

Motion for Full Council – 28 January 2026

Border and Immigration Pressures – Housing, HMO Regulation and Local Service Impacts in Swale

This Council notes that:

1. Swale Borough Council holds statutory responsibilities for housing, homelessness prevention, temporary accommodation, planning control, environmental health, and the maintenance of community wellbeing within the borough.
2. National immigration and border policy decisions relating to both legal migration (including asylum, resettlement and permitted routes) and illegal or irregular migration are reserved to central government but are having sustained and material downstream impacts on local authorities, including Swale.
3. These impacts arise through increased demand for accommodation, pressure on housing supply, rising use of temporary accommodation, and strain on council-funded services.
4. At its meeting on 1 October 2025, this Council debated and supported stronger management and regulation of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), including progression of an Immediate Article 4 Direction, explicitly recognising cumulative pressures on local housing stock, neighbourhood amenity, and service capacity.

5. That debate acknowledged that local housing pressures are not occurring in isolation, but are exacerbated by national policy decisions beyond the Council's control, the effects of which must nevertheless be managed locally.

6. Local authorities are increasingly required to absorb the financial, operational and social consequences of central government policy, including migration-related pressures without equivalent local discretion, sufficient funding certainty, or long-term strategic clarity.

This Council believes that:

1. Where national migration and border policy decisions create significant and ongoing local impacts, it is both appropriate and necessary for councils to make clear, evidence-based representations to Government.
2. Public confidence in housing allocation, community cohesion, and local service provision depends on fairness, transparency, and systems that are effective in practice, not merely in principle.

This Council resolves:

- A. To formally recognise that both legal and illegal migration pressures are contributing to housing and service challenges within Swale, including impacts on housing availability, temporary accommodation usage, homelessness services, private sector housing regulation, and community cohesion.
- B. To request the Leader of Swale Borough Council to write to the Prime Minister and relevant Secretaries of State to:

1. set out the practical and financial impacts of these pressures on Swale Borough Council services and residents;
2. call for clear national leadership and accountability in addressing the local consequences of migration-related pressures;
3. urge Government to bring forward coherent legislative, operational and funding measures that reduce pressure on local housing markets and council services, including support for temporary accommodation costs; and
4. invite Government to review whether existing legal and policy frameworks governing migration are operating effectively, within domestic and international law, to enable timely and proportionate outcomes.

C. That this correspondence be shared with Swale's local Members of Parliament, Kent County Council, and be made publicly available.

Proposed by: Councillor Richard Palmer

Seconded by: Councillor Kieran Mishchuk