

# Tenant Panel Meeting

Date: 19 March 2026 Time: 2pm – 4:30pm  
Venue: Essex Hall, Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton on Sea

| In Attendance                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tenant Panel Members                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Carol McDougall</b> (Chair), <b>Mary Humm</b> (Vice-Chair) <b>Helen Dodridge</b> , <b>Chris Gill</b> , <b>Christian James</b> , <b>John Coles</b> , <b>Ellen Wright</b> , <b>Rita Dove</b> , <b>Madeline Pound</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| TDC Staff                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Damian Williams</b> (Corporate Director), <b>Cllr Andy Baker</b> (Portfolio Holder), <b>Tim R Clarke</b> (Assistant Director Housing & Environment), <b>Matthew Wicks</b> (Senior Housing Manager), <b>William Lodge</b> (Corporate Communications Manager), <b>Teresa Enys</b> (Community Development Manager), <b>Leanne Parkin</b> (Digital Marketing Assistant), <b>Kelly Ellis</b> (Senior Sheltered Housing Officer), <b>Annie Goodwin</b> (Senior Building and Maintenance Surveyor), <b>David Ousby</b> (Assistant Director Project Delivery), <b>Jessica Woods</b> (Senior Tenant Involvement Officer) & <b>Sam Carran</b> (Tenant Involvement Officer). |

## 1. Welcome & Introductions

Carol welcomed everyone to the meeting. She thanked the Panel members and TDC representatives for attending the meeting and asked for those present to keep topics non-personal.

Carol then opened the room for introductions by those present.

## 2. Apologies for Absence

- Patrick Gafney
- Sid Payne
- Sheila Jones
- Muna Smith – resigned from the panel

## 3. Role of the Tenant Panel

Tim reminded everyone about the role of the Tenant Panel and that discussions should focus on strategic level matters and not specific matters relating to individuals that can be picked with officers at the end of the meeting.

## 4. Minutes of previous meeting and update on Actions

The minutes of the meeting 19 March 2026 were approved as an accurate record of that meeting.

The following actions were reviewed and status updated.

| Meeting  | Action                                                                                                | Lead       | Status   | Notes |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------|-------|
| Sept '25 | Review tenant panel membership of the Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) next year (2026) | Jessica    | Complete |       |
| Sept '25 | Circulate for December meeting estate walkabout calendar and provide name badges for those attending  | Jessica    | Complete |       |
| Dec '25  | Quarter three budget updates to March meeting                                                         | Cllr Baker | Complete |       |
| Dec '25  | Complaint performance update to March meeting                                                         | Cllr Baker | Complete |       |
| Dec '25  | Tenant Involvement guide approval at March meeting                                                    | Jessica    | Complete |       |

## 5. Talk by the Bill Clinic

The group received a presentation from Sharon from the Bill Clinic

The Bill Clinic aims to prevent overpayments on gas and electric bills, and support clients with energy efficiency along with understanding their bills.

They can also help with fuel and/or shopping vouchers. Sharon spoke about broadband being one of the largest upsold services they have come across, especially with elderly people when they are paying for a more expensive package than they require. They can also make further referrals themselves if it is necessary for the clients to have extra support. The Bill Clinic can complete home visits or online, all they need to start is a single energy bill to begin their checks.

Madeline asked about who this service is available to, with Sharon replying that it is available to anyone and not just council tenants.

Carol thanked Sharon for her time.

## 6. Housing Communication Strategy

William Lodge, Communications Manager, gave a presentation on the Housing Communication Strategy, see **Appendix A**.

Will began by saying the Comms team are hoping to support with transparency around housing and broadcasting any achievements. He said that their two main objectives are to celebrate and champion the work we do, along with driving up services available to tenants, such as the tenant panel. As we broadcast more communications, we want to keep it direct and relevant but also clear for anyone to read.

Will explained that the Comms team involvement in housing is something we are looking to improve on, and the goal is to show real images and people to highlight the work we are doing and how we are helping. We wish to drive forward certain key messages of have

easily accessible support, such as with repairs, and the range of teams that make up the wider housing department. Will said he wants the Comms team to get out of the office on a more regular basis, in order to take videos/pictures of what we are doing so we can broadcast this and have people understand what we are doing.

It is important that tenants get involved with feedback on social media and other communications, so we know what works and what doesn't. As part of this, we want to focus on being able to reach people, with one of these ways being through the tenant newsletter. We are looking at providing the newsletter to all tenants via email, with a hard copy still being available to those who request it. Will mentioned the new Facebook page relating directly to housing that has been created, so tenants and others are able to view this and engage. The page is new and growing, and feedback is vital so that the communications can make people interested and informed.

Carol asked if any members of the panel had a question, to which none were asked.

Carol asked if the general approach so far had been effective, with Will saying that even without the correct technology we will still use a non-digital approach so everyone can have the capability to get involved.

## **7. Programme Summary of Jaywick Sands HRA owned sites**

Carol introduced David Ousby to the panel.

David began his presentation by outlining a number of projects that could be carried out on land owned within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) in Jaywick Sands, the most deprived ward in England, and the potential impact to the HRA.

David referenced slide 4, see **Appendix B**, that showed an area in which the Jaywick Sands Healthy Homes initiative and other charities in the area are based. This area of land sits within the HRA and is becoming overgrown, with regular issues with fly tipping. The proposal is a light touch proposal to tidy the site and create additional walkways along the route of the route of existing lay lines. The intention is to link two existing sites in a more formal way to mirror how people are using the site currently.

He then referenced slide 5 and a parcel of that land that the Clarion Housing Group have approached the Council with a desire to partner with the Council to develop a programme providing construction and green skills courses. The proposal is to provide temporary buildings on this site, to support the delivery of this this programme. The programme is intended to promote job opportunities in construction to help those not in education to develop skills in an area of deprivation.

Cllr Baker made the panel aware of the Cabinet meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> March, at which it was hoped to approve investment in Jaywick through the Jaywick Sands Place Plan.

Damian gave the background as to why land was acquired within the HRA and outlined the volume of that land that the HRA owns within Jaywick Sands. The land was acquired for the development of housing at a point in the future. 10 houses were built, as proof of concept, to show that development is possible. To date, no decisions have been taken on the development of these sites, and because of this we are looking to make positive use of this land in the short term until a long-term decision can be made.

He spoken about how many projects like this are very small scale and that there is the potential to use our land on a temporary basis to provide support to the local community and to support residents into jobs.

Madeline asked David whether Clarion will pay TDC to use the land and the cost of the training, to which David confirmed they would.

Cllr Baker spoke on how Clarion remain involved in communities they have been involved with, to support them, not just Tendring, but Colchester as well. They wish to show they are not just a housing developer, but also there to support and develop other areas.

Damian said the HRA is also able to be used for generating income, and it could be possible in the future for us to use certain land as a way of generating revenue through housing or other means.

Carol asked the Tenant Panel to vote on whether David should continue to progress the projects to produce more detailed and costed schemes for the Panel to consider, with a view to the panel making a final decision at that point for those schemes it would support. A unanimous decision made through a show of hands, to support David to produce more detailed and costed schemes for the Panel to consider at a later meeting.

David and Damian both agreed that they will look to keep the panel updated with future progress.

## **8. Update from Subgroups**

### *Complaints & TSMs*

Madeline gave a quick update regarding the difference between a complaint and a repair request, and how tenants can be clear on which they are wishing to make. Madeline gave details on the steps to make a complaint if required, and how to follow the process to completion (of which can be found on the Tendring District Council website).

### *Housing Repairs*

Chris G gave an update for the housing repairs subgroup from February.

Chris spoke about the no access list for boiler and electrical checks, and the problems associated with this. He continued with comments on Rapid Response and how they conduct their business and to what standards, with the hope for them to attend the next subgroup meeting. Chris raised the issue that occasionally, official ID is not provided by contractors and that a review form after repairs is completed would allow for tenants to voice any concerns.

Jessica raised that we have created a review form that Rapid Response will be giving out to tenants after works are completed, to which we can then collate any data for to feed back to them.

Damian said that we hope to get Rapid Response at a tenant panel, so they too can be held to a standard. He continued by saying that subcontractors completing works are not an issue if tenants are made aware of the change, although poor standard of work is. He asked for issues raised in this meeting, to be continued in the specific subgroups so officers can communicate how to deal with said issues in a strategic way.

Carol said Chris G is wishing to shadow a cleaner to understand what they are doing.

Damian said this may be difficult, although questions can be asked surrounding the contract and what they do.

### *Anti-Social Behaviour, Neighbourhoods and Rents*

Matthew W spoke on the transactional survey for blocks being cleaned which had been raised in the Housing, Anti-Social Behaviour, Neighbourhoods and Rents subgroup. Clean Green, the company contracted for this, will be coming to our June meeting to be asked any questions by the panel. They also spoke about Anti-Social Behaviour and how this is dealt with, such as statutory noise, but also neighbourhood noise. He noted that the policy for this is up for review, and the subgroup members had been given a copy to feedback information on in the next subgroup.

Carol added that the information on fraud presented by David Ballard was interesting, with the reasons behind fraud and types of fraud being various.

Carol asked the panel for further questions on this.

Mr Coles asked who cleans the carpets in the blocks of flats.

Matthew said this is not currently on the programme, although cleaning can be completed on an ad hoc basis when needed.

## **9. General update & Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) update**

Tim began with how we are looking to improve ARCH and the offer for tenants to become ARCH tenant panel representatives. He later asked whether any of the panel members wished to be involved in this, with attendance possible in person, or by being dialled into the meeting. Information gathered can then be brought back to the panel and updates provided.

Damian highlighted how important ARCH is to central government, and how positive it would be for our panel to speak to other tenants from across the country along with senior figures in housing in order to see what improvements can be made in our own area. Damian added that this knowledge would be invaluable and shows how much of a voice we can have even when compared to larger councils with a higher number of properties.

Tim said that communication has been sent out regarding the new 3-year waste contract that has been awarded to Veolia, with one of the changes to this including a dedicated litter picking crew for housing land. The contract starts on 1<sup>st</sup> April, although a district wide rollout of a new recycling service will start in October. This will include new services for glass collection, as well as a wider range of plastic materials. Tim added that we are also rolling out food waste collection from certain flats (such as Sheltered schemes) which can be collected weekly to prevent this from going to a landfill.

Damian added that we are taking a strong approach towards fly tipping. 50 tonnes of waste have been collected from gardens in Jaywick Sands as part of a clean-up in 2025, and we may look to introduce this in other areas that require this service. We only wish to provide this for tenants to keep areas cleaner, and not to open this up for other members of the public to exploit.

Helen spoke of an idea of items labelled as potential fly tipping to be collected by TDC once a month for no charge.

Matthew W said that this has been done previously with a skip being placed in an area once a month, although the issue we had is that other members of the public abused this and would drive from other areas to dump their waste. He said this could be reintroduced, although it would require a lot of thought to ensure no similar issues occur.

Tim added that some councils offer free collections for tenants through their waste contracts, and this is something we could bring in.

Carol asked if there were any questions and then passed over to Cllr Baker.

#### **10. Update from Cllr Baker: Finance complaint handling**

Cllr Baker started with information on the budget being set on the 17<sup>th</sup> Feb by Cabinet. The budget for overall repairs is £9 million, being made up from £5 million for repairs and maintenance, with the remaining £4.6 million being for housing improvement and disabled adaptations. He stated that in the first 3 quarters of 25/26 £3 million has been spent on repairs from the £5 million budget, and housing improvement spend so far is at £1.5 million. He is hoping that the housing improvement plan budget will be underspent, although repairs and maintenance is likely to be over budget due to price increases.

Carol asked if more money will be spent due to the new regulations being introduced.

Cllr Baker said that the stock condition survey is almost complete and conversations will be held tomorrow about which areas require upgrades based on the information we have gained. He stated that the regulator expects us to know our tenants and to have a decent standard of homes, although some properties are so old that they may not be possible to bring up to the standard without significant works.

Damian built on what Cllr Baker said, with 87% stock condition survey being completed, and 300 tenants refusing entry. We will be able to extrapolate the data gathered from the survey and prove why we are spending money in certain areas. Data that comes back from tenant satisfaction measures is also important as it provides ideas on communal spaces, development, and more so we know where to target the funds. He added a goal to reintroduce a schedule/roadmap so that tenants can be aware of when we are aiming to complete certain objectives by. Underspending this financial year will hopefully allow for us to spend a higher amount next year and use this high-level set of data to do so effectively. We will share this data with the tenant panel once it is available.

Carol opened the room for questions.

Chris G mentioned that 300 tenants refusing entry appears to be a high number.

Damian said there are many reasons for tenants refusing entry and wish to work around any reasons for refusal so that we can survey as many properties as possible.

Cllr Baker stated that there are difficulties with entering properties for boiler checks, which targets tenant safety and the need to manage properties to ensure they are entered so our tenants can remain safe.

Helen queried if the gas safety letters that are sent out to tenants.

Cllr Baker said that it is the goal of the Tenant Involvement team to understand what is needed for visits, including vulnerabilities, contact details, who is living in the property and more.

Cllr Baker then moved onto complaint handling, saying that as an organisation we have to report our complaint figures every year and what they are regarding. Cllr Baker then gave a breakdown of housing related repairs, with responsive and repairs scoring the highest, and also including complaints about damp and mould and behaviour from contractors. Complaints stats must be agreed with cabinet once confirmed.

After a brief talk about homelessness legislation and the housing allocation policy, Jessica asked if they are topics the panel wishes to be part of the next agenda.

The panel all confirmed their interest for this. **ACTION**

**11. Tenant Involvement 2025 Achievements, updated for 2026 & guide sign off.  
New proposed Constitution & Evaluation of Tenant Panel. Election of Chair &  
Vice Chair 2026**

Jessica began this topic speaking on the tenancy checks completed by the Tenant Involvement team. She confirmed that 724 checks had been completed in 2025, and that we are confident of achieving our goal of visiting all tenants across the district by April 2027. Jessica then spoke about the estate walkabout calendar for 2026, along with the new Tenant Panel representative badges we will be providing to panel members attending any walkabouts. The Tenant Involvement officer leading the walkabout would then provide these to any attendees and collect them at the end of the walkabout.

Chris G queried if mileage could be claimed for travel expenses.

Jessica confirmed that we can provide this, and alternatively a taxi can be booked if a panel member is unable to drive.

Jessica then touched on the service assessor groups we are starting. There will be 3 groups to begin with. One will be for assessing our void properties, allowing tenants to view the void process from start to finish. The second will be for those with diverse needs, allowing tenants to review our website and other communications to ensure it is accessible to those with differing needs. The final group will be regarding communal cleaning standards, with Chris G offering to be the communal cleaning representative, working with both Clean Green and Matthew Wicks.

Matthew W said that not all blocks have communal cleaning, although some have communal gardens/areas. He is hoping that Chris G can develop into a communal area representative, as opposed to just cleaning.

Jessica asked the panel if they agree for Chris G to lead on this, to which all members confirmed through a show of hands.

Jessica then referenced the reading group we are introducing regarding housing policy, along with any communications we may send out so that members of the group could read through them and provide feedback without having to commit to a full panel meeting.

Cllr Baker suggested that any housing policies sent to the reading group should be done so within ample time, so that time taken for approval is not increased.

Jessica also spoke about the new block champions project we are starting, which would include tenants conducting inspections of their blocks on a monthly basis and completing a form with feedback relating to different subjects. We will hold a meeting once a quarter, so that we can come together with ideas for what certain blocks need to improve.

Jessica briefly mentioned the community event we are organising, with more information being provided about this during the next tenant panel. Panel members are encouraged to come to this event and hopefully be able to speak to other tenants so the panels attendees can increase.

Jessica then moved onto the [Tenant Involvement Guide](#), with all panel members receiving a copy of said guide. This is a document provided to all tenants upon completion of a tenancy check, and when signing a new tenancy agreement which discusses what the team does, and how tenants can get involved.

Jessica asked if the panel are happy with the contents of the document, to which all agreed.

Jessica then spoke on the new tenant panel constitution and asked for comments from the panel about this, see **Appendix E**.

Madeline asked if there were any extensive changes to the constitution.

Jessica said that we have condensed the code of conduct and constitution into the same document, and that tenants must attend at least half of the tenant panel meetings per year in order to stay on the panel.

Tim made the panel aware that it is also open to leaseholders to join, and not solely council tenants.

Helen asked whether multiple subgroups could be joined, of which Jessica confirmed tenants can join as many, or as few as they wish to.

Jessica asked for a vote on the new constitution, of which a unanimous decision was made.

Jessica then addresses the tenant panel feedback. There were 11 answers overall, with a majority of answers confirming their years of membership to the panel being over 4 years, with most attending all meetings. Jessica said that the answers provided were positive, with the comments being clear and helpful. Comments were made for tenant panels to be held in different parts of the district, and due to this we will be holding meetings at Wix Village Hall, and Brightlingsea, along with the June and September meetings being held from 4pm to 6:30pm.

The feedback also stated that we are unbiased towards different topics, and topics brought up in meetings were regularly spoken about on future panels. Taxi bookings have also been pushed back by 15 minutes after the meetings end, allowing panel member more time to speak to others.

Microphones are also now being used in the committee room if needed.

Finally, comments were made on the introduction of more subgroups. Due to the 3 we have currently only recently being set up, Jessica said that we will wait until the process is perfected, and we can introduce further groups where necessary.

Rita asked about a Sheltered housing subgroup, of which Kelly and Jessica are going to look into whether this is possible to implement this calendar year.

Matthew W, Cllr Baker and Jessica reiterated that we are open to ideas for further subgroups and wish to hear any ideas panel members may have.

Carol asked if tenants could be provided with a sheet in order to track potential issues with their areas, with Jessica confirming that this is completed on our estate walkabouts and should cover the same areas.

Jessica mentioned that all of the maps, dates and locations for our future walkabouts will soon be on the website.

Jessica stated that Chair of the panel Carol, and Vice Chair of the panel Mary are to be revoted in due to no other names being put forward. Unanimous decision through a show of hands was made for both to remain in their respective positions.

## **12. Update on Devolution & Local Government Reorganisation**

Damian provided an update regarding the Mayor of Essex elections expected in 2028. Local Government Reorganisation is still going ahead, with the Minister for Local Government expected to provide a 'minded to' letter in the coming weeks to provide further context on the changes. We will understand the setup for the unitary council after this point, with Damian hoping to provide a more informed update at the next tenant panel.

## **13. Any other business**

Damian discussed the departure of Andy White and Chris Ball from TDC, meaning they would no longer be attending the tenant panel. Damian reassured the panel that we are looking to readvertise for these positions, although have so far been unsuccessful.

## **14. Recap of Actions**

Sam recapped the actions from the meeting and who will be leading on them.

| <b>Meeting</b> | <b>Action</b>                                                                       | <b>Lead</b>    | <b>Status</b> | <b>Notes</b>           |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|------------------------|
| March '26      | Invite Clean Green to June Tenant Panel meeting                                     | Matthew Wicks  | In progress   |                        |
| March '26      | Complaints and TSM figures to be an agenda topic at the next Tenant Panel.          | Cllr Baker     | In progress   |                        |
| March '26      | Cllr Baker to attend Complaints and TSM subgroup                                    | Loraine Pruden | In progress   | 28 <sup>th</sup> April |
| March '26      | Cathy Low to be invited to June meeting to speak about Homelessness and Allocations | Jessica Woods  | In progress   |                        |
| March '26      | List of abbreviations/housing glossary to provide tenant panel members with         | Jessica Woods  | In progress   |                        |

**15. Date of next meeting**

Jessica confirmed that the date of the next meeting is Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June at Wix Village Hall, with letters to follow closer to the time.

## Appendix A – Housing Communications Presentation

# Housing Communications

Will Lodge  
Corporate Communications  
Manager

Serving Local People

## Objectives

- Celebrate & champion work we do
  - Increase visibility of services delivered
- Drive take-up of services available to tenants
  - Increase use of housing services
- “Underpinned by effective tenant engagement”
  - Shaping communications based on user feedback
- Supporting Housing Strategy objectives
  - Data driven (ongoing)

Serving Local People

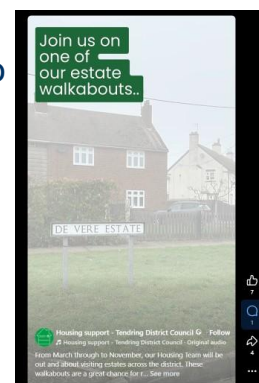
## Narrative

- Simple narrative
- Using real people where possible
- Accessible
- Example messages:
  - You report it, we repair it / Help us to help you
  - Keeping you independent in your home
  - Get involved!
  - Happy home, happy neighbourhood
  - Tell us how we did / You Said, We Listened

Serving Local People

## How do we achieve that?

- Getting out there more – communications team joining housing teams
  - Internal communications boosted too
- Video & photo focus
- Toolkits & wider content
- Feedback and evaluation
  - Future tenant survey questions
  - Tenants' Panel views



Serving Local People

## Channel use and mix

- Shift to digital as we gather data
- Maintaining other formats for those who require them
- Medium-term
- New channels
  - Facebook
  - E-newsletter
  - Website refresh

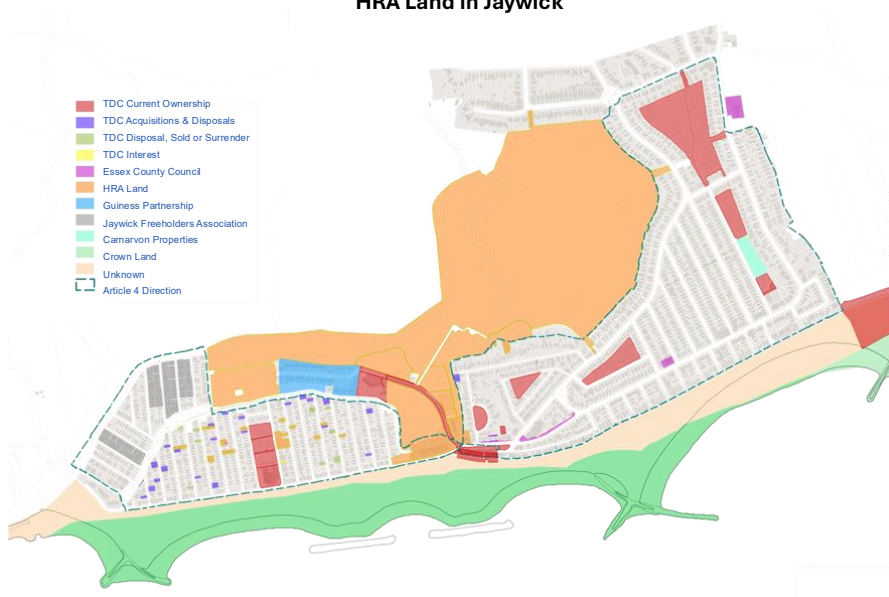


## Appendix B- Jaywick Sands HRA Presentation

# Jaywick Sands HRA Plot proposals

Presentation March 2026

**HRA Land in Jaywick**





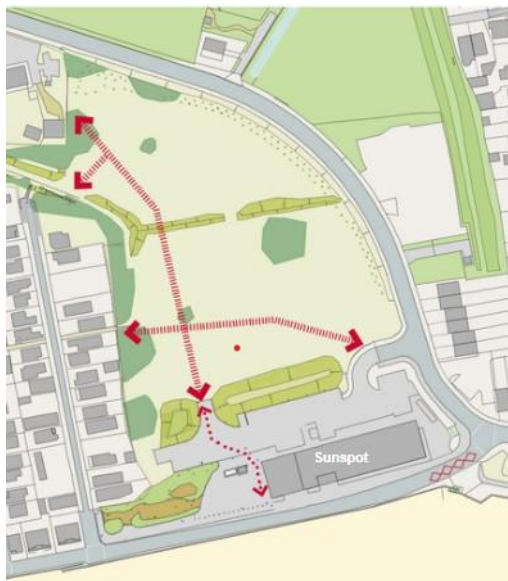
**Former Mermaid Pub site**  
**Meanwhile uses:**

- Growing space
- Car parking / turning / vehicle cut through



**Market Site: Land between Sunspot and Enterprise Centre bounded by Lotus Way**

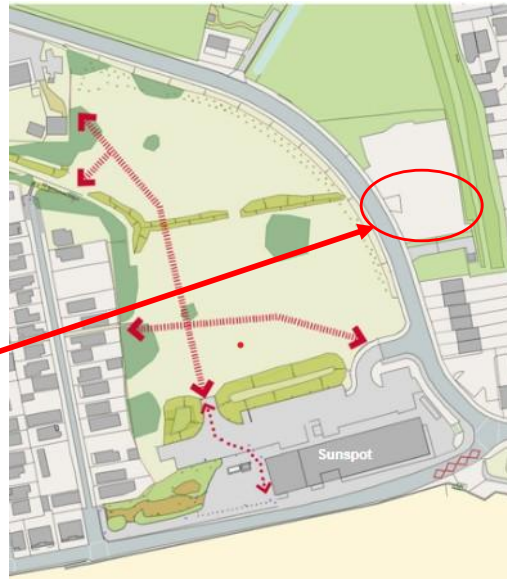
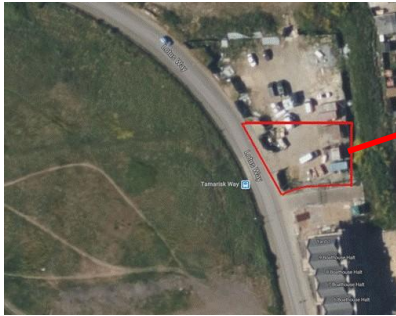
- New paths on existing desire lines, forming direct link between Sunspot and Enterprise Centre



**Clarion – bringing green skills and Construction training to Jaywick Sands.**

Delivering Green Skills & Construction Training:

- Temporary use of land for storage and support the training which is being delivered at the Sunspot.



## Clarion Housing Group

### Delivering Green Skills & Construction Training:

Clarion is partnering with Tendring District Council to run a growing programme of construction and green skills courses hosted at the Sunspot.

Benefits to the Area:

- Green Initiatives Roofing Course including solar PV installation, eco-roofing systems, and drone inspection techniques.
- Supporting residents to obtain the Construction Skills Certification Scheme card (CSCS) required for entry-level jobs.
- Supported more than 30 local residents into employment in the past year.
- Focused on young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), helping them into sustainable career pathways.
- Hiring local facilities (generating income for the HRA through renting space at Sunspot)
- Bringing footfall to the area.



The Lotus Way site will allow us to extend our training offer and get construction companies our part supply chain to offer construction masterclasses in: bricklaying, block paving, fencing, basic plumbing and carpentry.

It will also allow us to run more intensive courses that would not be suitable for the Sunspot space.

*Sean McGinn, Employment & Training Manager, Clarion*

**‘I am so glad he done. When he came home on the first day, he was in 2 minds on whether to carry on with the roofing course or not, but he loves it now and wants to be a roofer - he has really, really enjoyed it’.**

*Mother of a current trainee*

Appendix C- [Tenant Involvement Achievements](#)

Appendix D- [Tenant Involvement Calendar 2026](#)

Appendix E- [New Proposed Tenant Panel Constitution](#)