

Tendring
District Council



Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031



FOREWORD

We have a good track record in Tending of working with our partners to address homelessness. Nationally the number of homeless households has risen exponentially and Tending is no exception. We have seen an 87% increase in enquiries since 2018/2019 and a 26% increase in homeless applications. This higher number has now levelled off but is still demanding. The numbers of single homeless have risen more sharply than households with children and we have prioritised this for intervention in this strategy.

We have achieved a measure of stability through a focused approach which has strengthened early intervention to prevent homelessness; provided better quality temporary accommodation particularly for families; and engaged with our partners to provide suitable accommodation for homeless households to move on to.

We are anticipating Local Government Reorganisation within the next three years which means Tending District Council will become part of a new larger unitary authority. Here we set down the priorities for tackling homelessness in our area, built on our local knowledge and in consultation with our partners. The three priorities for the next five years of improving access to services, working in partnership, and increasing options for the single homeless will remain relevant when we become part of this new unitary council working across a wider area.

I am pleased to endorse this strategy. It builds on our existing success in improving our homelessness service and has been developed in discussion with our statutory and community based partners. It reflects our determination to tackle homelessness in our area and provide support to those without a stable place to call home.

Councillor Andy Baker, Housing Portfolio Holder

Executive Summary

This five year strategy is written in anticipation of Local Government Reorganisation which is likely to happen within the timeframe. Nevertheless the analysis and priorities set out are unlikely to change for our area and will remain relevant when we are absorbed into a new unitary authority with wider boundaries. The new authority will still have a legal responsibility, set out in various legislation, to address homelessness.

Preventing and reducing homelessness is a priority in our new Housing Strategy. Here we expand on what we will do to achieve this, building on our successes, with our partners, since the last Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was adopted in 2020.

The numbers of families and single people who approach our homeless services for advice and support each year are significant. 2190 households approached us last year, of which 865 were assessed as needing further work to prevent homelessness or to be assessed within temporary accommodation. We are seeing an increasing number of young single men approach the service.

The top three reasons why people face homelessness remain notice to quit from a landlord, family eviction, and domestic abuse. Many of those to whom we owe a duty have other support needs, the majority relating to mental or physical health. Partner agencies are crucial in providing for this.

The flow of new affordable homes in the pipeline, and private sector rent levels in the area, are both critical to being able to move households for whom we have a duty to rehouse into stable accommodation. But there are no guarantees that either will be sufficient to meet demand now or in the future.

A pro-active approach is needed to address the causes and solutions to homelessness in our area. In consultation with our partners we have identified three priorities for future action, and an implementation plan to realise our ambitions.

Our three priorities are:

Priority 1 – Improve access to early housing advice and information.

Priority 2 - Work in partnership to prevent and reduce homelessness

Priority 3 – Increase the number and type of housing options for single people.

Part 1 Introduction

People can lose their accommodation and become homeless for a range of reasons. Homelessness is complex. The most visible form of homelessness is rough sleeping where people are sleeping outside, on the streets and in tents. But many people who become homeless lived previously in insecure and unstable housing or may have been staying temporarily with family or friends.

Local Authorities are legally required to have a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in place, and they must be updated every 5 years. The last strategy covered the period 2020 - 2024 and this refreshed strategy ensures that we and our partners are doing everything possible to prevent and respond to homelessness in the district. The pressure on local authorities to find accommodation for homeless families and vulnerable individuals has increased dramatically in recent years, not least in Tendring.

Local Government Reorganisation

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) means that the possibility of joining with neighbouring authorities to form a new unitary authority is on the horizon. Essex is part of the Government priority programme for LGR, and at the time of writing proposals have been submitted to Government for consideration. A decision is likely in March 2026. This strategy has therefore been written within a timeframe where it is reasonable to assume that the scope of the Council's housing responsibilities will remain constant and continue beyond 2028 when new unitary councils are expected to be formed across Essex absorbing existing district councils. The new unitary authority will still need to address and alleviate homelessness. It is crucial that we are clear about what our priorities are as we approach unification across wider boundaries.



Corporate Plan 2024 - 2028 (Our Vision)

The council has a Corporate Plan – a key document which lays out the high-level priorities for the authority over four years.

Our Vision, covering 2024-2028, agreed in November 2023 encompassed a Community Leadership approach. Listening to residents and businesses, it sets out six themes:

- Pride in our area and services to residents
- Raising aspirations and creating opportunities
- Championing our local environment
- Working with partners to improve quality of life
- Promoting our heritage offer, attracting visitors and encouraging them to stay longer
- Financial sustainability and openness

Housing Strategy 2026-2030

At Tending the new Housing Strategy 2026-2030 will include four strategic housing priorities for the next four years:

1. Maintaining and improving our existing stock.
2. Preventing and reducing homelessness.
3. Delivering, with partners, high quality homes.
4. Supporting people in their homes and communities.

In addition to preventing and reducing homelessness the Housing Strategy promotes healthy, sustainable communities by raising the standard of existing homes and enabling provision of quality new ones; resulting in suitable, affordable housing to meet the needs of our current and future residents and enable them to live healthy lives, supporting everyone to reach their full potential.

Achievements since the last Strategy

It is important to recognise the successes we alongside our partners have achieved since the last Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was adopted in 2020. At that time many households were placed in hotels or bed and breakfast

accommodation outside of the district, including families, and the effects of the pandemic were being felt across the country.

In the last five years we have:

- ✓ Developed a Council owned 31-unit temporary accommodation project making use of a redundant sheltered housing scheme providing good quality units at a reduced cost.
- ✓ Implemented a Temporary Accommodation Policy aimed at placing households in better quality accommodation.
- ✓ Eliminated fully the use of hotels for families as temporary accommodation.
- ✓ Recruited a Housing Early Intervention Officer to add to the prevention offer.
- ✓ Established an early response and outreach service to tackle rough sleeping.
- ✓ Developed a 'call before you serve' service for private landlords to get in touch before serving notice.
- ✓ Developed a hospital discharge protocol in partnership with other Essex authorities and the NHS.
- ✓ Created holistic Personal Housing Plans to improve client's well-being.
- ✓ Developed an under-occupation scheme to free up family sized homes.

The impact of these measures has been recognised by our partners who have seen significant improvements in service delivery. However, there is still further to go, particularly in relation to provision for single people.

Part 2 - Homelessness Review

Overview of numbers

We have carried out a light touch review of homelessness in the district, considering the national requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 and the Homelessness Code of Guidance.

In 2024/25 2190 households approached the Council for housing advice. Of those 865 went on to make a full homeless application and were assessed under the Homelessness Reduction Act. Of those, 329 were owed a prevention duty, 597 a relief duty and 162 a main duty (a full duty to rehouse). While the number of households with children and single women has remained fairly stable since 2021 the number of approaches from single men has increased significantly.

Overview of approaches						
	Total approaches	Households with children	Singles (no dependants)			All other households
			Single male	Single female	Single Other	
2020/21	1636	432	668	412	5	119
2021/22	1914	624	669	436	5	180
2022/23	1933	630	684	464	13	142
2023/24	1977	659	725	470	5	118
2024/25	2190	659	922	457	4	148

The main causes of homelessness have remained consistent over the last five years. The three main causes of homelessness 2024/25 were:

1. Notice to Quit from a private tenancy – 263 (30.4%)
2. Family eviction – 219 (25.3%)
3. Domestic Abuse – 91 (10.5%)

Other notable causes were relationship breakdown (non-violent), notice to quit including from social housing, eviction by friends, and departure from custody.

The need for support for those owed a prevention or relief duty has increased. In 2024/25 of the 865 households approaching us 1108 support needs were identified. Some people will have more than one support need.

The overwhelming need, in line with other areas around the country is for support for mental health issues, followed by support due to physical ill health or disability, and due to domestic abuse. We are being approached more often by people who have multiple and more complex needs which are harder to meet.

Our relationships with partner agencies are good and joint working across services is effective. We have a good supply of supported accommodation for single people and young parents with low to medium needs. However, there is a gap in provision for single people with higher and/or more complex needs, which we acknowledge and seek to address in this strategy. The regulation which is anticipated for the supported housing sector following the passing of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act in 2023 will focus on regulating standards in supported housing but is not designed to increase supply.

Some units of supported housing receive housing-related support funding from Essex County Council and where this has ended, we have worked hard to make sure alternative funding is in place.

Provision of temporary accommodation

The numbers placed in temporary accommodation demonstrate the scale of homelessness we are tackling in Tendring, and the table below shows the upward trend in the number of households needing emergency accommodation.

	Households in temporary accommodation			
	No of households placed in temporary accommodation	Singles	Households with children (or expected child)	Other
2020/21	279	188	72	19
2021/22	252	138	98	16
2022/23	363	191	152	20
2023/24	412	197	189	26
2024/25	477	236	215	25

It is significant that families with children have not been placed in bed and breakfast or hotels since the new 31-bed hostel provision at Spendells House in Walton-on-the-Naze opened in December 2024. However, the continued use of bed and breakfast type accommodation, for single people, is an ongoing concern that we also seek to address within the strategy.

We have a Temporary Accommodation Policy which facilitates cost recovery in terms of recharging the ineligible (for Housing Benefit) costs of accommodation provided. This is recognised good practice and keeps us in line with other local authorities who are also seeing the costs of temporary accommodation rise.

Rough Sleeping is one of the main indicators of acute housing need in an area. Historically numbers have been low, between one and ten, but this has fluctuated over the last few years, with the number at the last estimate in December 2024 at seven. This success is largely due to the joint work being carried out with Anglia Care Trust, our commissioned service for rough sleepers. They provide support and advice to rough sleepers making an important contribution to keeping the majority of homeless single people off the streets with appropriate supported accommodation.

It is difficult to precisely predict future levels of homelessness. Nevertheless the expectation is that it will continue to rise nationally. The following factors are likely to continue to impact on the demand for homelessness services in Tendring, as elsewhere:

- Introduction of the Renters Rights Act 2025 impacting private landlords. This may prompt some landlords to withdraw from the rental market.
- Low Local Housing Allowance rates below the average rental prices, meaning rents will not be covered by the allowance and landlords may not want to risk non-payment of the gap.
- Lack of new affordable housing supply. New supply is crucial to meeting the demand for housing in the area, including for homeless families and vulnerable individuals.

Housing Register and Housing Allocations Policy

The main homelessness prevention tool available to our service is the Housing Register. Being a stock holding authority with just over 3000 homes we aim to make best use of our homes and award priority through our Housing Allocations Policy to those at risk of homelessness. We have recently reviewed our Housing Allocations Policy to ensure it is up to date and delivers the best outcomes for people in housing need in the district. The new Housing Allocations Policy was adopted on 20th June 2025 and is currently in the process of being implemented.

The number of households on our housing register has fluctuated over the last three years, due largely to several new housing developments in the area. Lettings have increased to housing association partners who make an important contribution to meeting housing need. Over the last three years the number of lettings overall has remained largely stable. As new developments come forward with partner housing associations this number will increase.

Year	TDC General stock	TDC Sheltered stock	Housing Association	Other	Total
2022/23	210	46	82	1	339

2023/24	164	34	174	4	376
2024/25	175	17	133	5	330

While progress is being made in developing partnerships around homelessness prevention, without a pipeline of new housing supply this will not in itself solve the housing pressures we face. A pro-active approach is being taken with housing providers to identify new sites and deliver new affordable homes in the district.

Delivery of new high quality homes is a key priority in the newly adopted Housing Strategy 2026-2030 as increased supply will contribute significantly to the Council's ability to manage the demands on the homelessness service and the costs of temporary accommodation.

Consultation with partners

A Homelessness Forum was held on 6 October 2025 attended by over 20 representatives from local statutory services and the voluntary and community sector. A workshop was held to understand and reflect on the challenges we face in terms of homelessness, and to discuss the findings of the review and help develop the priorities for this strategy.

Those attending included elected Members, officers from the housing team and external agencies. Attendees welcomed the opportunity to attend such an event and the priorities identified in the workshop have shaped this strategy. There was wide support for the following emerging priorities and the actions we propose to take as a result. The workshop emphasised access to services, raising awareness of the services on offer, and the importance of early help which we have reflected in the overall priorities below. It is hoped that regular twice-yearly partnership meetings will continue in future.

Part 3 – Our Key Priorities

We have developed three strategic priorities from our review of homelessness and from discussions with our partners. These are:



Priority 1 – Improve access to early housing advice and information.

We will do this by

- Making our customer facing services more accessible to people in housing need.
- Improving the information around our application forms and online systems.
- Improving our website and making it easy for people to self-help.
- Make more use of social media to promote early prevention services.
- Developing community based factsheets and information for our partners to share.

Priority 2 - Work in partnership to prevent and reduce homelessness

We will do this by:

- Holding twice yearly Homelessness Stakeholder Forum meetings.
- Ensuring our partners can identify people in need of early housing advice and make appropriate referrals.
- Holding regular training/information sessions for partners on our referral pathways.
- Commence procurement for our supported accommodation for young parents.
- Develop our offer to support refugees and people from abroad.
- Host twice yearly Private Sector Landlord Forums to develop relationships further.

Priority 3 – Increase the number and type of housing options for single people.

We will do this by:

- Exploring opportunities to develop temporary accommodation for single people.
- Working with private landlords to develop suitable shared accommodation for single people under 35.
- Reviewing move-on provision in the Housing Allocations Policy to ensure throughput in our supported housing schemes
- Exploring the use of modular homes to provide accommodation with support for our most complex and high need rough sleepers
- Commence procurement of a rough sleeper service using RSI funding.

Part 4 – Monitoring and Review



Some of the actions in this strategy are short-term and can be realised quickly. Others will take a number of years to bear fruition. With Local Government Reorganisation planned in the coming years there may be actions that ultimately prove redundant or unachievable. It is however important to be clear what our priorities are as we go towards the changes ahead, and we respond to our changing needs.

The strategy is accompanied by a delivery plan in Appendix 1 which will set out when the actions will be completed and achieved. The strategy and action plan will be reviewed and monitored regularly, and a review will be produced and published annually to update the Homelessness Stakeholder Forum, Members, the wider community and other partners on how the strategy is progressing.



Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy Delivery Plan 2026-2028

Action	Lead officer	Target date
Priority 1 – Improve access to early housing advice and information Make customer facing services more accessible to people in housing need		
Ensure a Triage Officer is based in Customer Services to talk to customers face to face and support applications	Housing Manager	April 2026
Improve the information around the application forms to make them more customer friendly and review this annually	Homelessness Initiatives Officer	April 2026 April 2027
Review the housing website pages to include more self-help options and review them annually	Homelessness Initiatives Officer	April 2026 April 2027
Post on the Council's social media pages at least monthly promoting early advice, information and support services.	Homelessness Initiatives Officer & Housing	April 2026 Monthly

Action	Lead officer	Target date
	Communications Officer	
Develop community-based factsheets and information. Distribute information to partners and provide annual updates	Homelessness Initiatives Officer	April 2026 April 2027
Priority 2 – Work in partnership to prevent and reduce homelessness Improve partnership working		
Hold Multi-agency Homelessness Stakeholder Forum meetings twice a year	Housing Manager Homelessness Initiatives Officer	June 2026 & November 2026
Improve early referral of clients locally before they are in crisis by attending multi-agency partner meetings: Transfer of Care Hub, MARAC, Homeless Prevention meeting with Tenancy Management Team, etc	Housing Manager Homelessness Initiatives Officer	Review attendance quarterly
Hold regular information sharing sessions for partners attending each other's team meetings to develop consistent messaging. At least monthly joint meetings held.	Senior Housing Solutions Officer Housing Manager Homelessness Initiatives Officer	Monthly from January 2026
Commence procurement of supported housing for young parents. New service to be in place before end of the current contract to allow for implementation.	Housing Manager	January 2026 April 2026
Work with local organisations to develop an offer of support refugees and people from abroad. Information sharing and relationship building with new officer	Housing Solutions Team & Refugee Officer	April 2026
Hold twice yearly Landlord Forums to further develop partnership working with private sector landlords including information about the Renters Rights Act and other topics.	Accommodation Officer	March 2026 September 2026



Action	Lead officer	Target date
Priority 3 – Increase number and type of housing options for single people Increase options for single people:		
Explore opportunities to develop additional Tendring owned and managed temporary accommodation for single people	Housing Manager	December 2026
Work with private landlords to develop suitable shared accommodation options for single people under 35 years.	Accommodation Officer	June 2027
Review move-on provision in the Housing Allocations Policy and nominations to ensure throughput in our supported housing schemes	Housing Manager	September 2026
Explore the use of modular homes to provide accommodation with support for our most complex and high need rough sleepers	Housing Manager	December 2027
Commence procurement of a rough sleeper service using RSI funding. New service to be in place before the end of the current contract to allow for implementation.	Housing Manager	January 2026 April 2026

