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DECS Reference: TRO/1542088/26

22 July 2026

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your correspondence of 8 July 2026 about the use of Crowborough Training Camp as asylum accommodation.

I would first like to address the decision to decline the invitation to attend the Scrutiny and Performance Committee on 18 May 2026. Since Crowborough became operational in January 2026, the Home Office has established a comprehensive engagement framework to ensure that local representatives are regularly updated on the site's operation and have opportunities to raise questions, concerns and issues directly with Home Office officials.

This engagement framework includes:

a. Monthly Crowborough Multi-Agency Forum (MAF) – chaired by the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration, providing regular engagement with statutory and contracted partners, including the Local Authority, District Council, healthcare providers, police representatives and other key stakeholders. The MAF is supported by a suite of sub-groups attended by representatives of all MAF partners.

b. Monthly Parish and Town Councillor Meetings – Deputy Director-led discussions on the operation of the Crowborough accommodation site, attended by representatives from Wealden and local parish councils.

c. Monthly MP Engagement Meetings – Deputy Director-led discussions with local Members of Parliament, including Nusrat Ghani MP, providing a forum for parliamentary engagement and updates on site operations.

d. Local Resident and Councillor Visits – opportunities for local residents living near the Crowborough site to visit and Councillors, meet Home Office officials and service providers, and discuss the operation of the accommodation site directly.

Collectively, these forums provide regular and meaningful opportunities for elected representatives, stakeholders and local residents to engage with the Home Office regarding the operation of the Crowborough site outside of the Scrutiny and Performance Committee meeting.

For ease of answering your further questions, I have split the information into the following categories:

Clearsprings Ready Homes:
Operational services at Crowborough are provided by Clearsprings Ready Homes (CRH) under a variation to the Asylum Accommodation and Support Services (AASC) South Contract. The agreement for the provision of operational services at Crowborough with CRH has a duration of 12 months.

The Home Office is in the process of developing a bespoke KPI framework for Large Sites which, once agreed with the Provider, will be implemented at Crowborough. At present, CRH delivery is guided by the AASC KPIs, and Large Sites assurance is delivered through strong, hands-on operational oversight, grounded in on-site presence, observation, incident review and active engagement with Providers. This provides a high degree of real-time visibility and responsiveness and ensures that performance is managed closely both on site and on record keeping. Any issues are identified early and addressed promptly with a clear governance and escalation structure.

Information relating to the profits generated, or likely to be generated, by Clearsprings Ready Homes (CRH) through the provision of services at Crowborough cannot be disclosed, as it is considered commercially sensitive. Clearsprings Ready Homes (CRH) is not contractually required to utilise local supply chains in the delivery of operational services at Crowborough. Work is ongoing within the Home Office to determine if Crowborough may be utilised beyond the expiry of the current 12-month agreement with CRH for the provision of operational services.

Communications:
Home Office officials chair monthly Communications Subgroup meetings with statutory partners which provides a forum for key stakeholders to meet and discuss constructive engagement opportunities to address the concerns of the local community of Crowborough and the surrounding areas. We also work together to support proactive and reactive communication to counter misinformation in the mainstream and social media to reassure the community. Home Office have also committed to updating a public facing factsheet on gov.uk on a quarterly basis as a minimum. The factsheets supports partners to dispel misinformation relating to the site and explains the purpose of using the site as temporary accommodation for asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute.

Terminology:
The term “illegal migrants” is used within Home Office communications to refer to individuals who have arrived in the UK by illegal means, such as small boat crossings or concealed entry via ports.

Operations:
CRH deliver a fortnightly engagement with Voluntary Community Sector (VCS)

organisations to discuss current support provided by those in attendance as well as offers of further support. SAMAS currently provide support on-site through conversational English classes, clothing/SIM card distributions, football training sessions, and music (percussion) workshops. Further proposals, and funding requests, are being considered by the Home Office. VCS organisations interesting in supporting Crowborough can request to join the forum by contacting the CRH Activities Coordinator mailbox that has been shared.

Asylum decisions are not served on-site at Crowborough. Asylum Seekers are dispersed into Local Authority areas across the country before receiving their decision; therefore, no decisions have been served on-site. The operating model for Crowborough aims to provide asylum interviews to all residents, enabling case progression and 'decision ready' status at the point of dispersal.

Individuals may leave Crowborough before becoming 'decision ready'. The most common reasons for this are voluntary departures, where individuals choose to live elsewhere, and unsuitability relocations, where Crowborough cannot meet an individual's needs and alternate accommodation is provided. Case progression will continue in onward locations with asylum interviews booked accordingly.

Data:
The Home Office does not hold data on criminal or ASBO incidents. Insights into emergency attendances from blue light services would be reliant upon incident report data managed locally and not verified or assured for publication. For accurate data, I would encourage you seek insight from Sussex Police, South East Coast Ambulance Service, and East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service.

Community impact & funding:
Grant 395 (Asylum Grant) supports Local Authorities with a contribution to the costs of accommodating asylum seekers across all eligible accommodation types through a baseline payment of £1200 per occupied bedspace at the end of March and quarterly growth payments of £100 per net growth in newly occupied bedspaces. This payment is intended to recognise the existing contribution and longstanding support from local authorities and is to assist with costs of supporting Asylum Seekers. Further details are in the Funding Instructions which are issued to all local authorities and apply to Financial Year 2026/7. Future years' funding for Local Authorities will be agreed in due course.

Planning permission:
The Home Office has been given permission by the Ministry of Defence to extend usage of the site until January 2030 subject to appropriate planning permission. The Home Office is considering the appropriate planning route and will communicate any decision to the Council once available.

I hope this information is helpful in addressing the questions raised in your letter. The Home Office remains committed to working collaboratively with local partners, elected representatives and community stakeholders to ensure the effective operation of the Crowborough site and will continue to utilise our existing engagement framework.

Yours sincerely,





Deputy Director, Service User and Large Site Operations
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