
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCES AND SERVICES OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE,
HELD ON THURSDAY, 21ST MAY, 2026 AT 7.30 PM
IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, TOWN HALL, STATION ROAD, CLACTON-ON-SEA,
CO15 1SE**

Present:	Councillors P Honeywood (Chairman), Amos (Vice-Chairman), Casey, Goldman, J Henderson, Newton and Steady
Also Present:	Councillors Baker (Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning) (items 1-4 and part 5 only), Alexander (items 1-4 and part 5 only) and Griffiths (items 1-4 and part 5 only)
In Attendance:	Lisa Hastings (Corporate Director (Law & Governance) & Monitoring Officer), Gary Guiver (Corporate Director (Planning & Community)) (items 1-4 and part 5 only), Damian Williams (Corporate Director (Operations and Delivery)) (items 1-4 and part 5 only), Keith Simmons (Assistant Director (Corporate Policy & Support), Tim Clarke (Assistant Director (Housing and Environment)) (items 1-4 and part 5 only), Katie Koppenaal (Democratic Services Officer) and Bethany Jones (Democratic Services Officer)

1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS: CHANGE IN COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Chairman, Councillor P Honeywood opened the meeting by reading out the following statement:

"Before we commence today's meeting, I wish to formally record recent changes to the membership of the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

These changes arise from the decisions taken and confirmed at the Annual Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday, 19 May 2026.

As a result of those decisions, Councillor Peter Harris is no longer a member of this Committee, and Councillor Dan Casey has been appointed to serve as a member."

The Chairman expressed his thanks to Councillor Harris for his contributions to the Committee and formally welcomed Councillor Casey as a new Member.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bensilum and Bush with no substitutes appointed.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was moved by Councillor J Henderson, seconded by Councillor Newton and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on Tuesday, 10 March 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

4. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest made by Members on this occasion.

5. **QUESTIONS ON NOTICE PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 38**

No Questions on Notice pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 38 had been submitted by Members for this meeting.

6. **REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (HOUSING & ENVIRONMENT) - A.1 -
POTENTIAL USE OF PROPERTY IN CLACTON TOWN CENTRE FOR TEMPORARY
EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION**

The Committee noted that the provision of temporary accommodation had represented a significant financial pressure for the Council, with approximately £3 million spent annually before Housing Benefit subsidy was applied. Members were advised that, due to shortfalls in Housing Benefit subsidy for temporary accommodation, councils had been required to meet the majority of the cost themselves. It was reported that Tendring's level of expenditure and operational approach had been consistent with that of other local authorities.

Officers confirmed that there had been a continual turnover of households in temporary accommodation, with movements occurring on an almost daily basis. The Council had managed homelessness and temporary accommodation costs effectively, and the opening of Spendells House had contributed positively to this position. The Committee was reminded that the work of homelessness officers ensured that households—many with children—did not experience rough sleeping, which remained rare in the District, typically in single-digit figures.

The Committee was informed that the Council had a statutory duty to provide suitable temporary or emergency accommodation where it had “a reason to believe” an applicant was homeless and in priority need. Failure to do so could place the Council in breach of its duties and at risk of Judicial Review. Members noted the significance of the Court of Appeal judgment in *R (Elkundi & Ors) v Birmingham City Council [2022]*, which confirmed that the duty to secure suitable accommodation was “immediate, non-deferrable, and unqualified.”

Reference was made to the MHCLG Homelessness Code of Guidance (2018, updated 2026), which required suitability assessments to be based on individual household circumstances, including location, affordability, size, condition, accessibility, safety, and the needs of children. Officers reported that households retained the right to request a review of suitability, which was undertaken by a senior officer not previously involved in the case.

The Committee was advised that the majority of temporary accommodation had historically been sourced from private landlords, including hotels and B&Bs, some of which were licensed HMOs. Those establishments generally lacked kitchen facilities and offered shared bathrooms, which had been acceptable only for very short-term stays. As lengths of stay had increased—often several months or more—such arrangements had become unsuitable, particularly for families. This trend reflected national pressures,

including increased homelessness presentations and reduced availability of private rented housing.

Members heard that the Council had therefore needed to secure higher-quality, predominantly self-contained accommodation. Housing Benefit rules continued to create funding gaps, particularly where only 90% of the 2011 Local Housing Allowance rate could be claimed for self-contained units.

At the time of reporting, households were placed across a range of accommodation types, including:

- 66 households in fully self-contained privately owned units
- 27 single persons or households in privately owned units with shared facilities
- 27 households in Spendells House
- 63 households in Council-owned homes on temporary non-secure tenancies

Accommodation was primarily located in Clacton, with some provision in Harwich and Walton. Not all sites had on-site management, although CCTV and daytime staff visits were common where permanent management was absent.

The Committee was informed that, historically, temporary accommodation had been booked on an as-required basis without formal procurement, reflecting national practice and the limited market. A pricing structure had been developed to standardise costs, and several providers had reduced prices to retain bookings. Officers emphasised that the market remained a “seller’s market”, with many councils forced to place households outside their District—something Tendring had avoided except in exceptional circumstances.

Members noted that the Procurement Act 2023, implemented in February 2025, now required formal procurement of temporary accommodation. Cabinet had authorised the commencement of a procurement exercise on 30 January 2026. A Project Initiation Document had been submitted in April, and officers had met with Essex Procurement on 1 May 2026. The Committee was advised that the key challenge was designing a procurement process that ensured flexibility, given fluctuating demand and the uncertain impact of the Renters’ Rights Act. Procurement completion was anticipated for November 2026.

In the interim, the Council continued to block-book accommodation to meet statutory duties. Temporary accommodation remained one of the most significant pressures on the General Fund, despite the inclusion of some funding within the Revenue Support Grant.

Regarding placement processes, officers explained that risk assessments were completed for each household, and suitability was reviewed regularly. All households signed a standard Licence Agreement. Breaches could result in termination of temporary accommodation.

The Committee received detailed information on the internal procedures for assessing new providers and properties. The Private Sector Housing (PSH) team undertook inspections using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), assessing fire safety, amenities, room sizes, and compliance with relevant legislation. Officers

highlighted that all HMOs in Tendring required planning permission due to the District-wide Article 4 Direction in place since 2012.

Developers were encouraged to pursue self-contained accommodation due to lower fire and ASB risks. PSH officers provided advice on planning requirements, Building Regulations, and fire safety standards, including the use of LACORS Fire Guidance. Where necessary, detailed schedules of work and fire plans were issued, and interim inspections were undertaken during development. Completed schemes were inspected before occupation, and certification was retained on the PSH database.

Ongoing monitoring included welfare checks, repairs oversight, and performance reviews of providers. The Committee noted that the Council had ended the use of hotel accommodation for families and no longer used lower-quality or poor-value accommodation.

Officers also outlined the Council's prevention and relief work, including early intervention, tenancy sustainment, private rented sector access, and multi-agency working. Members were informed of the increasing proportion of single people with complex needs requiring temporary accommodation, and the corresponding need for strengthened assessment, safeguarding, and coordinated support.

The Chairman (Councillor P Honeywood) noted that an informal meeting of the Committee had been held on Monday 18 May 2026, and arising from that meeting were some questions to which Officers had provided written responses. Those questions were read out, along with supplementary questions asked as follows:

Questions by Members:	Answers:
<i>Page 17 states that the Council is spending £3 million gross annually on temporary accommodation. Please set out what the figures for 2025/6 were and what the anticipated expenditure will be in 2026/27 together with the net figures allowing for Government grants. This will help the Committee better understand the resources implications of this service.</i>	(Councillor Baker) <i>Figures set out below on spend during 2025/26 remain subject to the final outturn position for the year that have yet to be finalised.</i> <i>£3.325m was spent on temporary accommodation for 2025/26 (This is purely Temporary accommodation (TA) costs, not any other related expenditure i.e. salaries)</i> <i>£0.742m of the 2025/26 ringfenced Homelessness Prevention Grant was for TA purposes,</i> <i>We received £0.571m Housing Benefit subsidy against this cost</i> <i>So, £2.012m Nett</i> <i>TA spend for 2026/27 will depend on demand, but the trend for the last few years is upwards and 2025/26 was around £0.234m more than 2024/25.</i> <i>Grant for TA for 2026/27 forms part of the overall Revenue Support Grant, an additional 0.500m has been put towards TA.</i>
Referring to the 'Potential use of a property in Clacton Town Centre for	(Tim Clarke) We will be speaking about just the one property in respect of the agenda

temporary accommodation', how many properties have been identified to date? Would it be beneficial to identify other properties?	item before us. Yes, but I believe we will cover the procurement exercise being run in due course during these questions.
On page 17 of the report, the Committee is advised that levels of spend and the arrangements for sourcing and placing households into temporary accommodation are typical of other councils in the country. Can the other councils referenced here be named with details of the spend and a brief summary of the extent to which the process on page 22 mirrors the arrangements at TDC?	(Councillor Baker) This comment was made in a general context and not in relation to specific councils. High levels of spending on homelessness are well documented in the media and have been extensively researched by the Local Council's Network. This article is one such example: https://www.districtcouncils.info/most-of-our-council-tax-is-spent-on-temporary-accommodation/ Officers attend Essex-wide meetings on homelessness and talk to officers from other councils about their homelessness challenges and the learning from those conversations is that the challenges are similar elsewhere. This House of Commons research document sets out some further background to temporary accommodation: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/chapter-17-suitability-of-accommodation The Council's housing service commissioned a peer review in 2022 from Local Government East (LGE) that looked at the council's homelessness services. In 2025 further support was sought from LGE to support with the review of the Homelessness Strategy and advice was received on the council's approach to temporary accommodation booking. On both occasions the consultants involved indicated that our approach to homeless temporary accommodation is consistent with what occurs elsewhere. It is known that several councils have undertaken or are undertaking temporary accommodation procurement exercises to varying extents and that councils work to a similar approach, sometimes with both some procured accommodation and some on a less formal blocked booked arrangement.
In the report to this Committee, on	(Councillor Baker) Figures on a monthly

<i>page 17, it states that there is a significant turnover of households in temporary accommodation. Can the start figure, additions, those moving out and the final figure for each month be provided so that this statement can be understood?</i>	<i>basis show an average of between 30 and 40 new households entering temporary accommodation each month. Figures for those leaving for more settled accommodation as part of the ending of their homelessness are more difficult to extract. Figures from 2025/26 suggest an average of 26 households per month leaving temporary accommodation.</i> <i>These are rough figures and more analysis can be done on this given more time and officers would be happy to spend some time with committee members to present and talk through figures in more detail.</i> <i>Note that households also move through different temporary accommodation locations during their time in temporary accommodation.</i>
Is it possible to use the existing data on the housing pathway (from homelessness through to temporary accommodation, and subsequent stages) to forecast future council housing requirements, including the types of households likely to need them—for example, by family size or age profile?	(Councillor Baker) A significant proportion of households placed in temporary accommodation do not ultimately move into TDC's own housing stock. In many cases, households are "moved on" into private rented sector accommodation where this is assessed as more suitable than waiting for a council property. Although there are currently just under 2,000 applicants on TDC's housing register, many households in temporary accommodation are not in the higher priority bands. Regardless of the availability of Spendells, temporary accommodation is not an appropriate long-term solution for families. Enabling households to move on into either private rented accommodation or permanent council housing is therefore preferable to them remaining in temporary accommodation for extended periods. (Tim Clarke) There is a clear pathway for households entering temporary accommodation. Current figures show that more than one household per day presents as homeless and is assessed as requiring temporary accommodation. A household may move through several forms of temporary accommodation before potentially being placed in a temporary flat within

	TDC's own stock while a longer-term solution is identified. Tendring is comparatively fortunate in still having a supply of private rented accommodation into which households can be moved, creating the "flow" referenced in the report. As Councillor Baker has highlighted, many authorities lack this option and consequently experience households remaining in temporary accommodation for much longer, increasing pressure on their temporary accommodation capacity. In terms of projecting future demand, TDC holds a range of datasets—including the Strategic Housing Market Assessment—that provide insight into the types and sizes of properties required in the district. These datasets inform the Local Plan and guide the Council's responses to planning applications, ensuring that the affordable housing delivered on new sites aligns with identified needs.
From the report, it appears that between 4 and 14 households per month are approaching the Council as homeless, yet between 30 and 40 households are entering temporary accommodation each month, with an average of 26 moving on. Does this indicate a net monthly increase of 4 to 14 households in temporary accommodation, and therefore a corresponding rise in homelessness demand?	(Tim Clarke) This is an area where the data requires further refinement. I have had several discussions today with Officers who have direct access to the underlying datasets, and it is clear that more detailed work is needed to produce an accurate figure. This will take a few days, as the way the information is currently recorded means it is not a straightforward exercise and requires a significant amount of manual analysis. The figures presented in the report should therefore be regarded as indicative rather than precise.
<i>On page 19, the report states that at the time of writing, the Council had numbers of households in different private sector accommodation (and Council accommodation). On the basis that the transparency data of the Council will already list the providers of these accommodation units and payments to them, can the detail of the accommodation/providers be issued to the Committee for those private</i>	<i>(Councillor Baker) The Council uses the following providers; each may have one or more properties:</i> <i>Peace Lily Properties Ltd</i> <i>Dayal Group Ltd</i> <i>Maf Housing Ltd</i> <i>Taylor Phillips Ltd</i> <i>Krishna Kandiah</i> <i>C Whitcomb Properties Ltd</i> <i>It is not proposed to provide individual addresses as we are trying to minimize the risk of these entering the public domain as</i>

<i>sector units referenced in the report?</i> <i>Broadly, for the people referenced in the list of accommodation used, how long have the people been in private sector temporary accommodation? (broadly 0-3 months, 3-6 months, 6-9 months, 9-12 months and then 12+ months).</i>	<i>victims of domestic abuse are placed in them and we have experienced instances recently where perpetrators of the abuse locate their victims in temporary accommodation.</i> (Councillor Baker) To add to this, there is currently a lot of information available, as you rightly say, in relation to the transparency data and I will be speaking with Officers in some depth in the coming weeks, because I believe we are actually showing too much information that would identify specific properties. <i>This data will take some further time to collate, and officers are happy to explore this further. Placements vary from a few days to many months and as mentioned above households may stay in more than one location.</i>
<i>Please also set out, as referenced on page 25, how many escalation/move-on situations have occurred in the different forms of private sector accommodation listed on page 16.</i> <i>For the private sector property types listed on page 19, what is the average spend per unit per night to the Council (gross and net of Government Grant).</i> <i>Could you outline the main reasons for these escalations or move-ons, so we can gain a clearer understanding of the underlying factors?</i>	(Councillor Baker) <i>Finding this information on a case-by-case basis will take some considerable time to do.</i> <i>Figures relating to overall spend, Housing Benefit subsidy and grant have been provided above. A breakdown on a per property basis and then apportioning the level of grant and Housing Benefit subsidy for each will take much more time to collate.</i> (Tim Clarke) If the Committee is interested in data on move-ons from temporary accommodation into, for example, private rented accommodation as a discharge of the homelessness duty, those figures are relatively easier to produce. However, we did not present them today as we were not fully confident in their accuracy, though it is likely we can provide this information to the Committee. Analysis relating to factors such as length of stay is far more complex, as households often move through multiple

Thank you. I wondered if there could be some kind of pattern shown from those figures?	types of temporary accommodation, making the data much harder to extract and interpret. (Tim Clarke) That will be valuable to see, and it highlights one of the real strengths of this scrutiny process. From an Officer perspective, it is genuinely welcome, as it gives us the opportunity to explore areas—such as these figures—in greater depth than we might otherwise have reason to.
<i>On pages 20-21 of the report submitted to the Committee, it references the Procurement Act 2023 and that the council continues to block book accommodation to meet the need for temporary accommodation. Are the two positions compatible given the spend on temporary accommodation? When is the procurement exercise being timed to the appoint of award of contracts.</i> <i>Some councils, we understand, have lists of accredited providers of temporary accommodation and charge landlords to pay for the inspections and administration of the scheme. Has this self-funding model been considered?</i>	(Councillor Baker) <i>Details of the procurement are set out in the report. It is currently anticipated that a decision to make contract awards following the procurement can be made in November/December 2026.</i> (Councillor Baker) <i>No it has not but is something we can consider as part of the procurement exercise.</i>
Am I correct in understanding that the proportion of social housing proposed in the new Local Plan has decreased?	(Gary Guiver) The Council's adopted Local Plan currently requires 30% affordable housing on developments of 11 or more homes. In the draft Local Plan, which has recently been out for consultation, the proposal is to reduce this requirement to 20% for most developments. This proposed change reflects the inclusion of several new policies in the draft Plan—such as those relating to enhanced energy efficiency, biodiversity, and net-gain—which have implications for overall scheme viability. It is important to note that the draft Plan has not yet been adopted and remains subject to the consultation and examination process. As such, we cannot confirm whether the proposed percentage will remain

	unchanged. For the time being, the adopted Local Plan policy continues to apply, meaning the affordable housing requirement remains at 30%.
It will require a careful balance to ensure those figures are accurate. What approach should we take to achieve that?	(Gary Guiver) This is a matter that will be debated and considered by the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee as we move into the next stage of the Local Plan consultation. Ultimately, it requires balancing the projected need for affordable housing with what can realistically be delivered once viability and other policy requirements—such as energy efficiency, biodiversity, and net-gain—are taken into account. This balance is currently being examined through the Local Plan process. As Mr Clarke noted earlier, we do have a Strategic Housing Market Assessment, which provides a key evidence base setting out the projected need for affordable housing. However, through the planning process we must weigh this evidence against viability considerations and other policy obligations.

The Corporate Director for Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer (Lisa Hastings) reminded Members that the matter before the Committee concerned temporary accommodation rather than affordable housing. She requested that the Corporate Director for Planning and Community (Gary Guiver) clarify whether the scope for affordable housing within the Local Plan would contribute to the Committee's enquiry.

The Corporate Director for Planning and Community (Gary Guiver) confirmed that the type of affordable housing being discussed, in planning terms, referred to a proportion of dwellings secured in perpetuity for affordable use. He explained that such homes could accommodate households on a permanent basis if required. He further clarified that temporary accommodation, as relevant to the Committee's current enquiry, did not fall within the percentage requirement for affordable housing.

Can you give an overview of the reasons why people find themselves homeless?	(Tim Clarke) The three main causes of homelessness 2024/25 were: 1. Notice to Quit from a private tenancy – 263 (30.4%) 2. Family eviction – 219 (25.3%) 3. Domestic Abuse – 91 (10.5%) Other notable causes were relationship breakdown (non-violent), notice to quit including from social housing, eviction by friends, and departure from custody.
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On pages 20–21 of the report, reference is made to the Procurement Act 2023 and to the Council’s continued practice of block-booking temporary accommodation. Are these two positions compatible, given the level of expenditure on temporary accommodation?	(Lisa Hastings) The issue was first addressed in the Cabinet report of January 2026. Several factors are relevant. The Procurement Act 2023, which came into force at the beginning of 2025, introduced a number of significant changes. One of its schedules sets out the types of procurement covered by the Act and refers to the CVPC code. Included within that schedule is the procurement of temporary accommodation. Historically, local authorities relied on the position that booking accommodation did not constitute a contract for services; it was simply the reservation of a room. The new Act broadened this definition, making clear that booking accommodation for the purpose of temporary housing is still the procurement of a service from the private sector and therefore must be subject to an open and transparent procurement process. This change coincided with national scrutiny of temporary accommodation expenditure and the processes being used by councils. At the same time as homelessness was rising, the legislative framework governing procurement was tightening, which caught many authorities off guard, including ourselves. We had previously explored going to market, but at that time were not required to do so. Some local authorities have since undertaken procurement exercises using frameworks that allow access to private or other sector properties that meet required standards and can be called upon when needed. This approach has been successful in some areas and less so in others, depending largely on local availability. As an organisation, we are required to undertake such a procurement exercise. We may ultimately continue to use the same types of accommodation in the same parts of the district, but we will have done so through an open and transparent process that gives all providers the opportunity to participate. As Monitoring Officer, I am obliged to raise any compliance issues with
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	the Council, which is why this matter was reported to Cabinet. The next step is to implement the necessary arrangements. We are currently non-compliant due to the level of expenditure, but we are not alone, and we have a clear plan to address the issue. Senior officers met earlier today and agreed to allocate additional capacity to support Mr Clarke's team and the Essex Procurement Team in completing this work.
<i>On page 21 a common licence agreement is referenced for households placed in temporary accommodation. Can the Committee see a copy of that agreement?</i>	(Councillor Baker) <i>[Referring to the supplementary document 'Spendells House Licence Agreement'] This licence agreement is used for all temporary accommodation.</i>
<i>Is there a clear alignment between the publicly stated position (at Cabinet) on procurement of temporary accommodation and the operational delivery of sourcing accommodation? Is the Portfolio Holder aware of the arrangements for compliance with the policy approach in this area?</i>	(Councillor Baker) <i>The portfolio holder is aware of the current general process for booking temporary accommodation, that has been in place for many years.</i> <i>As stated in the report, the procurement will take some time to complete and in the meantime the council cannot pause its use of temporary accommodation. The established processes will continue until the procurement exercise is completed.</i>
<i>On pages 23-25 of the report a process is described for sourcing temporary accommodation, can you say when was the process as described written (with all the steps referenced) and how long has it been in place for?</i>	(Councillor Baker) <i>The general process for booking accommodation has been in place for 25+ years.</i> <i>The part of the process relating to the inspection of premises by the Environmental Health service, especially those that are not already inspected, has been introduced and enhanced over the last couple of years.</i> <i>This part of the process has been introduced for both temporary accommodation and accommodation in the private sector that has been sourced for long term tenancies in order to discharge homelessness duties. The inspections are to ensure that the accommodation meets the suitability standards.</i> <i>It should be noted that the regime of inspections we have in place goes beyond</i>

	<i>the minimum required by the Homelessness Code of Guidance.</i>
<i>Is there a 'Standard Operating Procedure/Work Practice Note' that exists that sets out the process described in pages 23-25? If so, can we have this and the review process for it? Plus, what training exists on that Procedure/Note's requirements? Is there a checklist to confirm the requirements are adhered to?</i>	(Councillor Baker) <i>There is not a standard operating procedure. This is an internal arrangement between two teams within the housing & environment service area and the officers involved are appropriately trained and aware of the process. There are written processes for other aspects of the service. A standard operating procedure would be beneficial, and officers will look to develop one.</i>
Is there a policy that we will try and provide temporary accommodation or council houses within the same town/ward that they previously resided?	(Councillor Baker) We always seek to minimise any disruption that moving between towns may have on a resident's life; however, this is heavily dependent on the availability of suitable accommodation at the time of need. There have been occasions where households have had to be placed in a different part of the district, which can affect a range of factors including access to healthcare, schooling, education, and existing support networks. This is one of the reasons we have been working to ensure that temporary accommodation is available across the areas where demand is highest. The greatest demand for temporary accommodation is in Clacton and the surrounding area, with Harwich being the second-highest, though to a much lesser extent. As a result, the majority of available temporary accommodation is located in and around Clacton. It is important to note that we will not place anyone outside the district unless it is absolutely necessary, and only where it is required for their safety. For example, in cases involving domestic abuse, it may be essential to place an individual outside Tendring to ensure they are protected. In relation to Council housing, we currently have over 3,000 properties within our housing stock, and approximately 2,000 households on the housing register. A key priority in addressing homelessness is

	preventing it from occurring in the first place. Prevention is central to our approach, and Officers undertake significant work beyond responding to households who present as homeless. This includes engaging with landlords or family members, supporting residents with budgeting, and taking other steps to help people remain in their existing accommodation wherever possible. At this stage, it is too early to assess the impact of the Renters Reform Act, which came into force only around 20 days ago. We will, of course, continue to deal with the same underlying issues, but it will be important to monitor whether the new legislation affects the volume or nature of cases coming forward. (Tim Clarke) With regard to grant funding, until this year we received the Homelessness Prevention Grant, which was originally not ring-fenced. In recent years, however, at least 40% of that funding has been required to be spent specifically on homelessness prevention activity. This can include staffing costs, as well as initiatives designed to prevent homelessness at an early stage. For the current financial year and the following two years, the Government has committed to continued funding, now under a revised title: the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant. Notably, this grant does not include any provision for temporary accommodation costs; it is focused entirely on prevention activity. In relation to suitability, Chapter 17 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance (Suitability of Accommodation) sets out the requirements regarding both the physical condition of accommodation and its location. Placing an individual at a significant distance from their support networks, essential contacts, and established community would not be consistent with that guidance. Where we do not have suitable temporary accommodation available in the appropriate area, we regularly review each household's circumstances alongside
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	emerging availability, with the aim of relocating them to the most suitable location as soon as possible.
Since the Renters Reform Act came into force, have we lost any landlords as a direct impact of the legislation?	(Tim Clarke) I think it is fair to say that we have lost a small number of landlords, but it is too early to draw firm conclusions. Any landlord wishing to leave the market as a direct result of the legislation would have needed to do so before 1 May 2026, and we are aware that some did take that step. What remains to be seen is how the situation develops now that the Act is in force, and we will be monitoring the position over time.
<i>Within the process outlined on pages 22–24 of the report, the term ‘standards’ is referenced multiple times. What are these standards and can the Committee have the documentation to support the ‘standards’ referenced?</i> <i>The report also references improving standards of accommodation. Please set out what those improvements in the standards will be.</i>	(Councillor Baker) <i>The standards referred to are that as set out in Chapter 17 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities. This Chapter covers Suitability of Accommodation.</i> <i>The council’s environmental health service includes officers who are trained in the assessment of suitability having regard to the relevant Housing Act 1985 and Housing Act 2004 provisions. These include size of the rooms/accommodation, presence of hazards to health, fire safety, disrepair and levels of amenities (kitchens & bathrooms).</i> <i>Improvements to standards refers to the fact that some accommodation previously used by the council does not so readily meet the suitability standards.</i> (Tim Clarke) In relation to the Homelessness Code of Guidance, there are additional Government orders associated with it that set out very clear requirements regarding the use of bed-and-breakfast accommodation for families. For context, several years ago we were non-compliant with these requirements, as families must not be placed in bed-and-breakfast accommodation for more than six weeks. This attracted the attention of the then-MHCLG, and there was a possibility that a formal letter would be issued to the Chief Executive, alongside a requirement for us to produce an improvement plan. Fortunately, the opening of Spendells came

	at a critical time, and, combined with the work undertaken to secure additional self-contained accommodation, we are now fully compliant. As a result, we no longer have any families placed in bed-and-breakfast accommodation.
<i>How many times in, say, the last 12 months has the process described on pages 22-24 for sourcing temporary accommodation not been followed? Can details of those non-compliances be provided to the Committee to assist it to understand the application and controls around the process.</i>	(Councillor Baker) <i>The process has been followed in respect of the suitability of accommodation although in at least one instance a property has been used for a short period that did not have residential planning consent. In view of this a further final stage to the process has been added which involves a meeting between the Housing Manager, the Environmental Health Manager and the Assistant Director where final agreement on the safety and suitability and planning status of any new premises to be used can be checked and agreed.</i>
Page 20-21 refers to the future procurement and anticipates the procurement process being complete in November and outlines a requirement for the owner/landlord to demonstrate that it has the necessary planning approvals in place. Who currently ensures the necessary approvals are in place before the property is used?	(Tim Clarke) This work is undertaken within the Homelessness Team as part of the suitability assessment process, which includes ensuring that any property used has the appropriate approvals in place. We also obtain all required certification, including fire safety and related compliance documents. In addition, in light of previous non-compliance issues, we have introduced an extra stage to the process: before any new accommodation is used, a review meeting is held. I am part of that meeting and, having considered all the relevant information, I ultimately determine whether the property is approved for use.
To confirm, you review each case and a designated decision-maker is appointed who determines whether to approve or reject the accommodation?	(Tim Clarke) Yes. Going forward that decision maker will be me, working with those two colleagues to manage those services.
<i>There is a planning application for 1 Wellesley Road, Clacton to provide temporary accommodation.</i>	(Tim Clarke) <i>19 rooms in the building were booked during January with 11 occupants placed there for a maximum of 28 nights. The total cost of this was £24,850. Housing Benefit was claimed for those who were placed there.</i>
<i>How many people have been</i>	(Tim Clarke) Yes, those making decisions

<i>placed by the Council in this property within the last 12 months and for how long?</i> <i>How much have the Council spent placing people in this property?</i> <i>Do those making decisions about placement of people into temporary accommodation have all the necessary information held by the Council on the property (this would include information held on the Council's Uniform computer system)?</i> <i>Are there any particular risks (e.g. fire, reputational etc) around using temporary accommodation that does not have planning permission?</i>	<i>have access to information about the standard of accommodation and suitability (having regard to Chapter 17 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance). Information in respect of planning status can be obtained from the Planning service.</i> <i>(Tim Clarke) If the property has not been inspected to confirm suitability as referenced above then there could be safety risks. In this instance it had been inspected.</i> <i>(Tim Clarke) The absence of appropriate planning approval does present a reputational risk to the council especially were use of the property to have continued.</i> <i>(Tim Clarke) In the case of the property referred to it was used before planning permission had been granted and this is clearly an error although in other respects it meets the suitability standards. Once the error was identified steps were taken to stop using the building as quickly as was practicable. As a consequence of this and to ensure this does not occur again the Assistant Director for Housing & Environment must now be consulted before a decision is taken to use a property.</i> <i>(Cllr Baker) When this issue came to light, a single point of contact was established within Planning for Officers to consult. This ensures that any properties offered to us, or identified for potential use, have the correct planning permissions in place where required.</i> <i>(Lisa Hastings) Following the points raised by Officers and the Portfolio Holder, I would request that a formal record is made each time a property is approved for use. This should include the rationale for selecting that property and confirmation that all required certifications have been obtained. I recognise that, in light of earlier concerns, it may not be appropriate for the full address to be placed in the public domain; however,</i>
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	documenting the decision-making process will provide assurance that the necessary checks have been completed. I would also emphasise that this arrangement would apply only for the temporary period until the procurement exercise has been completed.
Are we actively looking for other temporary housing accommodation? Is that happening in Clacton and do the same rules apply?	(Councillor Baker) Are we actively seeking additional temporary accommodation, and is this work taking place in Clacton? Do the same requirements and approval processes apply to any new properties identified.
Are we actively seeking additional temporary accommodation, and is this work taking place in Clacton? Do the same requirements and approval processes apply to any new properties identified?	(Councillor Baker) Demand for temporary accommodation continues to rise. As noted earlier, it is too soon to assess the impact of the Renters Reform Act, given how recently it came into force. It may help reduce demand, but we must be prepared for continued pressure. We are also exploring whether parts of the Council's own housing stock could be used for temporary accommodation. In short, yes—we are actively seeking additional options.
I have previously mentioned the idea of using glamping pods or warehouses to provide temporary accommodation. Have those options been considered?	(Councillor Baker) We have discussed this and someone has investigated it, however, the costs were astronomical. Therefore, it is not currently something we are pursuing, but it is something we may discuss in the future.
Is it possible for the Committee to see the minutes for the Working Group?	(Lisa Hastings) As a Scrutiny Committee, if this is an area you wish to examine further as part of your ongoing work, you have the legal right to access the relevant Council information associated with those enquiries. While the minutes of such enquiries would not be placed in the public domain, any subsequent work — for example, if the enquiry were to lead to the establishment of a Task and Finish Group — may result in findings being reported back to the Committee, and those reports would be publicly available.
Page 21 of the report states “ <i>given that local small and medium sized businesses (SME's) are likely to be involved in the procurement consideration is being given to how the Council supports them through</i>	(Councillor Baker) Please could you submit this question to me in writing, and I will provide a written response to this in due course.

<i>procurement process rather than putting them off.”</i> How much support is currently permitted with a planning application where TDC intends to book the property before it is deemed appropriate to automatically refer the application to the Planning Committee?	
In reference to the meeting of the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 14 January 2026, the following question was asked: <i>“Could you provide the latest figures on placements by other Councils into rental accommodation in Tendring and set out what issues such placements has and what your response is to this?”</i> The answer given was: <i>“During 2025 there were 70 placements that were notified to Council under s208 of the Housing Act 1996. Whilst Tendring does not place homeless households outside of the District unless there are exceptional circumstances it is common that other councils do so. 70 placements over the course of a year is not considered to be exceptional. LGR and the formation of unitary councils will create wider geographical areas over which a single unitary authority can make placements, and it is not possible to prevent other councils from placing into Tendring currently. Of course, those 70 placements will be into accommodation that a resident of Tendring might have been able to use. The only response is to monitor the situation and also be alert to the use of establishments that might be unsafe or unsuitable.”</i> The breakdown given on those was: Barking & Dagenham – 2	(Councillor Baker) The response provided at the meeting on 14 January was given on my behalf, as I was unable to attend due to illness. I was not aware of the disparity in the figures referenced. The Committee will be aware that other councils are required to notify this authority when they place individuals into temporary accommodation within our district, although I am not familiar with the specific legislative sections cited. It is also important to note that the use of privately rented properties for temporary accommodation does not materially change the situation, as those properties remain available for rent by anyone, including individuals from outside the district. I recall, Councillor Honeywood, that when you previously held the Housing Portfolio, you engaged directly with other councils on this issue, and at that time the numbers involved were, as I remember, quite significant. The approach currently being taken is not the result of a decision made by this Cabinet, and I am not in a position today to state what our future course of action will be. I will need to discuss the matter with my Cabinet colleagues. I will therefore take this information away, consider it collectively with Cabinet, and provide a written response once a decision has been reached.

Braintree – 1 Redbridge – 3 Thurrock – 1 Chelmsford – 12 Colchester – 51 Following concern from myself that those figures were lower than expected, on 13 March 2026, I approached Colchester City Council and submitted a freedom of information request and received the following response: <i>“The total households placed in both interim and S193(2) temporary accommodation in Tendring between January 2025 to December 2025 was 114.”</i> I disagree that it is not possible to oppose other councils placing in Tendring as the previous administration took political action to reduce numbers. Why has the current administration refused to do the same? Will they now take action?	
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Councillor Griffiths, a ward member for St James Ward in Clacton-on-Sea, raised concerns about current planning and housing policy. He referred to the Clacton Town Board's emerging ten-year vision and four-year investment plan and questioned how this aligned with Local Plan policy LP11, which encouraged certain types of accommodation to be grouped in centralised locations. Drawing on his work with HMOs in the town centre, he warned that concentrating people with similar socio-economic challenges in one area could harm wellbeing and create avoidable pressures.

He highlighted antisocial behaviour in Pier Avenue, which he believed was linked to the high density of HMOs and bedsits, and argued that such clustering contributed to social and health issues whilst undermining tourism and economic activity. Whilst stressing the importance of supporting people who presented as homeless, he maintained that the location of their accommodation must be chosen carefully to avoid placing vulnerable individuals at risk. He called for the policy to be reviewed so that location became a clearer factor when directing homeless provision. He concluded by supporting the Council's proactive approach to homelessness but emphasised that centralising vulnerable individuals did not benefit them, the Council, or the wider community.

Councillor Baker did not provide a formal response but requested that Councillor Griffiths submit his points in writing so they could be raised at the next meeting of the relevant Task and Finish Group.

The meeting was then temporarily adjourned, during which the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, Corporate Director (Planning and Community) Corporate Director (Operations & Delivery) and the Assistant Director (Housing & Environment) departed.

It was moved by Councillor P Honeywood, seconded by Councillor Amos and **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) a Task and Finish Group be formally appointed to undertake an enquiry day on Temporary Accommodation, with membership comprising the full Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- (b) the Assistant Director (Corporate Policy and Support), following consultation with the Committee's Chairman, be authorised to amend the membership of the Task and Finish Group as necessary to reflect Members' availability;
- (c) Officers provide the Committee with detailed financial information, specifically:
 - a. The average spend per unit per night incurred by the Council for private sector temporary accommodation, both gross and net of Government Grant.
 - b. Data on the number of households entering and leaving Temporary Accommodation over a defined period;
- (d) the Committee be supplied with figures relating to escalations and move-ons, noting the continued importance of this information for understanding service pressures and outcomes;
- (e) a clear specification of standards for Temporary Accommodation be developed, setting out:
 - a. The standards expected of all temporary accommodation used by the Council.
 - b. The characteristics of a well-managed temporary accommodation provider.
 - c. This specification should be prepared in advance of the forthcoming procurement exercise;
- (f) the Committee be provided with the standards contained within the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities, insofar as they relate to Temporary Accommodation;
- (g) the minutes of the Temporary Accommodation Task and Finish Group be supplied to the Committee in advance of the enquiry day, on the basis that those minutes remain private and confidential;
- (h) the Freedom of Information request submitted by Councillor P Honeywood be provided to all members of the Committee, arranged in chronological order to support clarity and ease of understanding; and
- (i) officers' acknowledgement of the need to reflect upon and improve the process be formally noted, together with confirmation that a new process has now been put in place.

7. REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (CORPORATE POLICY & SUPPORT) - A.2 - REVIEW OF THE WORK PROGRAMME

The Assistant Director (Corporate Policy & Support) presented the Committee, where relevant, with an overview of its approved Work Programme for 2025/26, feedback to the Committee on the decisions taken in respect of previous recommendations from the

Committee arising from enquiries undertaken, and a list of forthcoming decisions for which public notice had been given.

It was reported that a review of the Committee's Work Programme, in the context of the recent Ministerial announcement regarding the next steps for Local Government Re-organisation, would continue to be monitored as an ongoing item of business.

It was reported that the Chairmen of both Overview & Scrutiny Committees had met with the Deputy Leader of the Council and Senior Officers to consider priorities for the forthcoming year's Work Programmes, in accordance with the Council's Codes and Protocols for Overview and Scrutiny. The notes arising from this meeting had been attached as Appendix C to the Officer's report (A.2).

Members were invited to put forward items for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme for 2026/27 and to consider the content of the 2025/26 Annual Report. It was noted that a joint informal meeting of both Overview & Scrutiny Committees would take place on Thursday 4 June 2026 to agree these matters.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Committee:

- (a) notes both its approved Work Programme 2025/26 (Appendix A) and the list of forthcoming decisions (Appendix B);
- (b) notes the remaining contents of the report; and
- (c) endorses the requirement to scope the work programme for 2026/27 ahead of its submission to Council on 11 August 2026.

The meeting was declared closed at 9.28 pm

Chairman