

101442990
Revision 01

ACCOMMODATION WORKING GROUP

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Meeting:	20 th January 2025, 14:00-16:00
Location:	MS Teams
Chair:	Teresa Howarth (ESC)
Attendees:	SZC – Mike Humphrey (MH), Niki Pieri (NP) – Obs, James Soloman (JS) – Obs ESC – Fern Lincoln (FL), Alexis Corless (AC) – Obs, Philip Ridley (PR) – Obs, Naomi Hayes (NH) – Obs, Teresa Howarth (TH) – Obs, Naomi Hayes (NH) – Obs SCC – Isaac Nunn (IN)
Apologies:	

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Meeting notes:

Project Update

- The project is progressing for a Financial Investment Decision by mid-year.
- The site access road is complete, with SSSI crossing work starting in the next couple of weeks.
- The site office hub is complete.
- Additional office and welfare buildings will be operational within the first six months of this year.
- Focus is now on offsite infrastructure, with site establishment, archaeology, and vegetation clearance prioritised.
- The first anniversary of the DCO commencement was on January 15, with payments made on that date.

Project Accommodation and AMS

Project Accommodation

- Clearance for early works on the accommodation campus has commenced.
- Application for touring caravan pitches at Pontins Pakefield is in preparation. Phase 1 has opened, welcoming the first guests. Minimum night stay terms are in place, and the obligation for a full night's stay has been lifted until the full contract is finalised, enabling occupancy of Phase 1 rooms.
- Contract between Szc and Britannia for Pontins, is expected to be signed this week.
- Occupancy is being advertised on AMS, with some waitlisted individuals now in rooms. JS is working with Britannia on refurbishment rates. Several refurbished rooms will be available for unions to review next week.
- The proposed rate card and pricing per night need clarification with the unions.
- PR expressed concern that ESC needs workforce survey data to address the number of workers on-site and their accommodation needs, which extends beyond the Pontins site. NH and PR are facing pressure from planning colleagues. Consequently, PR emphasised the importance of having access to data to better understand current accommodation provisions and future requirements over the next two years as AD sites are developed.
- PR highlighted a gap in understanding the bedspace provision over the next two years, prior to the accommodation campus becoming operational. This situation arises as Teresa and Fern's teams manage requests for refurbishing and updating housing to allow workers to utilise available rooms. PR noted the need for a catch up in terms of data, to gain better insight into the current situation, enabling them to respond effectively to internal inquiries, address questions from politicians, and provide a clear picture to communities regarding the status of accommodation.
- JS, PR, NP, FL, TH, and AC will connect to ensure alignment and a comprehensive understanding of accommodation, along with oversight of Szc's strategy for early bedspaces. PR emphasised the importance of ESC knowing Szc's position and accommodation numbers, as this knowledge will enable the planning authority to make informed decisions on third-party proposals and engage in meaningful discussions. This will help ensure they provide the appropriate quantity of properties and support to those approaching them. NP will share a tracker of Szc meetings related to various sites, and JS and NP will collaborate to respond effectively to this query.

Action - JS and NP will collaborate with PR, FL, TH, and AC to align on accommodation strategies and share Szc's position in terms of early bedspaces and accommodation numbers. NP will share a tracker detailing the meetings Szc has held regarding various accommodation sites

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Accommodation Management System

- There are up to 3,300 bedspaces available, with around 200 seekers registered. Price ranges remain consistent, with approximately 75% of accommodations being affordable. There is enough suitable accommodation identified to meet the anticipated influx over the next couple of months.
- FL suggested mapping the locations and types of available accommodations (e.g., single buildings, shared spaces). JS has requested clearer reporting tools in AMS to analyse where individuals are responding to ads.
- Funding has been approved and will be available in the coming months.
- PR emphasised the need for the group to gain deeper insights into the accommodation management strategy and background data. This will enable them to confidently understand the accommodations being provided, identify any challenges, and ensure they have the necessary data to respond to stakeholder's queries (e.g. politicians and communities).
- JS responded that he has requested various reporting tools to enhance clarity on this matter. He will collaborate with FL, TH, and AC to gather the appropriate data from these tools and address any challenges they may face.

Action – JS to collaborate with FL, TH and AC to gather appropriate data from AMS reporting tools and address any challenges

Workforce Survey (Summer 24) – Recap from October (MH)

Survey methodology

- The survey included a solid sample size of about 45% of the on-site workforce. Various data collection methods were used to capture statistically significant sample.
- Of the respondents, around 29% were workers in temporary accommodation due to the project.

Workers in Temporary Accommodation

- Accommodation types include private rentals, holiday lets, caravan/campsites, and local hotels. Most workers are seeking short-term options, primarily in the hotel and B&B sectors, with about a quarter of the local workers renting accommodations.
- Latent Accommodation: Data is being collected to track whether individuals have moved into the area to rent and then relocated, allowing for analysis of internal churn.
- The survey is also examining if individuals are living with their landlords (e.g., in spare rooms) and whether these landlords had rented the properties before the project began, to assess if this represents new rental market accommodation.
- PR asked if the workforce survey could be mandated during onboarding. MH will investigate this option.

Action – MH to investigate whether workforce survey can be mandated during onboarding process

Accommodation Location – Temporary Accommodation

- MH presented various accommodation types within the strategy and sought feedback from group

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- TH and FL found the data helpful but emphasised the need for more granular information. FL specifically requested details about accommodations, such as their exact locations, the number of available spaces, and information about private landlords, to aid ESC Lettings to build relationships with landlords and address accommodation needs.
- AC inquired about tracking results against initial predictions over time. MH confirmed the importance of providing biannual updates on private accommodations, which will be reported geographically to support the planning process and allow for comparisons with previous data.

ESC Update

Events

- The housing team has successfully promoted the grants approved by the Accommodation Working Group through several well-attended events.
- ESC requested that SJC representatives attend future events to address SJC-related questions from attendees.

Action – SJC to attend future ESC accommodation events to support addressing questions from attendees

Enquiries

- ESC has logged enquiries from individuals seeking grants for home modifications or additional accommodation. Many require planning consent, necessitating collaboration with the planning team to explore exemptions or policy changes. Background information from SJC, particularly workforce surveys, is therefore essential for justifying these policy amendments.
- To minimise traffic congestion, enquiries must be appropriately located. TH noted a focus on promoting grants within a 30-minute driving distance from the site, with potential expansion once park-and-ride options are available.
- TH also expressed interest in exploring additional transport options from SJC. PR agreed, emphasising the importance of integrating transport and accommodation strategies. PR highlighted the importance of utilising bus routes to minimise traffic congestion. JS added that bus services are integral to all of SJC's accommodation initiatives. TH requested to be kept informed on this matter.

Action – JS to keep ESC informed on how SJC is integrating transport and accommodation strategies

- ESC is receiving paperwork from applicants and expects some to come on board soon. They will recommend registering accommodations on the AMS for better data tracking.
- MH inquired about the possibility of monitoring enquiries that result in actual bedspaces to track attrition rates and refine planning efforts accordingly. TH confirmed that this is feasible and suggested including reasons for any inquiries that do not progress.

Action – ESC to monitor accommodation enquiries to track attrition rates and refine planning efforts, including documenting reasons for those that do not progress

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- MG noted that the theme of the meeting centres on data provision and the triangulation of various datasets. An action will be taken to analyse the spatial distribution of projected workers, ensuring that this information aligns with workforce demand from surveys and accommodation supply from AMS data.

Action – SZC to analyse the spatial distribution of projected workers, ensuring that this information aligns with workforce demand from surveys and accommodation supply from AMS data

- By mapping these elements against current inquiries, the team will be able to identify any unexpected surges in accommodation or transport needs. MG stated that this approach will serve as a valuable template for tracking progress. Additionally, efforts are underway to effectively integrate the workforce survey with the regular transport survey, allowing for simultaneous presentation of both datasets to the group.

Reporting to the Social Review Group

What's going well

- NH mentioned that SRG is eager to understand the workforce survey results. These should be shared with them to keep them informed, along with updates on the inquiries received.
- MH emphasised that this group should provide SRG with an assessment of the effectiveness of spending across different plans, as well as any necessary changes to those approaches. This should align with TH's ESC report and incorporate both demand and supply-side information.

Concerns:

- TH raised concerns regarding tenancy relations, particularly in relation to the housing fund. There are funds available to support residents who may be displaced by SZC workers, and the team is currently assessing the potential impact. TH anticipates that managing tenancy relations will require significant effort.
- Another concern was the attendance at SRG meetings. NH noted that when issues are referred to SRG, it would be beneficial for FL or TH to attend in case there are any questions.

Action: SZC to confirm that Housing and Homelessness Services Resilience Measures funding can be used for additional staffing to support homelessness prevention with confirmation via the normal funding approval route

AOB

- AC noted that the DoO references the need for the accommodation plan by January. However, due to initial delays in obtaining data from a tourism perspective, the timeline for this work plan has now shifted to March.
- NH noted that the DoO may not have fully anticipated the challenges in creating this plan. She suggested the group agree on a flexible timeline to develop a clear vision. AC added that the March plan will outline options and expected growth but will not provide definitive solutions. Continuous monitoring and review will be necessary as the process evolves.
- The goal is to report on progress at the next meeting and potentially make decisions then.

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Actions raised during the meeting:

Date Raised	Ref.	Description	Lead	Date Due
20/01/2025	1	JS and NP will collaborate with PR, FL, TH, and AC to align on accommodation strategies and share Szc's position in terms of early bedspaces and accommodation numbers. NP will share a tracker detailing the meetings Szc has held regarding various accommodation sites	SZC	28/04/2025
20/01/2025	2	JS to collaborate with FL, TH and AC to gather appropriate data from AMS reporting tools and address any challenges	Working Group	28/04/2025
20/01/2025	3	MH to investigate whether workforce survey can be mandated during onboarding process	SZC	28/04/2025
20/01/2025	4	SZC to attend future ESC accommodation events to support addressing questions from attendees	SZC	28/04/2025
20/01/2025	5	JS to keep ESC informed on how Szc is integrating transport and accommodation strategies	SZC	28/04/2025
20/01/2025	6	ESC to monitor accommodation enquiries to track attrition rates and refine planning efforts, including documenting reasons for those that do not progress	ESC	28/04/2025
20/01/2025	7	SZC to analyse the spatial distribution of projected workers, ensuring that this information aligns with workforce demand from surveys and accommodation supply from AMS data	SZC	28/04/2025
20/01/2025	8	SZC to confirm that Housing and Homelessness Services Resilience Measures funding can be used for additional staffing to support homelessness prevention with confirmation via the normal funding approval route	SZC	28/04/2025

Author: Caitlin Murphy (SZC)