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ACCOMMODATION WORKING GROUP

Meeting Type:	DoO Governance Group Meeting
Date:	5 th November 2025
Venue:	MS Teams
Meeting Chair:	Fern Lincoln (ESC)
Attendees:	SZC – Rebecca Calder (RC), Mike Humphrey (MH), Roan Morling (RM), Jen Mills (JM) – Observer, Niki Pieri (NP) – Observer ESC – Fern Lincoln (FL), Ellis Rix (ER), Alexis Corless (AC) – Observer, John Paul Farthing (JPF) – Observer, Bethany Rance (BR) – Observer, Heather Fisk (HF) – Observer, Joss Mullett (JM) – Observer, Tom Cox (TC) – Observer SCC – Kate Watson (KW)
Apologies:	-
Meeting Record produced by:	Caitlin Murphy (SZC)
Next Meeting Date:	12 th January 2026

Summary / Key Discussion

Meeting Notes:

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF PREVIOUS ACTIONS

Actions:

Date Raised	Ref.	Description	Lead	Date Due
21/07/2025	1	SZC to consider changes to AMS so workers can become seekers once they are assigned to the project.	RM	Closed
21/07/2025	2	RM, ER, and TH to consider survey questions for AMS system providers to gather their feedback.	ER, RM, AC	Closed
21/07/2025	3	RC to share Implementation Plan with AWG.	RC	Closed
21/07/2025	4	SZC to share Workforce Survey results presented with AWG plus data on HB workers and location of dependants.	RC	Closed
21/07/2025	5	SZC to provide a more accurate estimate of total workers meeting the five-day rule for next workforce survey ahead of the full site access control system being in place.	SZC	Ongoing
21/07/2025	6	RC to present the rationale to the AWG for their agreement on why SZC should not be required to make LEEIE payment – informal meeting to be arranged for September.	RC	Closed

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21/07/2025	7	Group to review Workforce Survey data offline and regroup in September (as per meeting above) to offer feedback.	AWG	Ongoing
21/07/2025	8	SZC to share relevant questions on the next Workforce Survey with SCC / ESC in advance, & in reasonable time to allow for response	SZC	Ongoing
21/07/2025	9	ER to circulate grant conditions and outline the monitoring process to ensure properties are made available to SZC workers, including identifying any reasons for unavailability.	ER	Closed

Review of Previous Actions

- **Action 1:** closed. Will be covered in this meeting
- **Action 2:** closed. Will be covered in this meeting
- **Action 3:** closed
- **Action 4:** closed
- **Action 5:** ongoing
- **Action 6:** closed
- **Action 7:** ongoing
- **Action 8:** ongoing
- **Action 9:** closed

SZC Reporting

- **SZC Update**
 - Financial Investment Decisions has been published, financial close has been achieved.
 - Work is progressing across all sites, with the first park-and-ride spaces now available at NPR.
 - The Annual Sustainability Report has been published.
 - A meeting in November has been arranged with Local Authorities to review monitoring and reporting against the Deed of Obligation.
 - The issue with a lettings business unrelated to the Project has been resolved; they have added a disclaimer to their website and updated visuals to ensure they are not perceived as part of SZC.
 - At the recent community forum, concerns were raised about parking in Saxmundham, both as a result of HMOs (not necessarily related to the Project) and people using the side streets to avoid paying for station parking. The Parish Council suggested introducing resident parking permits. This remains primarily a parking issue rather than an accommodation matter.
 - Flagship has been actively engaging with the Noise Mitigation Scheme. A new representative has joined their team, and re-engagement is underway to support eligible residents.
- **Accommodation Management System**
 - RM provided an update on number of bedspaces advertised and number of workers registered as accommodation seekers on the AMS.
 - IT development is in progress to enable data scraping for enhanced location details and breakdowns; timelines are yet to be confirmed.
 - RM has worked with ER and RC to design a concise advertiser survey, which is nearing completion and will be issued shortly – the nine survey questions were presented to the group for comment.

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- AMS now allows registrations as soon as a role is confirmed on the project, enabling accommodation to be secured prior to arrival.
- Discussions with SZB regarding accommodation for their workers during the 2026 outage are underway.
- JPF queried how to monitor listings that remain active versus those removed without notification. RM confirmed that advertisers are responsible for removing or archiving adverts. The advertiser survey includes a question on property availability and prompts removal if no longer available.
- JPF asked about measures to prevent AMS from retaining outdated accommodation listings over the project duration. RM emphasised the need for continuous engagement with advertisers to maintain accuracy. Potential measures include introducing a pop-up prompt asking whether bookings were successful to identify unavailable properties.
- RM presented nine proposed survey questions to the group for review.

- **Project Accommodation**

- Utilisation of Project Accommodation:
 - RM provided an update on the utilisation of project accommodation. Refurbishment at Pakefield is nearing completion, with the bar, café, shop, pool, and indoor gym now open. The site is being actively promoted, and engagement with incoming workers continues during induction. Development of an online electronic booking system is in progress.
- Progress of Project Accommodation:
 - The Pakefield Caravan Park TCPA submission has submitted.

- **Other sites**

- The former SZB caravan site has not progressed - HF noted there are outstanding queries regarding this application from ESC, and requested SZC to provide a contact for further discussion to enable progress.
- Darsham - existing planning consent in place. Proposal is for lodges to be adapted to accommodate four workers each – requires further consent which is planned to be submitted shortly. .

Action – SZC to share contact details for who they are speaking to at ESC regarding the former SZB caravan site.

- **Other relevant information**

- A three-year workforce lookahead has been provided and will be updated annually.
- The implementation plan was updated in August and shared with ESC and SCC. Future versions will clearly identify any changes from previous iterations.
- The group discussed the importance of understanding the workforce lookahead to ensure appropriate mitigation measures are in place. While the document is primarily intended for ESEWG and focuses on skills demand rather than accommodation, additional context and data sources can be explored.

Action – RC to review and provide further information regarding context of workforce lookahead to the group.

- *Queries were raised regarding sharing the Implementation Plan with third-party consultants. SZC will review this request and confirm whether wider sharing is permissible, providing clear reasoning if not. This will be fed back via the Planning Group.*
- *The group discussed data-sharing arrangements between SZC and ESC. Further discussion is planned to ensure alignment on what information can be shared through governance groups.*

Action – JM to explore whether Implementation Plan can be shared with the Councils' third-party consultants – feedback via Planning Group.

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- *Workforce Survey*

- The workforce survey closed in October - reporting is due 2 months following closed (December 25 for January 26 AWG).
- Preliminary headlines were presented (caveated that this is draft pending finalisation of surveys).
- SCC expressed interest in understanding the impact of workforce travel distances, particularly journeys exceeding 20 miles, on highways.
Turnstile figures will be more accurate in future; Approximate workforce number meeting the 5-day rule was 1,937, of which 667 (34%) were non-home-based.

ESC Update

- *DoO Reporting*

- ER presented expenditure from the Housing Fund under the Private Housing Supply Plan including for Accommodation Grants where investment has been made and bedspaces delivered.
- Rent and deposit schemes managed by East Suffolk Lettings have not yet required funding from the allocated pot, as additional incentives have not been necessary. ER noted that discussions are scheduled with East Suffolk Lettings to explore targeting areas with rising costs and incentivising landlord participation.
- Only one minor works grant has been issued to date, but ER confirmed an intention to expand this scheme. Bedspaces have already been delivered across multiple locations, primarily in Leiston and Saxmundham.
- Planned delivery was also presented and this includes Accommodation Grants currently going through the application process, covering multiple locations across the district, alongside Rent and Deposit Schemes.

- *Enquiries*

- There are currently a significant number of active enquiries for SZC accommodation grants.
- Processes have been reviewed to manage high demand, ensuring they remain streamlined for applicants while maintaining clarity on obligations and auditability.
- A substantial number of enquiries have been closed, primarily due to lack of planning consent or being outside eligible areas for grant consideration.
- Additional resources have been allocated to the grants team to address the number of enquiries.

- *Monitoring of Grants*

- ER highlighted the need to ensure that awarded grants are being used as intended, specifically for SZC workers, and introduced a high-level monitoring process, which was presented to the group.
- The group discussed how to manage situations where landlords cannot fill bedspaces with SZC workers despite reasonable efforts. It was agreed that flexibility may be required to prevent properties from remaining vacant while still meeting the objectives of the scheme. It was noted that the intention of the Housing Fund is to increase overall bedspaces so it may be appropriate for a non-SZC person to take a bedspace created by the fund to offset a SZC worker taking an existing bedspace.

Action – ESC to consider whether to introduce more flexibility into use of bedspaces created by SZC Accommodation Grants such as by allowing them to be utilised by non-SZC workers.

- *Current Issues*

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- HMOs
 - Ongoing community concerns regarding the increase in HMOs within the area. While increase is expected to meet housing needs, ESC is focusing on proactive monitoring and support.
 - Additional resources have been allocated, including a technical officer for HMO monitoring and funding for an HMO enforcement officer through the Housing and Homelessness Resilience Fund.
 - Investment has also been made in data sets to identify potential small HMOs in key areas such as Leiston and Aldeburgh.
- Housing Advice and Homelessness
 - Impacts continue to be monitored, with no significant increase in homelessness presentations linked to SZC to date.
 - Housing advice events are delivered periodically throughout the year to provide support and guidance.
 - Affordability remains a key challenge, and work is ongoing with East Suffolk Lettings to increase access to more affordable accommodation options within the market.
- *Future focus / concerns*
 - Reports indicate SZC workers may be residing at local caravan sites near the project, raising potential concerns about compliance with planning and licensing conditions.
 - Additional insight into workforce projections is required to support effective planning and implementation of mitigation measures.
- *Tourist Accommodation Plan*
 - AC noted that progress on the Accommodation Plan is slower than anticipated.
 - ESC is preparing a position statement to explain the current status, reasons for delay, and revised timelines for bringing the plan forward.
 - In the short term, ESC plans to establish an internal working group to agree on a consistent approach to licensing and enforcement of caravan sites wishing to house Sizewell C workers. Guidance will be developed for operators to clarify planning requirements and expectations.

Risk register

- *Potential risks identified*
 - Housing fund grants do not mitigate pressure on accommodation market.
 - Risk that grants may not sufficiently mitigate pressure on the accommodation market if delivery is delayed or workforce projections change.
 - The group noted the need for better visibility of workforce triggers and early warning mechanisms to avoid reactive responses.
 - ESC consider that current reliance on the DCO curve and three-year workforce lookahead provides limited insights.
 - SZC noted that these remain the best source of data currently and that it is not possible to exactly forecast where workers who are not yet employed on the project may choose to live.

Action – ER and RC to review data sources to see what can be utilised to inform mitigation delivered under Housing Fund grants.

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- Properties funded through housing grants not taken up by SZC workers, creating reputational risk and potential community disengagement.
- Increase in unlicensed HMOs within the area.
- Delays in delivery of project accommodation or changes in workforce profile.
- Planning risk for applications such as Pakefield if conditions are not met.
- Further Considerations
 - KW requested inclusion of timelines for refurbishment projects (e.g. Darsham, Pakefield) in risk planning.
 - KW highlighted the need to reflect the Renters Reform Bill and short-term tenancy changes in the risk profile, given ESC's compliance responsibilities.
 - RC, MH, and RM to prepare an initial draft of the risk register.

Accommodation Working Group DoO Reporting

- Six-monthly reports will be provided to the Social Review Group on the effectiveness of monitoring and expenditure in line with the Housing Fund, Private Housing Supply Plan, Tourist Accommodation Plan, and Housing and Homelessness Resilience measures.

Risk / Issues / Opportunities

- *What is going well*
 - Strong interest in PHSP grants.
 - New officers in post to tackle HMO licensing and enforcement.
 - Regular ongoing liaison with SZC and the community, including Leiston drop-ins.
 - Pakefield caravan park application submitted.
 - No significant increase in homelessness presentations.
 - Officers appointed to address HMO issues
- *What are you concerned about*
 - Tourist Accommodation Plan still not in place.
 - Data veracity: Workforce lookahead figures lower than DCO numbers, making planning challenging (reactive vs proactive). Concerns raised regarding lack of clarity of data shared.
 - Pakefield caravan park may not be ready ahead of the LEEIE Date in the Deed of Obligation.
 - Community concerns around HMOs and affordability (linked to SZC and wider national issues – compounded by Renters Reform Act).
- *What needs to happen next*
 - Tourist Accommodation Plan to be brought to AWG for approval.
 - Next PHSP review to decide whether to amend grant scheme provisions to allow rooms to be rented to anyone, not just SZC workers.
 - Long-term workforce survey provider to be procured by SZC and turnstile data fully integrated.
 - Risk register discussion to identify gaps and high-risk issues.
- *Any changes to ToR? No*

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- Any disputes to escalate to SRG? No
- Any other matters to raise to SRG? No

AOB

- None

Actions agreed in meeting:

Date Raised	Ref.	Description	Lead	Date Due
21/07/2025	1	SZC to provide a more accurate estimate of total workers meeting the five-day rule for next 2026 workforce survey ahead of the full site access control system being in place.	SZC	Once permanent survey company in place
21/07/2025	2	SZC to share relevant questions on the next Workforce Survey with SCC / ESC in advance, & in reasonable time to allow for response.	SZC	As above
05/11/2025	3	SZC to share contact details for who they are speaking to at ESC regarding the former SZB caravan site.	SZC	ASAP
05/11/2025	4	RC to review and provide further information regarding context of workforce lookahead to the group.	RC	Next meeting
05/11/2025	5	JM to explore whether Implementation Plan can be shared with the Councils' third-party consultants – feedback via Planning Group.	JM	Feedback to Planning Group
05/11/2025	6	ESC to consider whether to introduce more flexibility into use of bedspaces created by SZC Accommodation Grants such as by allowing them to be utilised by non-SZC workers.	ESC	Next meeting
05/11/2025	7	ER and RC to review data sources to see what can be utilised to inform mitigation delivered under Housing Fund grants.	ER / RC	Ongoing