CABINET COMMITTEE: HOUSING

Monday, 6 July 2026

Attendance:

Councillors
Reach (Chairperson)

Cutler	Tod

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Becker (Councillor Tod deputised) and Councillor White (Councillor Lee deputised)

Non-voting invited councillors

Councillors Clear, Horrill, Power and Lee

Members in attendance who spoke at the meeting

Councillor Adams

Video recording of this meeting

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1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Becker and White with Councillors Tod and Lee deputising as noted above.

2. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Tod and Clear declared disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of various reports on the agenda due to their roles as Hampshire County Councillors. However, as there was no material conflict of interest, they remained in the room, spoke and voted under the dispensation granted on behalf of the Audit and Governance Committee to participate and vote in all matters which might have a County Council involvement

3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Ian Tait spoke during public participation as summarised briefly below.
Mr Tait's comments related to the conversion of the old coach house to the rear of 59 Colebrook Street. He expressed concern that the decision to proceed with the project had not been made in an open meeting and believed that there was a pattern of other large sums of Housing Revenue Account money being written off due to schemes that did not progress. He suggested that the use of Section 106 and right-to-buy receipts on such projects was an inefficient use of council

resources. He recommended that a more thorough assessment of such developments be conducted in the future to help safeguard public funds.

Councillor Reach responded to the comments made, including advising that if progressed, the proposal would be funded via the Homes for Ukraine scheme rather than HRA monies. Once tenders for the work had been received and assessed, further information would be made available.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held 2 February 2026 be agreed as a correct record.

5. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements made.

6. NEW HOMES PROGRAMME UPDATE (PRESENTATION)

The Service Lead – New Homes gave a presentation on the New Homes Programme which was available on the council's website here.

The Strategic Director, Service Lead and the Corporate Head of Housing responded to questions and comments raised by councillors as summarised below:

a) The specific steps being taken to ensure the delivery target returned to the intended level of 1,000 new homes by 2032.
b) Information was requested regarding the current occupancy position and demand for shared ownership properties.
c) A question was asked regarding the number of households currently registered within Bands One and Two of the housing list.
d) Further details were sought on how new development opportunities were identified and how the council engaged with local communities across the district.
e) A question was asked regarding the level of clarity provided by Registered Providers concerning the location and numbers of their housing stock within the district.
f) Further clarification was sought regarding the status of the Newlands Parish project in light of the proposed Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).
g) A question was asked about how the council sought different sources of government funding available.
h) Further information was requested regarding the role of the new combined authority and its strategic relationship with Homes England. The Strategic Director agreed to follow up on this point.
i) A question was asked regarding whether there was a brownfield site register available.

j) Further clarification was sought on the progress of rural exception sites and the provision of appropriate housing for older people to downsize into.

In relation to the various questions raised which connected to the LGR proposals, Councillor Reach confirmed that further reports would be brought forward as appropriate, including an item to a forthcoming Economy and Housing Policy Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the update regarding the new homes programme be noted.

7. RETROFIT PROGRAMME UPDATE (PRESENTATION)

At the invitation of the chairperson, Councillor Adams addressed the committee as summarised briefly below.

Councillor Adams spoke regarding the Swedish cottage retrofit programme and noted that whilst there was some remaining frustration about the delays, officer communication had received positive feedback. He suggested that more regular progress updates be provided to ward councillors and other stakeholders following the resolution of land-use issues with the Parish Council. Further reassurance was sought concerning the potential for additional programme delays resulting from the upcoming Local Government Reorganisation.

Councillor Reach thanked Councillor Adams for his comments which would be noted for further action.

The Retrofit Manager gave a presentation on the retrofit programme which was available on the council's website here.

The Retrofit Manager and the Corporate Head of Housing responded to questions and comments raised by councillors as summarised below:

a) Further information was requested on the specific financial and lifestyle benefits of retrofit measures for individual tenants.
b) Further clarification was sought on the plan to achieve the final delivery target for properties that were more difficult to treat.
c) Further information was requested regarding lessons learned from solar battery monitoring and how the council ensured fairness for tenants whose properties could not benefit from solar energy due to the orientation or aspect of the building.
d) A question was asked concerning the steps being taken to future-proof homes against climate change, specifically regarding overheating resilience and ventilation.
e) Further details were sought on the pilot scheme for Swedish cottages, including the testing of a new thermal insulation product and infrared heating.
f) Assurances were sought that ward councillors should be formally notified before any pilot schemes commenced in their respective wards. In addition, it was suggested that councillors could assist with resident

engagement by utilising parish or ward magazines to share information on retrofit schemes.

g) Further clarification was sought on the distinction between the "planned windows" programme and the dedicated conservation area window programme.
h) A question was asked regarding the degree of integration between retrofit assessments and the wider council stock condition surveys. In addition, how the retrofit programme was linked to the council's workstream for addressing damp, mould, and condensation?
i) A concern was raised regarding the risk of using over-specialised contractors for single retrofit measures and whether this might overlook more holistic building issues.

RESOLVED:

That the update regarding the retrofit programme be noted.

8. **HOUSING CONSUMER STANDARDS**

(CAB3559(H))

Councillor Reach and the Tenancy Services Manager introduced the report which provided an update following the council's self-referral to the Social Housing Regulator in April 2025.

Councillor Reach welcomed the two TACT Board members present, Lyn Mellish and Sandra Salter, and it was confirmed the TACT Board has been interviewed as part of the self-referral process and follow up.

The Tenancy Services Manager, Corporate Head and Strategic Director responded to questions and comments raised by councillors as summarised below:

a) A question was asked concerning the primary barriers remaining that prevented the council from achieving a C1 rating.
b) Further clarification was sought regarding the specific measurable improvements expected within the next six months.
c) Information was requested regarding the quality and completeness of property, tenant, and household data.
d) Further details were sought on the strategy being developed to improve the insight held by the council concerning the occupants of its homes.
e) A question was asked concerning the data gap identified in relation to stock condition surveys.
f) Further clarification was sought regarding how the council supported staff morale and managed the pace of change required to meet regulatory standards.
g) Information was requested regarding the integration of net-zero targets and environmental considerations within the improvement plan.
h) A question was asked regarding the likely date of the next formal inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing.

i) Further clarification was sought on whether progress against the improvement plan would be reported in a broader context to the committee and the TACT board.
j) Information was requested regarding the frequency of future performance reports to be brought before the committee.

Councillor Reach expressed his thanks to Lin Mellish for all her work over previous years as a member of the TACT Board.

The Cabinet Committee agreed the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That it be noted that HQN have been commissioned to assess the Landlord Service against the Consumer Standards.

2. That the Consumer Standards service improvement plan/s be agreed, as set out in Appendix A of the report.

9. **TENANCY STRATEGY AND TENANCY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**
(CAB3558(H))
Councillor Reach and the Tenancy Services Manager introduced the report which detailed both the revised Tenancy Strategy and the new Housing Services Tenancy Management Strategy.

The Tenancy Services Manager and Corporate Head responded to questions and comments raised by councillors as summarised below:

a) Further clarification was sought regarding the performance and outcomes framework and how the council intended to measure success against the strategy.
b) A question was asked concerning the specific evidence that underpinned the council's approach to tenancy length, succession, and affordability.
c) Information was requested regarding the safeguards in place to ensure that vulnerable tenants were not disadvantaged by any proposed policy changes.
d) Further information was requested on how the strategies would continue to operate following the proposed Local Government Reorganisation.
e) Further clarification was sought regarding whether the strategy could unintentionally increase homelessness or lead to higher rates of tenancy failure.
f) A question was asked concerning the monitoring of specific outcomes, including levels of arrears, evictions, and successful tenancy sustainment.
g) Further details were sought regarding how the council intended to enforce the expectations set out in the strategy with Registered Providers.
h) A question was asked regarding the frequency of reporting on tenancy measures to the Housing Leadership Board and the TACT Board.

The Cabinet Committee agreed the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Tenancy Strategy 2026–2031 attached at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

2. That the Housing Services Tenancy Management Strategy 2026–2029 be approved, as attached at Appendix 3 to the report.

3. That authority be delegated to the Corporate Head of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Good Homes for All, to make any minor amendments, typographical corrections, formatting changes, legislative updates or other non-material changes required prior to publication and implementation of the Tenancy Strategy 2026–2031 and the Housing Services Tenancy Management Strategy 2026–2029

10. REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE PROCUREMENT AND AUDIT UPDATE
(CAB3557(H))

Councillor Reach and the Asset and Planned Maintenance Manager introduced the report which provided an update on the contracts awarded and the audit action plan.

The Asset and Planned Maintenance Manager responded to questions and comments raised by councillors as summarised below:

a) How contractors would be held accountable for quality and how social value and carbon reductions were measured?
b) Further details were requested on how the council would check contractors work to facilitate effective auditing.
c) A question was asked concerning whether staff had been transferred from previous contractors under TUPE arrangements.
d) Further clarification was sought regarding the specific performance criteria and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that was required to be met before a contract extension was invoked.
e) Information was requested on the current status of governance and risk management following the weaknesses identified in the internal audit.

The Cabinet Committee agreed the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

That the following be noted:

1. That the repairs and maintenance contract has been awarded to Wates Property Services.

2. That the Heating contract has been awarded to Signix Ltd.

3. That the Electrical contract has been awarded to Signix Ltd.

4. The Repairs and Maintenance audit action plan and progress made to date.

11. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY AND CIVIL PENALTIES POLICY

(CAB3555(H))

Councillor Reach and the Private Sector Housing Manager introduced the report which set out a revised enforcement framework following the introduction of the Renters' Rights Act 2025.

The Private Sector Housing Manager and the Corporate Head of Housing responded to questions and comments raised by councillors as summarised below:

a) A question was asked regarding the estimated number of private rented properties in the district and the number of officers available to manage the increased workload.
b) Further clarification was sought on how the council intended to keep housing conditions under review and remain proactive despite limited staffing resources.
c) A question was asked regarding whether the income generated from civil penalties could fully recover the costs of enforcement and debt collection.
d) Information was requested regarding the proportion of properties let by professional agencies and whether the Renters' Rights Act required a higher standard of professionalism from all landlords.
e) A question was asked concerning the timeline for a formal review of the new enforcement model and its impact on the budget.
f) Further clarification was sought regarding the council's primary enforcement priorities, specifically in relation to safety hazards and energy efficiency.
g) Information was requested on the methods used to reassure tenants that they could report disrepair or illegal practices without fear of retaliation or "no-fault" evictions.

The Cabinet Committee agreed the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the revised Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy be approved, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

2. That the proposed Private Sector Housing Civil Penalty Policy be approved, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

3. That the Corporate Head of Housing be authorised to make minor changes or those linked to legislative change, to the Private Sector Housing Enforcement and Civil Penalty policies.

12. **HOMELESSNESS, ROUGH SLEEPING AND DOMESTIC ABUSE GRANT** (CAB3554(H))

Councillor Reach (on behalf of Councillor Becker) together with the Service Lead – Strategic Housing introduced the report, highlighting that it was the first time a multi-year settlement had been provided by the government which would allow for more strategic, long term planning.

The Service Lead and Strategic Director responded to questions and comments raised by councillors as summarised below:

a) The current assessment of homelessness and rough sleeping across the district and how often data was collected.
b) Further clarification was sought on the relationship between the Renters' Rights Act and the council's statutory homelessness duties.
c) Information was requested concerning the specific percentage of funding directed toward prevention activities versus crisis response in addition to a question regarding the measurable reductions in homelessness that were expected to result from the new funding approach.
d) Whether neighbouring local authorities had received similar multi-year settlements and how this might impact the movement of homeless households between districts.
e) Further information was requested on whether the grant funding could be geographically ring-fenced in light of upcoming Local Government Reorganisation.
f) Further clarification was sought regarding which specific interventions were delivering the most successful outcomes and which were proving less effective.
g) Information was requested concerning the level of coordination between the council and external partners, specifically the police, health services, and the voluntary sector.
h) A question was asked regarding whether the proposed grant levels were sufficient for core partners, such as the Beacon and Trinity Winchester, to sustain their current service levels.
i) Further details were sought on the progress and timeline for the purchase of two additional properties for use as temporary accommodation.
j) Information was requested regarding the use of Memorandums of Understanding to protect partner funding during the proposed transition to a unitary authority under LGR.

The Cabinet Committee agreed the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant Spending Plan for the three-year period 2026/27 to 2028/29 be approved, as set out at paragraph 11.18 of the report.

2. That all the fixed term staffing contracts be extended as set out in paragraph 4.4 of the report.

3. That the allocation of £286,000 draw down from the Homelessness Grant reserve, to fund the Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Spending Plan for 2026-27 be approved and the Homelessness Reserve Spending Plan set out at paragraph 11.24 of the report be approved.

4. That the Homes for Ukraine spending plan and reserve plan be approved as set out at paragraphs 11.33 and 11.40 of the report.

5. That the allocation of £47,856 for New Burden's funding associated with the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight Act) 2023 be approved as set out in paragraph 11.44 of the report.

6. That a capital budget to purchase up to 2 properties up to the value of £500,000 in total be approved, with 50% funded from the Ukrainian reserve (Homelessness) and 50% funded from the Homelessness reserve.

7. That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director with housing responsibility, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities, to agree any minor amendments to spending plans for the homelessness, rough sleeping and domestic abuse grant, the homelessness reserve grant, Homes for Ukraine funding, Ukrainian reserve and New Burdens funding related to the Renter's Rights Act and the Supported Housing Regulatory Oversight Act 2023 .

13. **<u>DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS:</u>**

RESOLVED:

That the dates of the next meetings be noted.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 1.00 pm

Chairperson