

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Thursday, 11th June, 2026 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr Halleh Koohestani (Chair)
Cllr Kevin Betsworth (Vice-Chair)

Cllr A. Adeola
Cllr Uttar Gurung
Cllr Sally McGuinness
Cllr Bill O'Donovan
Cllr Sarah Spall

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Steve Harden, Cllr G.B Lyon, Cllr Mike Roberts and Cllr Nicky Slater.

Cllr Lisa Greenway attended the meetings as a Standing Deputy.

1. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

RESOLVED: That Cllrs. Kevin Betsworth and Steve Harden be appointed as Vice-Chairmen of the Committee for the 2026/27 Municipal Year.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th February, 2026 were agreed as a correct record.

3. HOMES FOR ALL - PRIORITY UPDATE

Officers, Suzannah Hellicar – Service Manager – Housing, Zoe Paine – Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer, Jermain Pinto – Housing Options Manager and Charlotte Redpath – Housing Support Team Leader provided a presentation which reported on progress with the Homes for All priority as set out in the Council Delivery Plan. The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning and Property also attended to respond to Members queries from the Executive's perspective.

- *Work with local social housing providers to encourage them to offer local tenants a good, consistent service and decent social homes* – It was noted that the Council had recently established a Housing Oversight Group which aimed to give Members a better understanding of issues round social housing. Alongside this Group, the Council's executive officers and the Cabinet Member met with key providers, as required, to discuss business model objectives at a strategic level.

The Committee were also informed of an electronic library of information on each social housing provider, which was available for them to view through the Members SharePoint.

- *Encourage the development of new and affordable homes on brownfield land*—The Committee noted that a Rushmoor Brownfield Land Register had been published in December, 2025. It was advised that, 1,465 homes were already in the pipeline, 65% of which would be realised from the Civic Quarter proposals. The Planning Policy and Development Management teams worked with developers to ensure compliant schemes were brought forward, however few large opportunities were forthcoming.

With regard to affordable housing, it was noted that the target, which had been met, was for 150 home per year with a healthy trajectory for 2026/27. The affordable homes delivery consisted of one and two bed flats and two, three and four bed houses.

- *Provide good quality temporary and supported accommodation* – It was reported that the Council had 64, units of hostel accommodation ran by the Society of St James, which were mainly self-contained with the exception of nine units in a hostel in Farnborough. Clayton Court was the largest site, housing up to 42 households, and offered support and security on site. The Private Sector Housing Team inspected the accommodation to ensure good standards and address any complaints.

It was noted that, on occasion, accommodation needed to be provided through bed and breakfast establishments. In these circumstances the Council used Travelodge of similar local establishments. The cost to use this type of accommodation was £181,705 (gross), £138,832 (net after housing benefit offset).

- *Intervene to improve the quality of private rented sector homes in the borough, which do not meet acceptable living standards* – It was noted that the Council had a duty to protect tenants and enforce standards in the private rented sector. These responsibilities and powers had increased since the introduction of the Renters' Rights Act in May 2026. The Act had been the biggest change in the last 30 years and secured more rights for renters and more accountability for landlords. The Housing Team aimed to work with landlords, through the Landlords Forum by introducing a series of training events to assist with compliance with the Act.
- *Make it easier to understand how council allocates social housing* – The Committee noted that a review was currently underway on how applicants on the housing register with health issues were assessed and how the current process could be improved to make it easier to understand and provide more clarity to users. Consultation had taken place with partners and the wider community, and the Team were now in a position to test the new way of assessing applicants and how they communicated with users. The Committee requested an All Member Briefing with a demo of the new process, when appropriated, so they were fully informed to assist residents.

- *Develop a new local plan that maximises the delivery of new homes* – The Committee noted that the Strategic Housing and Local Plan Group (SHLPG) were tasked with overseeing the development of the new Local Plan and the first round of consultation would commence on 19th June and run through to the 31st July 2026.

It was advised that there was a requirement for 600 new homes per year, for which work had already commenced to identify and assess potential sites. It was also noted a procurement process had commenced to undertake a full housing needs assessment to aid understanding on the needs of residents.

The Committee discussed the relationship with the Registered Providers and the work of the Housing Oversight Group, and it was advised that relationships with the providers were generally good, but when issues arose, that couldn't be dealt with internally, the Housing Ombudsman could be engaged. The role of elected Members was important in maintaining relationships by ensuring that any housing issues in wards, were raised promptly with officers.

During a discussion on the impacts of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) on the housing services provided, it was advised that the new authority would benefit residents through a larger team and access to more resources. The Team currently worked closely with the teams in both Hart, and Basingstoke and Deane councils, used the same systems and had similar policies. A request was made for a clear and simple way to explain how the prioritisation/allocation process worked, which Members could use to help their residents. It was noted that the team were always willing to talk through the process with residents and Members to ensure good understanding.

With regard to a query regarding temporary accommodation, it was noted that over the last twelve-month period, there had been 23 placements in bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation, 18 of which had no children. Rooms in B&B's were booked for one-week periods and clients may be asked to move out at short notice. The Team were working to make the process better and target support where it was most needed. With regard to the cost of B&B accommodation, it was noted that this had increased in the last three quarters of 2025/26, but the overall cost was still relatively low compared to previous years.

The Committee discuss the data provided, which showed the number of homelessness enquiries, the recent increase was attributed to the implementation of the Renters' Rights Act in May 2026, however, it was expected that this increase would reduce following implementation. It was advised that 84% of cases had been dealt with preventing homelessness in the Borough, this figure was well above the regional and national averages that sat at 55-57%. Other data showed a decrease in private sector improvement notices, where very low numbers of notices had been issued over the past two-year period, and complaint levels relating to the private sector had levelled out over the same period.

In response to a query regarding what could be done to help others achieve higher levels of prevention of homelessness, officers advised that early intervention was key, and the sooner accommodation could be secured the better.

In response to a query regarding private landlords selling their properties, due to the implementation of the Renters' Rights Act, it was felt that this may impact the individual one-off landlords, but less likely those with a portfolio of properties. However, those with a portfolio of properties would need some adjustment and upskilling to meet the new requirements and it was hoped that this could be done through the Landlord's Forum. The Committee requested that an information pack be provided for landlords, that could be made available to Members in order for them to assist their residents.

ACTION

What	By Whom	When
Arrange an All Member Briefing from the Housing Team, which would include a demonstration of the new process for assessing applications.	Suzannah Hellicar, Service Manager – Housing	Later in the Municipal Year 2026/27
Provide a link to the Government's information pack for Landlords following the introduction of the Renters' Rights Act. The information would then be saved on the Members SharePoint file for ease of access.	Jermaine Pinto, Housing Options Manager	July 2026

4. ROUGH SLEEPING

The Committee received a presentation from Charlotte Redpath, Housing Support Team Leader, which provided an overview of rough sleeping and the support offered to vulnerable rough sleepers in the Borough.

The Committee were advised of the difference between rough sleepers, those bedding down on the street, and the street attached, those with a history of rough sleeping but who were no longer bedding down on the street but were housed in appropriate accommodation for their needs. It was also noted that three times a week the outreach team were out carrying out checks, responding to needs and patrolling regular hotspots. The Team had access to a platform ([streetlink](#)) that allowed people to report sightings of rough sleepers, and Members were encouraged to promote StreetLink with their residents to ensure no delay in responding to incidents of rough sleeping.

It was noted that the team reported figures of rough sleepers on a set day per month. On average, the single night figure for the Borough had been three rough sleepers and six-eight rough sleepers per month, the numbers were considered low, but the individuals sleeping rough frequently changed during the month. The Committee noted that there was a core group of rough sleepers with long-term re-occurring issues – intervention with these individuals was always quick and support was ongoing.

During the period, January - June 2026, the Committee noted that fourteen rough sleepers had be re-housed. The team were also supporting 57 individuals, who had been placed in accommodation, through long-term and brief interventions as required.

In response to a query, it was noted that not everyone was entitled to housing support, each case was individually tested and certain groups, including those with children, pregnant women or victims of domestic abuse, were given priority need. In some cases, accommodation was provided but not sustained by the individual as a result of behaviours relating to drugs and alcohol use.

The Committee were advised of the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) which gave all individuals, regardless of their circumstances, access to accommodation in extreme hot or cold temperatures. SWEP also gave officers and partners the opportunity to engage further with individuals not willing to engage under normal circumstances.

A request was made for an All Member Briefing from the Housing Team, and arrangements would be made for this to take place later in the year.

ACTION:

What	By Whom	When
Provide an All Member Briefing on the Homes for all Priority.	Suzannah Hellicar, Service Manager – Housing.	Later in the Municipal Year 2026/27

5. APPOINTMENTS 2026-27

RESOLVED: That the following Members be appointed to serve on the following Groups for the 2026/27 Municipal Year:

(1) Agenda Preparation Group

Chairman	Cllr Halleh Koohestani
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Kevin Betsworth
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Steve Harden
Labour Group	Cllr Bill O'Donovan

(2) Council Tax Support Task and Finish Group

Labour Group	Cllr Lisa Greenway
	Cllr Mike Roberts
Conservative Group	2x TBC
Reform Group	Cllr Kevin Betsworth
Others	Cllr Halleh Koohestani

(3) Housing Oversight Group

Labour Group	Cllr Rhian Jones Cllr Bill O'Donovan 1x TBC
Conservative Group	2x TBC
Reform Group	Cllr Sally McGuinness
Others	Cllr Leola Card
Co-opted Member	Sue Dowell, Citizens' Advice

Group Leaders would be contacted following the meeting to fill the remaining spaces on the Council Tax Support Group and Housing Oversight Group.

6. WORK PLAN

The Committee noted the current work plan and the 2025/26 work plan for reference. It was noted that should any Members wish to have an item considered for scrutiny by the Committee they should advise the Committee Administrator.

The meeting on 16 July, 2026 would be re-scheduled due to the Wellington By-Election being held on the same day, a new date was being sought, and Members would be advised in due course.

The meeting closed at 9.29 pm.

CLLR HALLEH KOOHESTANI (CHAIR)
