



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

Thursday 15 October 2026

Innovative Approaches to Alternative Accommodation Scrutiny Working Group Report

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Zona Hannington – Cabinet Member: Finance and Resident Services Cllr Nathan England – Cabinet Member: Safer Street and Better Housing
Lead Director:	Anthea Lowe – Director: Policy & Governance
Service Area:	Policy & Governance
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Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Not Key Decision
Forward Plan:	Not Applicable
Report considered by:	SMT – 22 September 2026 Business Briefing – 1 October 2026 Cabinet – 15 October 2026

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Cabinet:-

- 1.1 Notes and endorses the recommendations of the Business and Finance Scrutiny Committee and Communities Scrutiny Committee and provides a response to the recommendations as outlined in the report at **Appendix A**.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to present the findings and recommendations of the Innovative Approaches to Alternative Accommodation Joint Scrutiny Member Working Group and seek Cabinet's approval of those recommendations as summarised below and detailed in **Appendix A**

That having considered all the information that they were provided with, Members recommended that:

- a) the Council continue to develop site options for one-bedroom delivery on existing council owned sites as part of a wider portfolio of delivery, using best mix and design to maximise delivery and viability; and
- b) a pilot scheme be progressed with Housing Plus Group to consider viability of delivering a housing solution on a garage site(s) recognising the constraints and if innovation can support delivery.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 At its meeting on 11 March 2026, the Business & Finance Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish the Innovative Approaches to Alternative Accommodation Joint Working Group with support from members of the Communities Scrutiny Committee to explore innovative forms of accommodation including the conversion of existing buildings, modular housing, micro-homes and other innovative forms of accommodation.
- 3.2 The Joint Working Group was established as a six-month review to gather evidence, consider learning from other authorities and develop recommendations for consideration by Cabinet.
- 3.3 The Joint Working Group met on four occasions between 27 April 2026 and 22 September 2026. Members received data relating to housing need within the Borough, considered examples of alternative housing solutions presented by external organisations and explored a range of development options for Council-owned sites. The evidence gathered informed the Working Group's assessment of how innovative housing approaches could contribute to meeting local housing demand and increase housing supply within the Borough.
- 3.4 The Working Group heard from an external witness, Louise Davidson, Head of Housing and Delivery at Bristol City Council who provided case studies and lessons learned following their approach to delivering innovative housing solutions.
- 3.5 As part of the work undertaken, initial engagement with Housing Plus Group (HPG) has also commenced to explore the potential for a pilot scheme focused on the redevelopment of existing garage sites.
- 3.6 The Joint Working Group reported its findings and recommendations to both the Business & Finance Scrutiny Committee and Communities Scrutiny Committee prior to submission to Cabinet for consideration.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

- 4.1 The Innovative Approaches to Alternative Accommodation Joint Working Group undertook a review of innovative housing solutions and alternative accommodation models to consider how these approaches could contribute to meeting identified housing need within the Borough and support the delivery of additional housing supply. The report at **Appendix A** outlines the series of work that was undertaken by the Joint Working Group between 27 April 2026 and 22 September 2026.
- 4.2 Through consideration of evidence provided by officers, external organisations and stakeholders, the Joint Working Group examined a range of alternative housing models, including modular housing, micro-homes, the conversion of existing buildings and the redevelopment of underutilised sites. Members considered both the opportunities and challenges associated with these approaches, including viability, deliverability, planning considerations and their potential contribution towards addressing local housing demand.
- 4.3 The Joint Working Group concluded that innovative housing solutions could form part of a broader approach to increasing housing provision within the Borough and identified opportunities for further exploration and development. In particular, Members recognised the potential benefits of utilising Council-owned land and pursuing partnership working with registered housing providers to deliver alternative forms of accommodation.
- 4.4 Following completion of its review, the Joint Working Group developed a series of recommendations, set out in **Appendix A** for Cabinet's consideration.

5.0 Alternative Options

- 5.1 Whilst Cabinet are being asked to approve the recommendations from the Working Group, it could determine that some or all of the recommendations are not necessary.
- 5.2 In accordance with guidance from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS), where Cabinet decides not to adopt some or all of the recommendations, it should provide reasons for reaching this outcome.

6.0 Key Risks

- 6.1 There are no direct risks arising from this report. However, should Cabinet approve the recommendations contained within **Appendix A**, there may be financial, legal, planning, delivery and reputational risks associated with the development and implementation of any future proposals.
- 6.2 These risks will be fully assessed and managed through the Council's governance and decision-making processes as individual projects and business cases are developed.

7.0 Council Priorities

7.1 The recommendations in this report align with the following Council priorities:

- Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community
- Everyone benefits from a thriving economy
- A community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report, which seek Cabinet's endorsement of the findings of the Joint Working Group and the further exploration of innovative approaches to alternative accommodation. No commitment to expenditure or to the delivery of a specific scheme is being sought at this stage.

8.2 Any future proposal or pilot scheme arising from the recommendations will require a detailed and fully costed business case before approval. This will need to identify the capital and revenue costs, including site preparation, acquisition or redevelopment, construction, professional fees, borrowing and financing costs, ongoing management, maintenance and lifecycle costs, together with any income, savings or cost avoidance. The business case should also assess affordability, value for money, procurement and delivery risks, and the sensitivity of the proposal to changes in costs, interest rates, timescales and anticipated demand.

8.3 Funding has not been identified within this report. Any proposal would therefore need to be supported by an identified funding source, which may include external grant, partner contributions, capital receipts and prudential borrowing. This will need to be approved as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy or separate Cabinet report. No expenditure will be incurred until the necessary business case, funding and approvals are in place.

9.0 Legal and HR Implications

9.1 The Council is required by the Local Government Act 2000 to maintain arrangements for overview and scrutiny of executive decision-making. The Innovative Approaches to Alternative Accommodation Joint Working Group was established by the Business & Finance Scrutiny Committee, with participation from members of the Communities Scrutiny Committee, in accordance with the Council's constitutional arrangements and approved Terms of Reference. The recommendations before Cabinet represent the outcome of that scrutiny review process.

9.2 Cabinet is entitled to accept, reject or amend the recommendations put forward by the Working Group. Where Cabinet determines not to adopt some or all of the

recommendations, reasons should be provided in accordance with recognised scrutiny good practice.

9.3 This report does not itself seek approval for the acquisition, disposal, development or construction of housing schemes and therefore does not give rise to any immediate legal implications or commitments. Should Cabinet agree that further work is undertaken in relation to the recommendations, any future proposals will require separate consideration and approval through the Council's governance processes. At that stage, detailed legal advice will be required in relation to matters including planning, land ownership, housing, procurement, subsidy control, contractual arrangements and any partnership arrangements with registered providers or other delivery partners.

9.4 Equality impacts, environmental considerations and any statutory consultation requirements associated with future proposals should be assessed as part of the development of individual projects and accompanying decision reports.

10.0 Ward Implications

10.1 There are no specific ward implications arising directly from this report. Any ward implications associated with future proposals developed as a result of the recommendations will be considered as part of the relevant decision-making processes.

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

11.1 There are no health, social or economic implications arising from this report. However, should Cabinet approve the recommendations contained within **Appendix A** and seek to explore opportunities to increase housing provision within the Borough and any future proposals brought forward may have associated health, social and economic benefits which will be considered as part of the development of individual projects.

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report. Any equality implications arising from the implementation of recommendations approved by Cabinet will be considered as part of the development of future proposals and decision-making processes.

13.0 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

13.1 There are no climate change, biodiversity and environmental implications directly arising from this report. Any implications associated with future housing proposals developed as a result of the recommendations will be considered and assessed through the appropriate approval processes.

14.0 Background Papers

- 1 Business & Finance Scrutiny Committee – Innovative Approaches to Alternative Accommodation Working Group – 11 March 2026
- 2 Business & Finance Scrutiny Committee – Appendix A Examples of Innovative Alternative Accommodation – 11 March 2026
- 3 Business & Finance Scrutiny Committee Minutes – 11 March 2026
- 4 Business & Finance Scrutiny Committee Minutes – 30 September 2026
- 5 Communities Scrutiny Committee Minutes – 1 October 2026

15.0 Appendices

- A Innovative Approaches to Alternative Accommodation Working Group Report
- B Joint Working Group Terms of Reference

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Director	02/10/2026	05/10/2026	KK
Legal	02/10/2026	05/10/2026	DTW
Finance	02/10/2026	05/10/2026	MLB