

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**RECORD OF DECISION**

**Decision Taken By: Cabinet Member for Housing,  
Environment and Economy**

**Decision No:  
D250083MEM**

**Date: 15 July 2025**

**Decision(s) and Reason(s)**

**Development of a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy**

(Report of Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health)

The report outlined a proposal to develop a standalone Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, as required under the Homelessness Act 2021 and within the context of a UK wide housing crisis, setting out how the Council would continue to tackle this increase in demand, and to ensure homelessness was prevented at the earliest opportunity and a range of housing options were available for those who had lost their homes.

The proposed approach of undertaking a comprehensive evidence base review of the challenges faced at a national, regional and local levels by the district, involving key stakeholders including Members and key partners, which would then be used to inform the development of a draft strategy and an associated action plan, was supported by Members.

In addition, the proposed timetable leading to the adoption of the strategy by Cabinet on 3 March 2026, following consideration of a draft strategy by the Scrutiny Select Committee on 2 December 2025 before undertaking a public consultation in December 2025 / January 2026, was noted.

Finally, Members were pleased to note that a contract to deliver the Rough Sleeper Prevention and Recovery Services for the borough had been awarded to Porchlight until the end of the financial year pending further grant funding from the Government.

Following consideration by the Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee, the Cabinet Member for Housing, Environment and Economy

**RESOLVED:** That

- (1) the approach to the development of a draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for consultation, be endorsed;
- (2) the engagement of key stakeholders, including Members and key partners, to assist and inform the development of the draft strategy, be agreed; and

(3) the proposed timetable which aimed to present a draft strategy to Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee on 2 December 2025 with a final draft following consultation to be presented to Cabinet on 3 March 2026, be agreed.

Reasons: As set out in the report submitted to Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee on 15 July 2025.

Signed Cabinet Member for Housing, Environment and Economy:	R Betts
Signed Leader:	M Boughton
Signed Chief Executive:	D Roberts
Date of publication:	17 July 2025

This decision will come into force and may then be implemented on the expiry of 5 working days after publication unless it is called in.

<b>Decision Taken By:</b> <b>Cabinet Member for Planning</b>	<b>Decision No:</b> D250084MEM
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**Date: 15 July 2025**

**Decision(s) and Reason(s)**

**Planning Technical Consultation Responses**

(Report of Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health)

The report provided an update on the technical consultations that had been published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, relating to improving transparency and monitoring of building out of schemes and to proposed reforms to Planning Committees, including their size and which types of application could be considered by those committees.

It was noted that the response to the “Implementing measures to improve Build Out transparency: Technical consultation”, attached at Annex 1, was submitted under delegated powers of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, due to the timescales involved. The fact that the Government was considering measures to ensure schemes were commenced and built out in a timely manner was welcomed by Members, although it was recognised that details around potential enforcement powers, in particular the power to decline to determine applications if a developer had failed to build out development authorised by an earlier planning permission at a reasonable rate, were yet to be laid out by the Government.

The proposed draft response to the “Reform of Planning Committees: Technical Consultation” was set out at Annex 2. Members noted that this consultation proposed reforms to the size of Planning Committees, as well as suggesting that Members on a Planning Committee would be required to have a certified programme of training. It also considered a potential tiering scheme to determine which types of application would be able to be considered by a Planning Committee, if meeting certain locally set criteria, and which would be delegated to officers.

While appreciating the careful thought that had been given and efforts made by the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health in drafting the response, Members had a lengthy discussion around the proposed response to a number of the questions in the consultation, and suggested strengthening the answers in respect of Question 2 (highlighting the exception of reserved matter approvals for both major and medium development categories from Tier A category), Question 3 (clarifying that Tonbridge and Malling should be in the ‘smaller Local Planning Authority’ category and therefore medium residential development should fall in Tier B), Question 5 (strengthening the application of exceptional circumstances in line with a mandate to be set by the Government to ensure consistency), Question 9 (highlighting confirmation of Tree Preservation Order should be included in Tier B as per the Council’s existing policy), Question 11 (accepting the application of

exceptional circumstances with enforcement decisions being delegated in the main under Tier A), Question 12 (emphasising the objection of Members to the restrictions being considered by the Government in respect of setting a maximum number for planning committee members for national consistency and removing the reference of the size of planning committee being an acknowledged issue from the response) and Question 15 (expanding the response to capture the different views of Members on mandatory training).

In order to meet the deadline for submitting a response to the “Reform of Planning Committees: Technical consultation” by 23 July 2025, it was proposed by Councillor Williams and seconded by Councillor King (Chair) that the draft response be amended to reflect the comments made above and a final version agreed in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and the Chair of the Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee before submission to the Government. This motion was supported unanimously by the Committee.

Following consideration by the Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee, the Cabinet Member for Planning

**RESOLVED:** That

- (1) the response to the “Implementing measures to improve Build Out transparency: Technical consultation”, which was submitted ahead of the 7 July 2025 deadline by the Director of Planning, Housing & Environmental Health in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, be noted; and
- (2) the draft response to the “Reform of Planning Committees: Technical consultation”, as set out in Annex 2, be amended to take into account comments made by Members at the Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee on 15 July 2025, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and the Chair of the Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee, and the submission of a revised final response by the 23 July 2025 deadline, be approved.

Reasons: As set out in the report submitted to Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee on 15 July 2025.

Signed Cabinet Member for Planning:	M Taylor
Signed Leader:	M Boughton
Signed Chief Executive:	D Roberts
Date of publication:	17 July 2025

This decision will come into force and may then be implemented on the expiry of 5 working days after publication unless it is called in.