

Full Council	
Meeting Date	23 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. Subject to any recommendations made by the Policy and Resources Committee at their meeting of 17th June 2026, adopt the HMO SPD (as set out in Appendix I).

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 At Full Council on 1st October 2025 it was resolved to refer the matter of the “Management and Regulation of HMOs in Swale” to the relevant Committee to develop a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This was subsequently progressed by Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group (PTPWG), the Policy and Resources Committee (P&R) and Officers which led to a Draft HMO SPD being the subject of a period of public consultation between 30th March 2026 and 29th April 2026.
- 1.2 The input from that public consultation has duly been considered, summarised and responded to, within a Consultation Statement which is provided at Appendix II. Officers have not recommended making any changes to the HMO SPD and, at the PTPWG meeting of 27th May 2026, members resolved to note the responses received to the public consultation undertaken in relation to the Draft HMO SPD and recommend that the P&R Committee recommends that Full Council adopt the HMO SPD.
- 1.3 The P&R Committee is to meet on 17th June 2026 and the agenda for that meeting includes Item 7 which relates to the HMO SPD. The recommendation to that Committee is that members note the responses received to the public consultation undertaken in relation to the Draft HMO SPD and recommend that Full Council adopt the HMO SPD.
- 1.4 Subject to any recommendations that the Policy and Resources Committee make at their meeting of 17th June 2026, this item is placed on the agenda on the Full

Council in anticipation that the recommendation will be that the Council adopts the HMO SPD or an amended version of the drafted SPD.

- 1.5 It is respectfully requested that the Full Council notes that this paper is being prepared in advance of the P&R Committee meeting. This is due to the scheduling of the P&R Committee meeting and the Full Council meeting in close proximity to each other and related paper deadlines and the government mandated deadline for the adoption of Supplementary Planning Documents, which is the 30th June 2026, meaning that there is not opportunity for the matter to be presented a later Full Council. Any changes that the Policy and Resources Committee recommend will be made available as soon as possible after the meeting as a published and circulated update paper.
- 1.6 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 that the HMO SPD is adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.

2 Background

- 2.1 The report to the P&R Committee meeting that is scheduled for 17th June 2026 and the report to 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 ability to bring this report to a scheduled Full Council rather than utilise an Urgent Decisions Committee or Extraordinary meeting.

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 20 th 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 by officers or PTPWG 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 the HMO SPD (as set out in Appendix I) is adopted by the Full Council as a Supplementary Planning Document.

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 were recommended by PTPWG but, as set out above, this is subject to further consideration by P&R:

- **Alternative Option 1:** 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 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 has been 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. There is a government mandated deadline for the adoption of SPDs of 30 th June 2026.
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](#)
- 8.7 [Report to Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group – 17 June 2026](#)