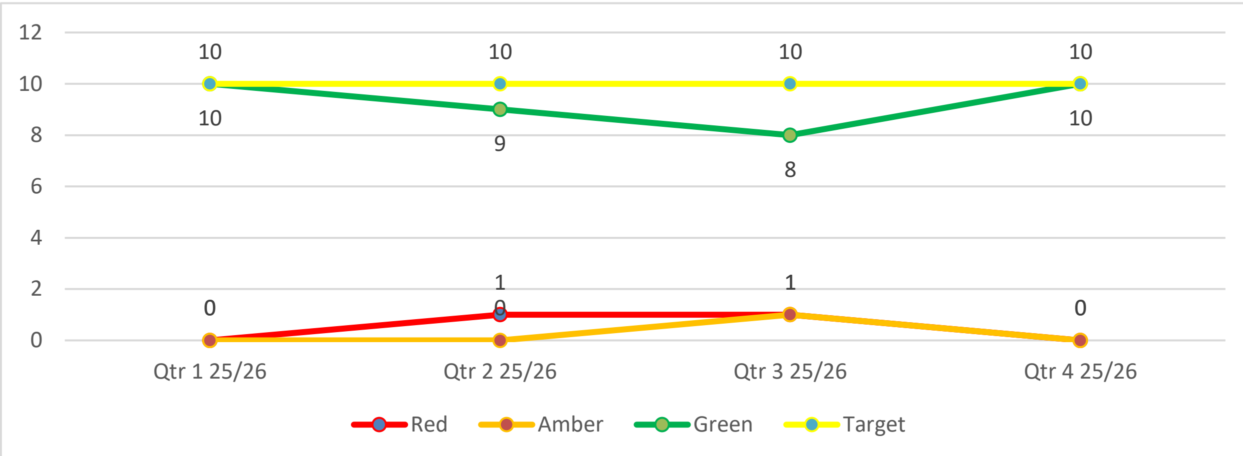
4.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Corporate Performance Management Headlines Report: March 2026 and Quarter 4 / year-end 2025/26.
- Appendix II: 2026/27 Performance Indicator Review.

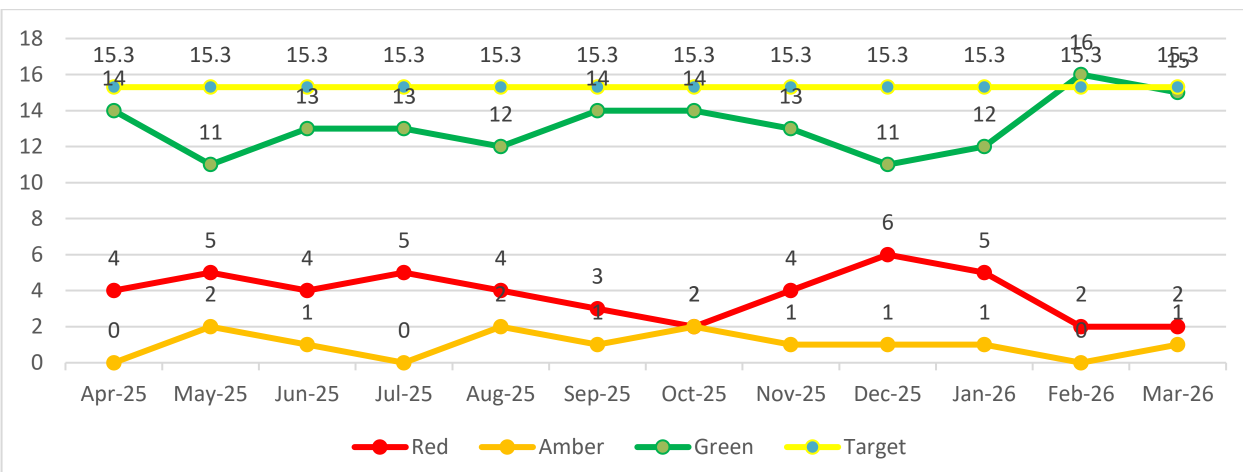
Corporate Performance Management Headlines Report **Appendix I**
Period: 2025/26 – Q4 (Jan–Mar)

1. Performance summary:

a. Quarterly indicators



b. Monthly indicators



2. Year-end Red & Amber Indicators

<table>
<tr><th>Year-end</th><th>This Quarter</th><th>Reference</th><th>Description</th><th>Year-end Value</th><th>2025/26 target</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>LI/CC/01</td><td>Number of reported missed bins per annum</td><td>8659</td><td>3500</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Missed bin performance continues to improve with a strong downward trend across the year. Current performance is strong with 99.9% of bins being collected as required (99.7% across the year). Out of the 0.1% of bins that were ‘missed’, nearly all bins were collected the following day after being reported. In 2026/27 this KPI will adjust to measure a more industry recognised system which will allow better benchmarking. In 25/26, missed bin performance improved month on month, with an average of 118 missed bins per 100,000 scheduled collections. The target for 2026/27 will be 75/100,000.

Year-end Commentary Provided by Alister Andrews.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>NI 191</td><td>Residual domestic waste per household</td><td>505.5</td><td>475 kgs (40)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Successful food waste campaigns in Swale have diverted food from residual bins and increased food waste tonnages by approx. 38%, compared to last year. These are the highest improvement figures across Kent councils. Under ‘Simpler Recycling ‘requirements, all communal premises have now been provided with food bins which should help further reduce residual tonnages into 2026/27. Further campaigns have also been run to target contamination in the recycling bins as this is a significant issue in Swale that causes contaminated recycling to be diverted to the residual waste streams.

Year-end Commentary Provided by Alister Andrews.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>SZ BV9</td><td>Percentage of Council Tax collected</td><td>94.8%</td><td>95%</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">No commentary provided by the service.

Service responsibility - Zoe Kent.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>BV78a</td><td>Speed of processing – new Housing /Council Tax Benefit claims</td><td>22 Days</td><td>23.87 Days</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">No commentary provided by the service.

Service responsibility - Zoe Kent.</td></tr>
</table>

		LI/TBC/02	**Proportion of Major Planning Applications overturned at appeal**	**10.91%**	**10%**

6 appeals relating to major development have been allowed in the 2025/26 calendar year. This includes the Jubilee Way, Faversham appeal which was an appeal submitted on the grounds of non-determination for an acceptable development where a S106 agreement had not been completed and the appellant wished to challenge several of the obligations that were sought. The outcome was an ‘allowed’ appeal but, ultimately, the decision aligned with the stance being taken by the Local Planning Authority. The 6 allowed appeals also includes the “Vigo Lane” solar farm where the Council raised no objection following the receipt of significantly amended plans. Again, this is marked as an “allowed appeal” but that does not fully reflect the circumstances of the case. The Scocles Farm which was also an uncontested appeal following the submission of an appeal on the grounds of non-determination in respect of a development that was not objected to by the Council. The appeal was submitted after the Planning Committee deferred the determination of the planning application. Of the remaining three appeals, one was at Brogdale Farm and the other two were for residential developments at Graveney and Ham Road, Faversham. It is noteworthy that two appeals relating to major applications were dismissed and that the means of calculating this statistic differs from the MHCLG method which is the method that is used for formally assessing the performance of the Council. The MHCLG method incorporates a 9 month-lag in the calculation of the applications determined (the denominator) to allow for the submission, processing and determination of an appeal and allow it to be more likely that there is a correlation between the applications and the appeal decisions. Current calculations suggest that the relevant figure is approximately 6.5%.

Year-end Commentary Provided by Ian Harrison.

		LI/CSC/003	**Complaints responded to within 10 working days**	**90%**	**89.10%**

Customer Services oversee the administration of the corporate comments, compliments and complaints process, however it remains the responsibility of the service areas to ensure complaints are signed off within target.

Year-end Commentary Provided by Carly Pascall.

		NI 192	**Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and comp**	**36.33%**	**38%**

Campaigns have been run to target items that could be placed in food bins or recycling bins. Successful food waste campaigns in Swale have diverted waste from residual streams and increased food waste tonnages by approx. 38%, compared to last year. These are the highest improvement figures across Kent councils. Under ‘Simpler Recycling ‘requirements, all communal premises have now been provided with food bins which should help to further improve

performance into 2026/27. Further campaigns have also been run to target contamination in the recycling bins as this is a significant issue in Swale. Year-end Commentary Provided by Alister Andrews.

3. **Year to Date overview** of all KPI

N.B. Where the monthly result differs to the cumulative year-to-date result, the monthly performance is indicated by either *R (Red) , *A (Amber) or *G (Green**)**

KPI Ref	Monthly Performance Indicators CUMMULATIVE YEAR TO DATE RESULT	Target 25/26	Period	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	EOY outcome
BV8	Percentage of invoices paid on time (within 30 days)	91%	Month	100.00%	100.00%	99.57%	99.86%	99.62%	100.00%	99.70%	99.57%	99.59%	100.00%	99.60%	99.53%	99.78%
			YTD													
SZ BV9	Percentage of Council Tax collected	95%	Month	15.10%	24.0%	33.0%	42.1%	51.0%	60.1%	69.1%	78.1%	86.6%	91.20%	93.5%	94.8%	94.8%
			YTD													
SZ BV10	Percentage of Non-domestic Rates collected	96%	Month	14.40%	23.58%	32.18%	42.94%	51.54%	60.62%	67.67%	77.31%	85.61%	92.47%	96%	98%	98%
			YTD													
BV12b	Short-term working days lost due to sickness absence (FTE)	3.2	Month	0.17	0.33	0.61	0.77	0.93	1.24	1.49	1.73	1.78	2.18	2.45	2.72	1.37
			YTD													
BV78a	Speed of processing – new Housing /Council Tax Benefit claims	22 days	Month	19.6	29.6	30.4	29.4	24.3	19.6	17.6	21.3	33.7	23.4	16.28	21.31	23.87
			YTD													
BV78b	Speed of processing - changes of circumstances for HB/CTB claims	9 days	Month	4.9	6	8.9	4.9	4.7	5.5	4.0	4.3	14.5	6.3	7.37	1.77	6.095
			YTD													
BV109a	Processing of planning apps: Major Applications (within 13 weeks)	89%	Month	100.00%	50.00%	100.00%	100.00%	93.33%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100%	100%	98%
			YTD													
BV109b	Processing of planning apps: Minor Applications (within 8 weeks)	82%	Month	100.00%	90.00%	92.86%	83.33%	100.00%	100.00%	91.67%	100.00%	75.00%	91.67%	92.31%	91.67%	91.33%
			YTD													
BV109c	Processing of planning apps: Other Applications (within 8 weeks)	91%	Month	97.96%	97.30%	100.00%	92.11%	97.83%	97.14%	97.44%	90.00%	96.67%	100.00%	100.00%	94.87%	96.74%
			YTD													
BV218a	Abandoned vehicles - % investigated within 10 working days	95%	Month	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	97.00%	100.00%	98.00%	100.00%	100.00%	96.43%	100.00%	100.00%	99.29%
			YTD													
LI/DC/DCE/004	Percentage of delegated decisions (Officers)	86.50%	Month	96.83%	100.00%	96.49%	90.91%	97.83%	98.00%	96.61%	81.82%	91.84%	92.50%	104.55%	97.06%	94.66%
			YTD													
LI/DC/DCE/007	Planning Enforcement - Informing complainant within 21 days	95%	Month	85.71%	85.29%	82.86%	84.38%	84.91%	73.68%	92.31%	95.45%	100.00%	85.70%	97.06%	100.00%	88.83%
			YTD													
LI/IC/CSC/002	Percentage of abandoned calls	8.50%	Month	6.2%	8.8%	8.0%	10.2%	13.1%	4.3%	3.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.8%	6.5%	5.5%
			YTD													
LI/LS/LCC01	Percentage of all Local Land Searches completed in 10 working days	95%	Month	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
			YTD													
LI/CC/01	Number of reported missed bins per annum	3500	Month	1200	1021	841	1331	766	615	544	609	400	496	406	430	8659
			YTD	1200	2221	3062	4393	5159	5774	6318	6927	7327	7823	8229	8659	
	Reported missed bins monthly value	*-291*		291	292	292	291	292	292	291	292	292	291	292	292	3500
LI/TBC/02	Proportion of Major Planning Applications overturned at appeal	10%	Month	0%	0%	29%	0%	0%	25%	0%	11%	33%	33%	0%	0%	11%
			YTD													
NI 191	Residual domestic waste per household	475 kgs (40)	Month	46.4	46.4	40.5	43.8	40.4	40.3	42.6	38.1	40.2	47.3	37.8	41.9	505.5
			YTD													
NI 192	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and comp	38%	Month	35.12%	37.40%	38.51%	41.20%	36.76%	38.40%	36.58%	35.83%	34.89%	32.53%	33.62%	39.22%	36.33%
			YTD													
	MONTHLY INDICATOR RESULTS (x18) YEAR TO DATE MONTHLY TOTAL			14G 4R 0A	11G 5R 2A	13G 4R 1A	13G 5R 0A	12G 4R 2A	14G 3R 1A	14G 2R 2A	13G 4R 1A	11G 6R 1A	12G 5R 1A	16G 2R 0A	15G 2R 1A	

KPI Ref	Quarterly Performance Indicators CUMMULATIVE YEAR TO DATE RESULT	Target 25/26	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2025/2026 Outcome
LI/ICT/0006	Website engaged sessions	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
BV79b(i)	Percentage of Recoverable Overpayments Recovered (HB) that are recovered during period	80%	104.1%	100.3%	72.49%	99%	94.01%
LI/CSC/003	Complaints responded to within 10 working days	90%	95.8%	82.4%	87.2%	91%	89.10%
NI188	Planning to Adapt to Climate Change	3	3	3	3	3	3
LI/EH/001	Percentage of Planning consultations responded to in 21 days	80%	97.12%	100%	100%	97%	98.53%
LI/EH/002	Food Hygiene – The percentage of food inspections completed that were due.	90%	96.15%	100.00%	93.00%	100%	97.29%
LI/IA/005	Audit recommendations implemented	95%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
LI/CEL/002	Percentage of beach huts occupied	75%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
LI/PAR/003	Percentage of disabled parking bay applications processed within 3 months	95%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
LI/PAR/001	Civil enforcement officer accuracy rate	98%	98.81%	98.97%	99.07%	99.48%	99.08%
Quarterly Indicators (x10) YEAR TO DATE Quarterly Total			10G 0R 0A	9G 1R 0A	8G 1R 1A	10G 0R 0A	

4. **Year-End outcome: Monitored Performance indicators (MPIs)** –monitored for context and information.

MPI Ref	Monthly Performance Indicators CUMMULATIVE YEAR TO DATE RESULT	Q1 (Apr, May, Jun)			Q2 (Jul, Aug, Sep)			Q3 (Oct, Nov, Dec)			Q4 (Jan, Feb, Mar)			25/26 Outcome
NI 156	Number of households living in temporary accommodation	268	269	273	282	279	282	293	292	300	315	329	322	292
BV12a	Long-term working days lost due to sickness absence (YTD)	0.17	0.51	0.76	1.07	1.22	1.12	1.56	1.84	2.43	2.69	3.22	3.66	3.66
LI/CC/MON16	% of fly-tipping incidents attended to within 10 working days	100%	95%	100%	98.32%	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	96.67%	97%	96%	98.49%
LI/EC/MON10	Swale Means Business – Website analytics	29	59	44	29	124	44	35	19	24	30	39	28	42.00
LI/EC/MON28	Swale VCS – Number of enquiries received	2	3	24	25	13	9	19	13	8	21	34	1	14.33
LI/HO/MON9	Rough Sleepers in Accommodation	25	27	29	22	19	21	25	26	21	20	19	19	22.75
LI/DC/DCE/006	Percentage of planning applications refused	12.70%	8.16%	8.77%	10.91%	8.96%	6.00%	5.80%	21.82%	12.24%	10.0%	8.70%	14.71%	10.79%

MPI Ref	Quarterly MPIs – Monitored Performance Indicators, Monitored for context and information	Target 25/26	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	25/26 Outcome
NI155	Number of affordable homes delivered (total year to date)	133.25	35	63	118	199	199
LI/CSC/006	Proportion of complaints escalating from Stage 1 (Service Unit) to Stage 2 (Chief Executive)	7.50%	4.00%	4.00%	11.00%	10.00%	7.25%
CSP1819/0006	All crime per 1000 population	94.75%	94.70%	93.80%	91.90%	85.50%	91.48%
LI/HO/MON7	Percentage of households who secured accommodation for 6+ months when prev. duty ended	74.25%	64.00%	63.00%	65.00%	58.00%	62.50%
LI/HO/MON8	Percentage of households who secured accommodation at the end of relief duty	32.75%	21.00%	47.00%	30.00%	38.00%	34.00%
LI/EC/MON33	Safeguarding training (% of training modules completed)	83.60%	81.05%	80.55%	82.82%	82.20%	81.66%
LI/CEL/001	No. of visits to Council owned or supported leisure centres	415,000	140,402	126,874	93,049	74,870	435,195
LI/CSC/001	% of contacts transacted digitally compared to other methods of contact to Customer Services	66.25%	70.00%	69.00%	73.00%	68.00%	70.00%

2026/27 Performance Indicator Review **Appendix II**
Period: 2026/27

Proposed Performance Indicator (PI) changes – summary

PI reference	PI name	What's proposed	Team	PI type	Change type	Notes
LI/CC/01	Number of reported missed bins per annum	Change to the number per year, proposed to be changed to 75/100,000 missed bins	Waste	KPI	Change	N/A
LI/ICT/0006	Website availability	Removal of this indicator and replacement with the two indicators referenced below	Comms/ICT	MPI	Removal	N/A
LI/WE/001	Website engaged sessions	To replace 'website availability', this indicator would measure website visits lasting longer than 10 seconds	Comms	MPI	New	This will be monitored for context and information only.
LI/SM/001	Social media reach	Social media metrics	Comms	MPI	New	This will be monitored for context and information only.

BV8	Percentage of invoices paid within time	To increase the % target from 91% to 93%	Finance	KPI	Change	Amended target figure
LI/FOI/001	FOI/EIR compliance rate (%)	This indicator will measure the percentage of Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004 requests responded to within the statutory 20-working-day deadline. The target is 95%	Information Governance	MPI	New	FOI and EIR requests have not been measured in recent years' reports. As responding to these requests is a statutory function, it is recognised that reporting FOI/EIR compliance is suited to being included within this report as best practice.
SZ BV9	Percentage of Council Tax collected	To update the percentages for council tax for 2026/27: target per month – • 9.6 • 18.80 • 27.90 • 36.80 • 45.60 • 54.40 • 63.20 • 71.90 • 80.60 • 89.30 • 92.7 • 95	Revenues and Benefits	KPI	Change	To update figures for the next financial year.

PI type: use **KPI** for Key Performance Indicator and **MPI** for Monitored Performance Indicator (no target). Change type: use **New** for a new PI, **Change** for amendments to an existing PI (e.g., definition/target/frequency/owner), and **Delete** for proposed removal.