

Housing, Health, and Community Committee	
Meeting Date	28 th October 2025
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 and Health 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.
- 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. The announcement on 10th October (World Homeless Day) of funding for Homelessness, was a confirmation of these amounts and some additional funding was announced but Swale did not receive any.

Performance Information

2.4 Statutory TA Placements – Total Households on last day of period

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

Statutory TA Flow (2025)

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	23	26	279
September	24	21	282

Length of Time in TA – Over 6 months

Length of time in temporary	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
6 months - 12 months	35	62		
12 months - 18 months	50	44		
18 months - 2 years	27	25		
2 years+	58	74		

TA Purchase Programme

Number of temporary accommodation units owned by Swale Borough Council	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD 25/26
Total	50	53			53

Bedroom size

1 bed	7	7			7
2 bed	37	39			39
3 bed	6	7			7
4 bed	0	0			0

Area

Sittingbourne	39	42			42
Sheerness	10	10			10
Faversham	1	1			1

Property type

Bungalow	1	1			1
Flat	18	18			18
House	29	32			32
Maisonette	2	2			2

Households on the Housing Register

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

Affordable Homes Delivered

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

- 2.5 The volume in TA has stabilised following all the interventions, demand continues to be high. We are seeing slightly more placements in TA than leaving each month, this is directly impacted by the reduction in new affordable home completions and housing register lets from the new and existing stock.
- 2.6 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.

- 2.7 Old Johnson House is being used and this is fully occupied, following extensive work with Southern Housing we are unable to take forward the use of Bridge House for TA.
- 2.8 Swale is part of a county-wide commissioned piece of work that is looking at the costs and quality of TA. This work is currently in its early stages.

Financial Monitoring

- 2.9 The gross external TA costs from April 2025– September 2025 was £1.76m which is a reduction compared to the same period in April 2024 – September 2024 of £2.10m. 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.

Rough Sleeping and Winter Preparedness

- 2.10 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.
- 2.11 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 been looking at options for how we can operate SWEP and the options for a night shelter, unfortunately we have not been able to secure a venue for a night shelter and due the upfront work we will not be able to operate it this year even if a venue was secured. We are continuing the project work for next winter working in partnership with The Salvation Army. Therefore, SWEP will need to be operated with nightly let provision therefore securing this and the costs could put pressure on the TA budget. On average we have activated SWEP around 18 times per year over the past few years. We do receive a Winter Preparedness grant each year, last year we only received grants in wave 2 and 3, which were in January and March. We are assuming that we will at least receive the same levels as previous years.
- 2.13 Each winter we also experience an increase in applications from those who utilise Caravans as their main home and then face homelessness during the closed period. This is likely to increase demand on our services and the number of households in TA.

Risks and Issues

- 2.14 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.

- 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 Bill is predicting some landlords exiting the market.
- We are increasingly seeing demand for hospital discharge support and suitable accommodation.

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.

7 Appendices

None

8 Background Papers

8.1 There are no background papers.