

Housing, Health, and Community Committee	
Meeting Date	25 th February 2026
Report Title	Temporary Accommodation (TA) Spend – Scrutiny Report
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing and Communities
Lead Officer	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing and Communities
Classification	Open
Recommendations	The committee is recommended: 1. To scrutinise the performance report and controls in place to manage the TA budget

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

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

2 Background

- 2.1 The Council has a Housing Options Improvement Programme (HOIP) in place to manage and control the spend on TA. The costs of TA to Council's are increasing nationally and there is a risk to the overall financial position of the Council if it is not monitored and managed effectively.
- 2.2 The Housing, Health and Communities Committee have made some significant investment in interventions to support the control of the TA budget, the most significant are the TA Purchase Programme and an investment in additional staff to work with enabling clients to move effectively through the system. Both these interventions have been implemented.

Grant Allocation

- 2.3 The Council receives a Homeless Prevention Grant (HPG) from MHCLG each year, in 2025/26 we have received £1,346,129, which is an uplift from previous years. Although this grant is welcomed it does not cover the full cost of providing the services and substantial growth has been made within the Council's base budget in previous years.
- 2.4 The funding for homeless services will change in 2026/27 onwards in line with changes to the Fair Funding review. The funding has been split into two elements following the Fair Funding Review, temporary accommodation funding has been separated out from the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse (HRSDA) Grant to end the current tension that forces local authorities to choose between investment in prevention and meeting temporary accommodation costs, creating dedicated ringfenced funds for the

prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping. However, due to the investment that the Council has made these figures are in line with the spend currently within Swale. The HRSDA Grant sees reductions in 27/28 and 28/29, despite the overall fund being larger and the new formula being a needs-based assessment. These figures also provide the new burdens funding for the Renters Rights Act which places significant new responsibilities on both the Housing Options team and Housing Standards and Assistance Team. The table below shows the allocation for Swale.

Table 1 – MHCLG Grant Allocation for Swale.

Year	Homelessness , Rough Sleeping, Domestic Abuse Grant TOTAL	Funding for homelessness and rough sleeping	Funding for Renters' Rights Act 2025 New Burdens	Funding for Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodati on Grant
Financial year 2026/27	£1,523,402	£1,410,376	£76,851	£36,175
Financial year 2027/28	£1,412,985	£1,339,858	£36,185	£36,942
Financial year 2028/29	£1,345,975	£1,308,281	£0	£37,694
Total Allocation Financial Years 2026-29	£4,282,362	£4,058,515	£113,036	£110,811

- 2.5 Due to the confirmation that our grant levels will be reducing during 27/28 and 28/29 the Leader has met with the Local MP for Sittingbourne and Sheppey to raise concern. The s.151 officer has also written to Alison McGovern MP Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness to query the grant allocation process and formula.
- 2.6 Despite this the Council budget setting process has enabled a neutral position for this year. Due to the three-year funding position and the process to enter into external agreements for our support provision, work is currently underway to review some of our commissioned services previously funded through our rough sleeping grant.

Performance Information

2.7 Table 2 - Statutory Temporary Accommodation Placements – Total Households on last day of period

	22/23	23/24	24/25	Q1 25	Q2 25	Q3 25
No. in Statutory TA	337	305	281	273	282	300
SBC Own Stock	3	3	38	44	42	48
Homeless Hostel	8	14	11	8	10	6
Housing Assn	79	84	73	76	81	73
B&B and Nightly Let	247	204	159	145	149	173
No. outside Statutory Duty (RSI Funded)	54	22	23	29	21	21

Table 3 - Statutory Temporary Accommodation Flow (2025/26)

Statutory placements	Households placed in TA	Households left TA	Households at month end
April	15	31	265
May	27	23	269
June	27	23	273
July	32	23	282
August	22	25	279
September	27	24	282
October	21	10	293
November	24	25	292
December	26	18	300

Table 4 - Length of Time in Temporary Accommodation – Over 6 months (2025/26)

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

Table 5 - Temporary Accommodation Purchase Programme – Stock Owned

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

Table 6 - Housing Register – Household and Lets

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

Table 7 - Affordable Homes Delivered

	22/23	23/24	24/25	Q1 25	Q2 25	Q3 25
New Affordable Homes	208	289	228	35	28	53

- 2.8 The volume in TA initially reduced and stabilised following all the interventions, however, demand continues to be high, and we have seen a steady uplift in cases and placement in TA throughout the year. This is directly impacted by the reduction in new affordable home completions and housing register lets from the new and existing stock. There have also been some staff vacancies and sickness in some key roles within the team which could have delayed move on from Temporary Accommodation.

- 2.9 The Housing Register demand is continuing to increase with limited lets becoming available. Residents are regularly frustrated at the length of time it takes to successfully secure a property and the availability of properties to proactively bid on.
- 2.10 Swale is part of a county-wide commissioned piece of work that is looking at the costs and quality of TA. This work has recently been completed, and a range of recommendations is being reviewed across Kent before further action is agreed.

Financial Monitoring

- 2.11 The gross external TA costs from April 2025 – December 2025 was £2.72m which is a reduction compared to the same period in April 2024 – December 2024 of £3.10m. This has been attributed to the reduction in the overall no. of households in TA and the use of our own TA during this financial year. However, with the increase in TA households this quarter and this continuing into Q4 there is an anticipated overspend on the TA net costs of circa. 32% on the profiled budget. This is anticipated to be around £400k.
- 2.12 We have now completed Phase 1 of the TA purchase programme, as we are still in the mobilisation period it is difficult to report true running costs and this will be covered in the evaluation report due in the Summer.
- 2.13 Housing salaries are currently underspending by 11%, which gives an underspend of circa. £220k.

Rough Sleeping and Winter Preparedness

- 2.14 We currently have 22 rough sleepers on the street and 21 in accommodation. We are seeing an increasing number of rough sleepers on the street, and this has seen an increase in complaints from the public. The grant funding for this non-statutory service has not seen an uplift for many years and therefore it is difficult to continue to provide the same level of service for the increasing demand.
- 2.15 Swale operates like most authorities a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) this is not a statutory duty but is a humanitarian duty. The aim is to minimise harm or death to anyone. We have currently activated SWEP for 27 nights. Work has progressed well to establish a night shelter for next winter to ensure a more enhanced wrap around service for rough sleepers throughout the winter period.
- 2.16 We have again this winter experienced an increase demand on the service due to caravan park closures, we have been approached by 69 households and accommodated 13 households in TA.

Risks and Issues

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

- Demand for homelessness services across the country is still high and is anticipated to continue.
- Delivery of Affordable Housing remains an issue, despite planning service securing a strong pipeline, there are not RPs prepared to purchase the properties. I am currently unaware if the announcement on additional Affordable Homes Programme will change this position for our local RPs. Homes England are also introducing a fund to enable unviable S.106 sites, this is due to be fully operational in April 2026.
- RPs have scaled back delivery programmes due to viability and capacity within the sector.
- Caravan Park utilisation as a main home remains a concern.
- Renters Rights Act is predicting some landlords exiting the market.
- We are increasingly seeing demand for hospital discharge support and suitable accommodation.
- The reduction in grant funding over the next three years will likely see an impact on service provision, unless alternative funding or service improvement work realises further impacts.

3 Proposals

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

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 None

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 None.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Health & Housing - To aspire to be a borough where everyone has access to a decent home and improved health and wellbeing. Running the Council - Working within our resources to proactively engage with communities and outside bodies to deliver in a transparent and efficient way
Financial, Resource and Property	This report looks at the performance monitoring in relation to the TA budget.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	Local housing authorities have a duty to secure accommodation for unintentionally homeless households in priority need under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). Households might be placed in temporary accommodation pending the completion of inquiries into an application, or they might spend time waiting in temporary

	accommodation after an application is accepted until suitable secure accommodation becomes available.
Crime and Disorder	None at this stage.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None at this stage.
Health and Wellbeing	None at this stage.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The TA budget has been identified as a corporate risk, due to demand on the service and the budgetary impacts.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.
Local Government Reorganisation	None identified at this stage.

7 Appendices

None

8 Background Papers

8.1 There are no background papers.