Agenda

Overview Committee

Thursday
8 October 2026
at 7.00 pm

The Guildhall
St Peter's Place
Canterbury
CT1 2DB

Membership of the Overview Committee

Councillors:
Pat Edwards (Chair)
Beth Forrester (Vice Chair)
James Flanagan
Mike Bland
Dane Buckman
Jean Butcher
Liz Harvey
Stuart Heaver
Tom Mellish
Peter Old
Alex Ricketts
Jeanette Stockley
David Thomas

Quorum: 7 councillors

NOTES

1. Members of the public may speak at meetings of the Committee so long as they contact Democratic Services by 12.30pm the working day before the meeting.

2. The venue for the meeting is wheelchair accessible and has an induction loop to help people who are hearing impaired.

3. Everyone is welcome to record meetings of the Council and its Committees using whatever non-disruptive methods you think are suitable. If you are intending to do this please mention it to the Democratic Services Officer and do not use flash photograph unless you have previously asked whether you may do so. If you have any questions about this please contact Democratic Services (members of the press please contact the Press Office).

Please note that the Chair of the meeting has the discretion to withdraw permission and halt any recording if in the Chair's opinion continuing to do so would prejudice proceedings at the meeting. Reasons may include disruption caused by the filming or recording or the nature of the business being conducted.

Anyone filming a meeting is asked to only focus on those actively participating but please also be aware that you may be filmed or recorded whilst attending a council meeting and that attendance at the meeting signifies your agreement to this if it occurs. You are also reminded that the laws of defamation apply and all participants whether speaking, filming or recording are reminded that respect should be shown to all those included in the democratic process.

Persons making recordings are requested not to put undue restrictions on the material produced so that it can be reused and edited by all local people and organisations on a non-commercial basis.

If a meeting passes a motion to exclude the press and public then, in conjunction with this, all rights to record the meeting are removed.

4. The information contained within this agenda is available in other formats, including Braille, large print, audio cassettes and other languages.

Contact Officer: Democratic Services, 01227 862009,
democracy@canterbury.gov.uk

A G E N D A

Page (s)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2 SUBSTITUTE COUNCILLORS

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

TO RECEIVE any declarations for the following in so far as they relate to the business for the meeting:-
a. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests
b. Other Significant Interests (what were previously thought of as non-pecuniary Prejudicial interests)
c. Voluntary Announcements of Other Interests

Voluntary Announcements of Other Interests not required to be disclosed as DPI's or OSI's, ie announcements made for transparency reasons alone, such as:
- Membership of outside bodies that have made representations on agenda items, or
- Where a Councillor knows a person involved, but does not have a close association with that person, or
- Where an item would affect the well-being of a Councillor, relative, close associate, employer, etc but not his/her financial position.

[Note: an effect on the financial position of a Councillor, relative, close associate, employer, etc; OR an application made by a Councillor, relative, close associate, employer, etc, would both probably constitute either an OSI or in some cases a DPI].

4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public may speak on any item on the agenda, for a maximum of three minutes, provided that notification has been given to Democratic Services by 12.30pm on the working day before the meeting.

(Please note: for items on this agenda that are being recommended to Cabinet, public speaking is only permitted at the Overview Committee meeting.)

To find out more visit this page.

5 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 SEPTEMBER 2026 6 - 12

To confirm as a true record the minutes of the meeting of the Overview Committee held on 10 September 2026

6 TENANCY POLICY AND TENANCY STRATEGY 13 - 76

To NOTE the report from the Director of People and the Head of Housing and Community

7 HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY AND PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS 77 - 156

TO RECOMMEND to Cabinet the approval of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Plan to End Homelessness.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7 pm, Thursday 5 November 2026

9 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS TO BE DEALT WITH IN PUBLIC

10 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

TO RESOLVE – That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act or the Freedom of Information Act or both.

11 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS WHICH FALLS UNDER THE EXEMPT PROVISIONS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 OR THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 OR BOTH

CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL

OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday, 10th September, 2026 at 7.00 pm in The Guildhall, St Peter's Place, Westgate, Canterbury

Present: Councillor Pat Edwards (Chair)
Councillor Beth Forrester
Councillor Mike Bland
Councillor Dane Buckman
Councillor Jean Butcher
Councillor Rachel Carnac (present as a substitute)
Councillor James Flanagan
Councillor Liz Harvey
Councillor Stuart Heaver
Councillor Tom Mellish
Councillor Peter Old
Councillor Alex Ricketts
Councillor David Thomas

In attendance Chris Cornell - Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Regeneration
Mel Dawkins - Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability

Officers:

Pippa Tritton	-	Democratic Services Officer
William Hicks	-	Director for Place
Nick Churchill	-	Senior Economic Development Officer
Martin Thomas*	-	Tree and Woodland Officer
Andrew Miller*	-	Project Support Officer (Environment)

(*present for part of the meeting)

237 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor J Stockley.

238 **SUBSTITUTE COUNCILLORS**

Councillor Carnac was present as a substitute for Councillor J Stockley.

239 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In relation to Item 6 – Adoption of the Canterbury District Biodiversity Plan, Councillor Buckman and Councillor Carnac made a voluntary announcement that they were members of the Open Space Biodiversity Group (OSBG).

240 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Chair advised that there were two public speakers who would be heard before the relevant item.

241 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 JUNE 2026**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2026 were agreed as a true record by general assent.

242 **ADOPTION OF THE CANTERBURY DISTRICT BIODIVERSITY PLAN**

(Councillor Buckman and Councillor Carnac made a voluntary announcement that they were members of the Open Space Biodiversity Group (OSBG)).

(Members of the public Michelle Crowther and Thomas Crowther spoke prior to the debate.)

The Tree and Woodland Officer gave a short presentation introducing the proposed Canterbury District Biodiversity Plan. He explained that it had been developed following the council's 2023 biodiversity emergency declaration to guide nature recovery across the district. The plan had been prepared by the Open Space and Biodiversity Group, informed by public consultation, and set out a long-term vision focused on key landscape areas, habitat connectivity, partnership working and biodiversity enhancement. Cabinet was being asked to adopt the Strategy as a supporting document to the Local Plan, providing a framework to guide biodiversity enhancement and nature recovery across the district.

Councillor Dawkins, Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability, welcomed the proposed plan and clarified that the appendix formed part of the evidence base linked to the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy, with the numbering system indicating both the type of action and its intended delivery sequence.

Councillors debated the report and made comments, with clarification provided by the Tree and Woodland Officer and the Director of Place where necessary:

- Officers were thanked for their work producing the comprehensive and important plan.
- Surprise was expressed that the Broad Oak Reservoir, a significant project within the Local Plan, was not mentioned in the Biodiversity Plan, particularly given recent local water supply issues, and concerns that had been raised by parish councils, local groups and South East Water.
- It was noted that the reservoir could also have positive impacts, but it was felt that it should have been included and officers undertook to feed this back to the report author.
- Concern was expressed that the biodiversity and climate change were closely linked and that prolonged periods of drought were already impacting habitats and agriculture in the district.
- Residents often identified local authorities as contributing to biodiversity loss through maintenance practices, and staff training could help to assist this.
- The restoration of ancient ponds was welcomed, and officers were asked if the strategy would link to ongoing work with the water companies as there was a strong relationship between biodiversity enhancement, water management and measures such as riverbank habitat improvements.
- There was concern that the plan was not sufficiently integrated with the Local Plan and the relevant Local Plan policies did not currently reference the strategy which could weaken both documents.
- There were also questions on whether the identified funding was significant to deliver the 31 proposed actions.

- Could further measures be introduced to encourage biodiversity within resident gardens?
- The Director of Place confirmed that the strategic issues raised regarding links with the Local Plan would be discussed with the Local Plan team. In addition, officers were actively exploring funding opportunities through Section 106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- In addition, he confirmed that discussions with water companies were ongoing, including the establishment of a stakeholder group with South East Water.
- It was important to understand that the Plan should be viewed as a living document which could adapt to changing circumstances.
- The inclusion of coastal, marine and marshland within the strategy was welcomed.
- Achieving the proposed 20% Biodiversity Net Gain target was ambitious.
- The public speakers were thanked for their attendance.
- Future planting schemes should take account of seasonal conditions.
- In response to a question regarding the local government reorganisation proposals, the Director of Place confirmed that work on the Local Plan would continue in accordance with the current timetable.
- There was a request for OSBG to be involved in reviewing and feeding back comments at an early stage through the pre-application process in order to maximise opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.
- Future reviews should consider the potential impacts of major infrastructure projects, such as data centres.
- Comments made would be used by Cabinet during their deliberations on the proposed adoption of the Biodiversity Plan.

There were three options available to councillors.

i. To recommend the adoption of the Canterbury District Biodiversity Plan.
ii. To not recommend the adoption of the Canterbury District Biodiversity Plan.
iii. To request a redraft and further consultation.

It was proposed, seconded and when put to a vote agreed to:

RECOMMEND (to Cabinet) that the Canterbury district biodiversity plan be adopted.

Record of voting:
For the proposal (13): Councillors Beth Forrester, Rachel Carnac, Mike Bland, Dane Buckman, Jean Butcher, Pat Edwards, James Flanagan, Liz Harvey, Stuart Heaver, Tom Mellish, Peter Old, Alex Ricketts and David Thomas
Against the proposal (0):
Abstained/absent for the vote (0)

243 **CITY AND TOWN CENTRE STRATEGIES**

The Director of Place introduced the report and gave a short presentation on the next phase of the town centre strategies for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable. This comprised proposals for three new place panels, along with project directories consisting of current initiatives and project ideas for the future, and an action plan for projects the council hoped to deliver by April 2028.

He advised that, although the timetable for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) had changed, the proposed approach remained valid and would help strengthen the

three centres and prepare them for future governance arrangements. The report sought comments, particularly on the proposed place panels and their governance arrangements, before consideration by Cabinet.

At the end of the introduction, Councillor Chris Cornell, as Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration, addressed the committee supporting the proposals. He noted that the project directories and place panels would help provide a clear vision, encourage engagement and support investment in the district's town centres.

Councillors debated the report and made comments, with clarification provided by the Director of Place and the Senior Economic Development officer.

- Members expressed concern that the proposed recommendation did not provide a sufficiently robust approach to Place Panel membership. Particular reference was made to Herne Bay, where the lack of organisations such as a university or Business Improvement District might limit the pool of suitable members.
- Members noted that the establishment of the Place Panels presented an opportunity to adopt a positive and innovative approach. In respect of panel membership, it was suggested that a process similar to that used for the appointment of independent members to Whitstable Harbour Board be considered, whereby applications could be invited from interested individuals and community representatives, with appointments made through a formal recruitment process.
- It was noted that the Whitstable Harbour Board had attracted highly experienced and capable individuals via this method. Pride in Place panels had also used a similar approach effectively.
- The Senior Economic Development Officer advised that the public engagement process that had informed development of the strategies, had helped identify 25-35 possible panel members in each area. These participants had already given time and input into the development of the strategies and may wish to participate in the panels.
- A number of councillors shared similar concerns regarding the proposed selection process. It was also felt that the proposed criteria to identify panel members was over ambitious.
- Officers were urged not to make panel membership decisions without wider consultation.
- The public engagement process had resulted in involvement from individuals who would not normally participate in council consultation and engagement, and it was felt that the proposed arrangements narrowed participation rather than broadened it.
- It was suggested that many of the organisations identified from the previous consultation exercises were unlikely to come from the Herne Bay area.
- Concern was also raised about the proposed size of the Place Panels with and the risk of the panels becoming 'talking shops'.
- Although public engagement events had attracted a range of participants, some preferred to simply provide feedback rather than becoming more involved.
- Members asked how the current financial pressures at Herne Bay Sports Centre had informed the proposals. It was noted that the site was connected to the Kavanagh Cinema and former co-working hub.
- Several site-specific proposals were raised or commented on by councillors. The Chair advised that these be sent to the team by email so that they could be considered and responded to.

- Several proposals were dependent on Kent County Council and Southern Water and concern was expressed about their level of engagement.
- Local talent should be prioritised where possible in relation to mural and public art projects.
- There was a strong creative community within Herne Bay.
- The land train in the summer had been very popular, and it was hoped that this could return in future.
- The Director of Place reiterated that Cabinet would be asked to consider the overall governance arrangements, and not individual projects. The projects within the directory had originated from the consultation responses and engagement exercises and were intended to be dynamic working documents which would be reviewed. The Place Panels would be responsible for considering and prioritising projects.
- The Wincheap project in Canterbury directory seemed to focus mainly on transport and movement links and more emphasis on residents was needed.
- The Whitstable strategy seemed to focus heavily on tourism and visitors. It was felt that projects needed a stronger emphasis on the needs of its vibrant residential community and maritime heritage.
- Some councillors had been expecting to see more of a broad, strategic framework rather than project proposals, and asked why the project directories had been published before the Place Panels had been established.
- Councillors asked how they would relate to statutory authorities on issues such as highways, and officers reiterated that the proposed panel structure included both a councillor and officer from Kent County Council.
- It was noted that the volume of information presented to councillors for the meeting had been considerable.
- The Director of Place stated that the directories should be viewed as sitting alongside the strategies, place panels and action plan. The directories were intended to be live, dynamic working documents which would be consistently reviewed and updated.
- The Senior Economic Development officer explained that the directories had captured a range of ideas from the public engagement for the strategies. Council teams and some of its partners had also contributed ideas. The creation of the directories would avoid potentially valuable projects and information from being lost.
- Officers had developed an online tool to enable organisations and stakeholders to submit new projects.
- The online submission process needed to allow applicants to submit a project without being affiliated with an organisation.
- Elected members needed opportunities to comment on projects affecting their communities.
- Concerns were raised regarding vehicle movements associated with activities around Wimereux Square.
- Higher car park charges could deter visitors from visiting coastal areas.
- The former co-working hub in Herne Bay was raised as an example of a council-owned building that had remained vacant for a prolonged period.
- Reservations were expressed about extending the cycle hire schemes to Herne Bay due to the council's older demographic and the usage of mobility scooters.
- St George's toilet block needed to be brought back into use.
- The Place Panels would be strategic and advisory forums involving councillors, but also business and community representation. They were intended to inform and add value to council governance processes but would not replace formal decision-making.

- The Senior Economic Development Officer advised that the Chair of each Place Panel would be elected from the non-elected membership of the Panel, but councillors would have the opportunity to engage with panel discussions and projects.
- It was felt that there was significant overlap between Place Panels, future town councils and Community Governance Review discussions and there was potential for public confusion regarding the different governance structures. Officers advised that the Place Panels would inform and support decision making but would not replace formal decision-making arrangements.
- Not all councillors had been aware of the Place Panel proposals. The officer emphasised that each adopted strategy recommended the creation of place panels.
- The Canterbury strategy had generally achieved a balance between its role of major visitor destination and the needs of residents, but greater emphasis should be placed on connections between outer communities and the city centre, for example via the underpasses and other routes used by those living outside the city centre.
- Councillors would form part of the elected membership of the panels. The Terms of Reference would also allow panels to invite individuals with valuable local expertise and experience to attend for specific agenda items. This would include councillors who wished to engage with panel discussions and projects.
- Given the Government had not allocated Pride in Place funding to any of the three places, it was felt that there would be a lack of funding for the more ambitious ideas in the project directories and thought needed to be given to alternative funding sources.

It was proposed and seconded:

To Recommend (to Cabinet):

• That place panels are created for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable.
• That authority is delegated to the Director of Place, in consultation with the cabinet member, to invite identified local anchor institutions/partnerships and key community representatives to join the non-elected membership of the three panels.

To Note: • Project directories for Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable. • Canterbury City Council's City & Town Centre Strategies action plan (to April 2028).

Following discussions, the recommendation was amended by the original proposer. It was seconded and when put to a vote, it was AGREED to:

RECOMMEND (to Cabinet)

- That place panels are created for Canterbury, Herne Bay, and Whitstable.
- That authority is delegated to the Director of Place, in consultation with the cabinet member to invite public applications from institutions/ partnerships and community representatives to join the non-elected memberships of the three panels using a process similar to that used to appoint independent members of Whitstable Harbour Board and that they recommend panel members to Council or Appointments Committee (as relevant committee) to be ratified.

NOTED:
• Project directories for Canterbury, Herne Bay, and Whitstable.
• Canterbury City Council's City & Town Centre Strategies action plan (to April 2028).

Record of voting:
For the proposal (11): Councillors Beth Forrester, Rachel Carnac, Mike Bland, Dane Buckman, Jean Butcher, Pat Edwards, James Flanagan, Stuart Heaver, Tom Mellish, Alex Ricketts and David Thomas
Against the proposal (1): Councillor Liz Harvey
Abstained/absent for the vote (1): Councillor Peter Old

244 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

7pm, Thursday 8 October 2026.

245 **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS TO BE DEALT WITH IN PUBLIC**

There was no business under this item.

246 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

247 **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS WHICH FALLS UNDER THE EXEMPT PROVISIONS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 OR THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 OR BOTH**

There was no business under this item.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.05 pm

Overview Committee

8 October 2026

Subject: Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy (adoption)

Director and Head of Service:

Marie Royle, Director of People

Tracy Chambers, Head of Housing and Community

Officer:

Gary Peskett, Housing Strategy Manager

Cabinet Member:
Pip Hazelton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing

Key or Non Key decision: Key

Decision Issues:

These matters are within the authority of the Cabinet

Is any of the information exempt from publication:

This report is open to the public.

CCC ward(s): All

Summary and purpose of the report:

On 21 May 2026, Management Team gave permission to consult on the principles of the draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy.

The draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy are a light touch refresh of the documents adopted by the council on 7 December 2020. They need to be updated to comply with national housing policy, statute, regulatory requirements, and council policy. The amendments are relatively minor and most of the text has been carried over from the 2020 documents.

Overview Committee is asked for its views on the draft Tenancy Strategy and Policy, which will be fed back to Cabinet at the end of the consultation process.

To Note:

The draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy and provide feedback on their contents.

Next stage in process:

Cabinet will consider Overview Committee's feedback as part of the wider consultation results when making its final decision on the Draft Housing Strategy on 7 December 2026.

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1. Introduction

The council has a statutory duty to produce a Tenancy Strategy to guide Registered Providers (RPs) in the development of tenancy policies for their housing stock in the district.

The draft Tenancy Policy is the council's response as an RP to the Tenancy Strategy.

The public consultations for the Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy ran in tandem for 12 weeks from 15 June to 7 September.

2. Detail

Tenancy Strategy

The Tenancy Strategy is written from the council's strategic perspective as the Local Housing Authority, rather than as a social housing landlord, and is primarily aimed at RPs and organisations that offer housing advice and support, such as Canterbury Housing Advice Centre and Citizens' Advice Bureau.

RPs include the City Council and housing associations, not-for-profit and for-profit organisations.

The Localism Act 2011, requires the Tenancy Strategy to address specific matters which RPs should consider when formulating tenancy policies for their own properties:

a) The types of tenancies granted

b) The circumstances in which a particular type of tenancy is granted

c) Where tenancies are granted for a specified term, the lengths of the terms granted

d) The circumstances in which a further tenancy is granted; where an existing tenancy is ending.

The Tenancy Strategy expects RPs to publish clear and accessible policies to inform their tenants and staff of their approach to tenancy management, based on the regulatory standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing.

Tenancy Policy

The draft Tenancy Policy is the council's response as an RP to the Tenancy Strategy and explains the Council's approach to the types of tenancy it grants, the principles that guide how tenancies are managed, and how the Council meets its regulatory duties under the Regulator of Social Housing's consumer standards. It is aimed at council officers, councillors, tenants and groups that offer advice and support.

This policy sets out principles, not operational procedures, which are contained in the Tenant Handbook and in internal landlord service procedures.

3. Relevant Council policy, strategies or budgetary documents

Corporate Plan 2024 to 2028

Housing strategy 2026 to 2030

Housing Asset Management Strategy 2025 to 2029

Housing allocations policy

Anti-social behaviour policy

Neighbourhood noise policy statement

Compensation and redress policy

Consumer Standard Improvement Plan June 2026

4. Consultation planned or undertaken

(a) General consultations

The consultations for the Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy ran in tandem for 12 weeks

from 15 June to 7 September 2026.

Hundreds of invitations were sent to organisations and stakeholder groups, including RPs, neighbouring local authorities, representatives of the property management and construction industries, the voluntary sector and local representative groups and was available on the council's website.

Unfortunately, only three responses were received. The analysis of the results of the consultation for the Tenancy Strategy is Appendix 5 and for the Tenancy Strategy is Appendix 6.

(b) Tenant engagement feedback

The Residents Engagement Panel was consulted on 16 June 2026 and its feedback is in Appendix 6.

The consultation responses do not merit fundamental amendments to either document but will be fully considered for opportunities to improve the text of the draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy.

5. Options available with reasons for suitability

1. Recommend that Cabinet resolves to adopt the draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy.

   This is the most suitable option because the draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy closely adhere to the relevant legislation and guidance that set out the rights and responsibilities of social landlords and their tenants.

2. Request amendments to the draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy prior to approval by Cabinet.

3. Refuse to recommend the draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy.

   This is the least suitable option because the council will have to rely on the existing documents which are now out of date.

6. Reasons for supporting option recommended, with risk assessment

Option 1 is recommended because the draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy fully reflect current legislation, guidance and regulation relating to the rights and responsibilities of social landlords and their tenants.

7. Implications

(a) Financial

None identified.

(b) Legal

The draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy explain the legal rights and responsibilities of social landlords and their tenants, which are contained in relevant legislation.

(c) Equalities

The draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy reflect landlord and tenant law, the council's tenancy agreement and the Housing Allocations Scheme 2023. They are based on objective criteria that apply to all social housing tenants and seek to ensure equality of treatment and eliminate discrimination and harassment.

(d) Environmental including carbon emissions and biodiversity

It is expected that the draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy will have a neutral impact on carbon emissions and biodiversity.

Contact Officer: Gary Peskett, Housing Strategy Manager

Background documents and appendices

Appendix 1 - Climate Change Impact Assessment

Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 3 – Draft Tenancy Strategy

Appendix 4 – Draft Tenancy Policy

Appendix 5 – Draft Tenancy Strategy consultation analysis

Appendix 6 – Draft Tenancy Policy consultation analysis and Residents Engagement Panel notes of 16 June 2026

Additional document(s) containing information exempt from publication:

No

Appendix 1 Climate Change Impact Assessment (Checklist)

Please provide an assessment of the impact of the proposal under each of the headings below. If none, please say so.

1. **Climate Change impacts**

Topic	**Impact of proposal** Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	**Explanation of impact** If you have any relevant data, please include that in the explanation and reference the source.	**Mitigation**
Impact on the council's target of being carbon neutral by 2030 This applies to emissions of carbon dioxide as a direct result of our **own** activities and services. Please consider the whole life impact of your proposals	Neutral	No impact is anticipated	n/a
Impact on carbon emissions in the Canterbury district This applies to the carbon dioxide emissions in the district as a result of your proposal. Please consider the whole life impact of your proposals.	Neutral	No impact is anticipated	n/a
Emission of other climate changing gases including methane, CFCs, nitrous oxide	Neutral	No impact is anticipated	n/a

2. Adaptation to climate change - Impact on our resilience to the effects of climate change

The greatest risks posed by climate change to the UK are:

- Flooding and coastal changes including erosion from extreme events
- Risks to health caused by high temperatures
- Water shortages and drought

- Risk to natural environments & services - landscape, wildlife, pollinators, timber etc
- Risk to food production & trade
- Emergence of new pests and diseases affecting people, plants & animals

What impact do your proposals have on our ability to resist or tackle these problems in the future?

Impact of proposal Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	**Explanation of impact**	**Mitigation**
Neutral	No impact is anticipated	n/a

3. Further assessment work

Is a further more detailed assessment required at a later stage of this proposal? If yes, please give a brief description No

Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment

Please be aware that in order to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010, this document will be made available to the public.

You should treat this as a live document and keep it under continuous review. You should do this by recording any issues you identify, along with any actions you take to minimise their impact.

Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment guidance to help you in completing this form.

For the purposes of this form, we refer to your policy, function, project or service as a proposal.

We have contact with two groups who can be useful sounding boards as part of any consultation or pre consultation engagement. They are the Disability Advisory Board (DAP) and the Ethnic Minority Independent Council (EMIC), both are local groups. You can contact Matthew Archer for further advice.

Date of initial assessment	21 September 2026
Division	Housing and Community
Proposal to be assessed	Draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy
New or existing policy or function?	Existing
External (i.e. public-facing) or internal?	External
Statutory or non-statutory?	Statutory
Your name	Gary Peskett
Your job title	Housing Strategy Manager
Your contact telephone number	01227910574
Decision maker (e.g.Community Committee, Management Team etc.)	Cabinet
Estimated proposal deadline	7 December 2026

Please outline your proposal, including: ● Aims and objectives ● Key actions ● Expected outcomes ● Who will be affected and how ● How many people will be affected	The council has a statutory duty to produce a Tenancy Strategy to guide Registered Providers (RPs) in the development of tenancy policies for their housing stock in the district. The draft Tenancy Policy is the council's response as an RP to the Tenancy Strategy. The Tenancy Strategy is written from the council's strategic perspective as the Local Housing Authority, rather than as a social housing landlord, and is primarily aimed at RPs and organisations that offer housing advice and

	support, such as Canterbury Housing Advice Centre and Citizens' Advice Bureau. The Localism Act 2011, requires the Tenancy Strategy to address specific matters which RPs should consider when formulating tenancy policies for their own properties: a) The types of tenancies granted b) The circumstances in which a particular type of tenancy is granted c) Where tenancies are granted for a specified term, the lengths of the terms granted d) The circumstances in which a further tenancy is granted; where an existing tenancy is ending. The draft Tenancy Policy is the council's response as an RP to the Tenancy Strategy and explains the Council's approach to the types of tenancy it grants, the principles that guide how tenancies are managed, and how the Council meets its regulatory duties under the Regulator of Social Housing's consumer standards. It is aimed at council officers, councillors, tenants and groups that offer advice and support.
What relevant data or information is currently available about the customers who may use this service or could be affected? Please give details; for example "x% of customers are female" or "x% of customers are aged over 60"	The council holds extensive information on its 5,000 tenants.

Is the decision relevant to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty, which are listed below? Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC's PSED Technical Guidance		
Aim	Yes/No	Explanation
Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Yes	The Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy reflect landlord and tenant law and the tenancy agreement, which prohibit certain behaviours.
Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes	All council tenants share the same rights and responsibilities under statute. Access to the council's rented homes is controlled by the objective criteria contained in the Housing Allocations Scheme 2023, which is a related policy document.

Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	No	

Assess the relevance of the proposal to people with different protected characteristics, and assess the impact of the proposal on people with different protected characteristics.
Your explanation should make it clear who the assessment applies to within each protected characteristic. For example, a proposal may have high relevance for young people but low relevance for older people; it may have a positive impact on women but a neutral impact on men.

Protected characteristic	Relevance to proposal High/ Medium/ Low/None	Impact of proposal Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	Explanation
Age	None	Neutral	The Tenancy Strategy applies to all Registered Providers and the Tenancy Policy applies to all council housing tenants.
Disability	None	Neutral	As above
Gender reassignment	None	Neutral	As above
Marriage and civil partnership	None	Neutral	As above
Pregnancy and maternity	None	Neutral	As above
Race	None	Neutral	As above
Religion or belief	None	Neutral	As above
Sex	None	Neutral	As above
Sexual orientation	None	Neutral	As above
Other groups: for example – low income/ people living in rural areas/ single parents/ carers and the cared for/ past offenders/ long-term unemployed/ housebound/ history of domestic abuse/ people who don't speak English	None	Neutral	As above

as a first language/ People without computer access etc.			

Are you going to make any changes to your proposal as a result of these findings, in order to mitigate any potential negative impacts identified? If yes, what are they? If no, why not?	No
Is there any potential negative impact which cannot be minimised or removed? If so, can it be justified? (for example, on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for another protected characteristic)	No

What additional information would increase your understanding about the potential impact of this proposal?	None

If a consultation exercise is required as part of your proposal, please complete the consultation planning form on iCan.

Please update the section below if:
- You have amended your proposal
- You have new information
- You have undertaken consultation

Date of revised assessment	Click here to enter a date.
Have you made any changes to your initial assessment? If so, please give brief details	
Did you undertake consultation? – if yes, give date and the consultation results:	The consultations for the Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy ran in tandem for 12 weeks from 15 June to 7 September 2026. Hundreds of invitations were sent to organisations and stakeholder groups, including RPs, neighbouring local authorities, representatives of the property management and construction industries, the voluntary sector and local representative groups and was available on the council's website. Unfortunately, only three responses were received. The analysis is contained in Append 5 of the report.

	The Residents Engagement Panel was consulted on 16 June 2026. A copy of the minutes is attached as Appendix 6.
Do you have new information which reveals any difference in views across the protected characteristics?	No
Can any new conclusions be drawn as to how the proposal will affect people with different protected characteristics?	No
Are you going to make any changes to your proposal as a result of these findings, in order to mitigate any potential negative impacts identified? If yes, what are they? If no, why not?	The consultation results will be fully considered for ways to improve the text of the draft Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy.
Is there any potential negative impact which cannot be minimised or removed? If so, can it be justified? (for example, on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for another protected characteristic)	No

Should you need to revisit your assessment more than once, please ensure that you provide details of any changes or new information and the date these amendments were made

Appendix 3

Draft Tenancy Strategy

June 2026

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1. Introduction

The council has a statutory duty to produce a Tenancy Strategy to guide registered providers of social housing (RPs) in the development of tenancy policies for their housing stock in the district.

Canterbury City Council's Tenancy Strategy was revised in April 2026, superseding the Tenancy Strategy of 7 December 2020. It needed updating because the environment in which social housing operates has changed dramatically since 2020.

It is written from the council's strategic perspective as the Local Housing Authority, rather than as a social housing landlord.

The situation facing RPs is challenging. Expectations of social landlords have increased, with updated regulatory standards, and greater prominence for the Regulator of Social Housing and the results of their inspections. There is more emphasis on improving the quality of housing management and maintenance, on healthy homes, fire safety and compliance, based on sound information about the housing stock and tenants, and by listening to the tenants' voice.

High property prices and rents in Canterbury District mean that many local households cannot afford to rent or buy a home on the open market. Affordable housing is in short supply: accommodation provided by the council and RPs makes up about 11% of all homes in the district, so many people who need an affordable home cannot get one.

There is considerable political and financial support nationally and locally to build more affordable housing. The council is making strenuous efforts to increase the number of new homes it owns and to rationalise its existing residential portfolio by disposing of properties that cannot be brought up to modern standards at reasonable cost.

The council has also stopped offering Flexible Tenancies in the light of case law and legal advice, although other RPs may choose to continue.

The Government would like to extend the Renters Rights Act to the social housing sector, but first the Regulator of Social Housing must amend the Tenancy Standard to clarify the expectations of RPs under the new system. This change will require statutory consultation, and it is not yet known when the new system will apply to social tenancies. Therefore, the Tenancy Strategy reflects the current legal position and will be amended in due course.

2. Purpose

2.1 Statutory requirements

This strategy meets the council's obligations under the Localism Act 2011, which requires local authorities to develop a Tenancy Strategy that sets out the matters which registered providers of social housing (RPs) should have regard to when formulating their tenancy policies for their own stock, especially:

a) The types of tenancies granted

b) The circumstances in which a particular type of tenancy is granted

c) Where tenancies are granted for a specified term, the lengths of the terms granted

d) The circumstances in which a further tenancy is granted; where an existing tenancy is ending.

2.2 The council's expectations

Tenancy policies are a regulatory requirement under the Tenancy Standard rather than statutory.

The council expects RPs to publish clear and accessible tenancy policies outlining their approach to tenancy management that:

e) Comply with the regulatory standards for landlords set by the Regulator of Social Housing using its powers under the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.

f) Cooperate with the council to address local housing needs.

g) Ensure that tenancy policies do not adversely affect homelessness.

h) Balance the interests of applicants for housing, tenants and landlords.

i) Facilitate tenant mobility to make best use of the affordable housing stock.

j) Create and maintain mixed and sustainable communities.

k) Support vulnerable people to sustain their tenancies and prevent unnecessary evictions.

l) Ensure that tenants abide by the terms of their tenancies, backed by appropriate sanctions when necessary.

m) Combat tenancy fraud.

(n) Contain simple and accessible appeals and complaints processes.

(o) Explain the advice and assistance they will give to tenants about finding alternative accommodation if another tenancy is not granted.

(p) Set out their policy on granting discretionary succession rights, taking account of the needs of vulnerable household members.

3. The intended audience of the Tenancy Strategy

All RPs with homes in the district, including the City Council and housing associations, not-for-profit and for-profit organisations.

The Tenancy Strategy is reviewed, modified or replaced from time to time and is published on the council's website. A copy is available at the council's principal office for inspection at all reasonable hours, without charge, by members of the public, who will be provided with a copy on request.

This Tenancy Strategy is supplemented by a Tenancy Policy for the council's own homes that explains how it will put the principles of this strategy into practice.

4. Links to other strategies

The Tenancy Strategy has a particular function, and does not cover the whole range of strategic housing issues, which are addressed in other strategies with which the Tenancy Strategy is aligned:

- Corporate Plan 2024 to 2028 | Canterbury City Council
- Adopted Local Plan | Canterbury City Council
- New Local Plan | Canterbury City Council
- Housing homelessness and rough sleeping policy 2018-23
- Draft Housing Strategy 2026 to 2030
- HRa Buisness Plan 2019
- Housing allocations policy 2023
- Tenancy strategy 2020
- Tenancy policy 2020

5. Statement of principles

The council is keen to ensure that the types of tenancies granted by RPs are suitable for local housing needs, create and support sustainable communities and ensure that vulnerable tenants have the level of stability they need, while promoting mobility and ensuring that tenants live in accommodation of an appropriate size.

RPs are expected to co-operate with the council's strategic housing functions and assist the council to fulfil its duties to meet local housing need, including assistance with homelessness duties, and by meeting obligations in nominations agreements. Homes must be allocated in a fair and transparent way that meets all legislative and regulatory requirements, considering the needs of tenants and prospective tenants, preferably using Kent Homechoice.

RPs shall offer tenancies and terms of occupation that are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of individual households, the sustainability of the community, and the efficient use of their housing stock. They must meet all applicable statutory and legal requirements in relation to the form and use of tenancy agreements and terms of occupation.

6. Introductory Tenancies

The council recommends that all new tenants should be granted an Introductory Tenancy, sometimes also referred to as probationary or provisional tenancies, for an initial period of 12 months, which can be extended by up to another six months.

Before the start of the Introductory Tenancy, prospective tenants should be told:

- That they do not have the same rights as Secure or Flexible tenants; for example, they cannot:
    - Apply for the Right to Buy their home or
    - Carry out a mutual exchange with other tenants.
- Whether they will be granted a Secure, Assured or Flexible Tenancy at the end of the Introductory period.
- The reasons why the landlord may refuse to grant a tenancy at the end of the Introductory Tenancy, such as:
    - The property is no longer suitable for the tenant, and an alternative affordable home is being offered that is in a location and of a type and size that will be more appropriate for the tenant in the foreseeable future.
    - The tenant's financial circumstances have improved to a level where other forms of tenure could be affordable, such as shared ownership or open market purchase.
    - The conduct of the tenant is such that they would not be accepted onto the council's Housing Needs Register, including rent arrears or other housing debts and their history of addressing these issues.
    - The tenants have breached the terms of their tenancy or have been involved in criminal activity or anti-social behaviour.
    - The tenancy was obtained fraudulently.
- The process for reviewing tenancies and the factors that will be considered.
- The process for appealing against a decision not to grant a further tenancy.

The council expects Registered Providers to provide appropriate tenancy support to help vulnerable people sustain their tenancies but also expects providers to take robust measures to deal with tenants who commit anti-social behaviour to protect individuals and communities.

7. Assured Tenancies

Following the introduction of the Housing Act 1985, social housing tenants were offered an Assured or Secure Tenancy, which granted them a home for life.

The Renters' Rights Act 2025 creates a simpler, more secure Assured Tenancy structure and strengthens tenants' rights. Implementing the Renters' Rights Act: Social Housing - GOV.UK

From 1 May 2026, the changes will apply to:

- The private rented sector – tenancies that are not within the definition of social housing Assured Tenancies such as market rent homes.
- Assured Tenancies of social housing where the landlord is not an RP.

Until October 2027, for social housing Assured Tenancies, RPs must continue to follow the existing rules that were in place prior to 1 May 2026.

From October 2027, the Renters' Rights Act will apply to social housing Assured Tenancies provided by RPs.

The Act introduces a new tenancy system, including:

- Assured Shorthold Tenancies (ASTs) will become Assured periodic (rolling) tenancies.
- All new Assured Tenancies will be periodic from the start.
- Section 21 evictions will be abolished.
- Updated grounds for possession will apply.
- RPs will be required to provide tenants with certain information in writing at the outset of tenancies. The government will lay secondary legislation setting out what this must include.

All existing social housing Assured Tenancies provided by RPs will move to Assured periodic from October 2027.

From October 2027, new section 13A of the Housing Act 1988 will apply to rent increases for social housing Assured Tenancies held with RPs. This will allow landlords to use the section 13A process to increase rent at any point in the first 52 weeks of a tenancy, and then no more than once every 52 weeks after that, provided they give at least one month's notice. Unlike private landlords, RPs will continue to be able to use rent review clauses to increase rent, as they do now, and where a rent review clause is used there will be no requirement to serve a section 13A notice.

Annual limits on rent increases will continue to be set under the Regulator of Social Housing's Rent Standard, not through the Renters' Rights Act.

To support the October 2027 changes, the government has published a consultation on a new Tenure Direction to the Regulator of Social Housing, which explains what the Regulator must consider when setting its standards. RPs must then comply with the standards the Regulator sets and deliver the outcomes they contain.

The current Tenure Direction needs updating to reflect the Renters' Rights Act changes to the tenancy framework. The Tenure Direction will ensure the regulatory framework reflects the Renters' Rights Act and support implementation.

The consultation will run for 8 weeks, from 2 April 2026 to 28 May 2026. Subject to the outcome of this consultation, the Government intends to issue the new Tenure Direction to the Regulator by October 2026. The Regulator will then consult on and publish any updates to the regulatory standards needed ahead of the October 2027 changes.

While the Renters' Rights Act will apply to landlords using the assured tenancy framework, the regulatory standards, set by the Regulator of Social Housing, apply to all social housing landlords registered with the Regulator, including Canterbury City Council.

Although the current Government guidance refers to ASTs, it is not yet clear whether this change will apply demoted tenancies and introductory tenancies.

Therefore, the Tenancy Strategy reflects the current legal position and will be amended when the revised Tenancy Standard is published.

8. Flexible Tenancies

Fixed term Flexible Tenancies were introduced by the Localism Act 2011 with the aim of helping RPs to make best use of their stock and respond to changing housing needs.

Fixed term Flexible Tenancies enable landlords at the end of a specified period to review tenants' conduct of their tenancy, their personal circumstances and to identify the most suitable housing option for them. This may include moving to another affordable rented property more suited to their needs, shared ownership or home ownership. This enables Registered Providers to ensure that best use is made of the limited housing stock in the district, whilst considering tenants' personal situation.

The council used to grant Flexible Tenancies, but in 2021 legal advice was sought on their use because of emerging case law. As a result, the council ended the use of Flexible Tenancies.

If RPs use Flexible Tenancies, the council expects the following factors to be considered:

- Flexible Tenancies should be for a minimum of five years, with consideration given for longer terms in appropriate circumstances.
- Longer Flexible Tenancies should be considered for families with young children, older households and for vulnerable tenants who would benefit from increased stability.
- Shorter tenancies of two years should be used only in exceptional circumstances, for example where accommodation is intended to be short term, or there have been significant previous tenancy breaches, or there are concerns about affordability. This should be clearly explained in their tenancy policies
- It is essential that all prospective tenants understand the type of tenancy they are being offered before they are obliged to accept it.
- All prospective tenants should be given clear information before the start of a tenancy, about the tenancy type, the reasons why that tenancy is being offered, the rights and responsibilities specific to the tenancy and the process for reviewing Flexible Tenancies.
- In most cases it is expected that a further Flexible Tenancy will be granted for the same property at the end of the fixed term.
- Decisions to end a Flexible Tenancy by accelerated legal proceedings should be proportionate and clear guidance should be given to tenants on the process, how to access independent advice, and how to secure suitable alternative accommodation.

In some circumstances a Flexible Tenancy will not be suitable, and a lifetime Assured or Secure tenancy is more appropriate, for example:

- Housing designated for older people, or
- General needs housing where the occupant will be 60+ years of age.
- Housing designated for vulnerable people such as those with learning or physical disabilities, or enduring mental health issues. The exception to this will be where the accommodation is intended as move-on to more permanent housing or where specific adaptations may not be required long term.

This list is not exhaustive and there may be other circumstances where a Flexible Tenancy may not be appropriate.

9. Reviewing Flexible Tenancies

RPs should explain in their tenancy policies the process for reviewing Flexible Tenancies, detailing the frequency of review and what factors will be considered.

The council recommends that Flexible Tenancies are reviewed between six and twelve months before the end of the term. The review should be based on objective criteria to establish how the tenant has conducted their tenancy, how the tenant has managed their

property, whether the property is still suitable to their needs, and whether the tenant has the financial means to move to alternative accommodation.

If the circumstances of the household are broadly similar to those at the time of the original letting, there should be a presumption that a Flexible Tenancy will be renewed. Examples of significant changes to a tenant's circumstances include:

- The property is no longer suitable for the tenant, and an alternative affordable home is being offered that is in a location and of a type and size that will be more appropriate for the tenant in the foreseeable future.
- The tenant's financial circumstances have improved to a level where other forms of tenure could be affordable, such as shared ownership or open market purchase.
- The conduct of the tenant is such that they would not be accepted onto the council's Housing Needs Register, including rent arrears or other housing debts and their history of addressing these issues.
- The tenants have breached the terms of their tenancy or have been involved in criminal activity or anti-social behaviour.
- The tenancy was obtained fraudulently.

RPs should ensure that they have sufficient resources and trained staff to operate the review process efficiently and effectively.

10. Ending Flexible Tenancies

Where a tenancy is to be ended without a breach of tenancy, reasonable efforts should be made to offer suitable alternative accommodation, and consideration given to extending the tenancy until alternative suitable accommodation can be made available.

RPs should give at least 6 months' notice to a tenant where there is an intention not to renew a tenancy.

The reason for ending the tenancy should be clearly set out and information provided to the tenant on how to appeal. The appeal process should be a clearly publicised, transparent process.

When ending a tenancy, it is essential that landlords take effective steps to avoid homelessness by working with the council at the earliest opportunity, so that tenants understand their housing options and organisations act together to avoid or relieve homelessness before the tenancy comes to an end. The tenant may obtain free, independent advice by contacting housingadvice@canterbury.gov.uk

Registered Providers must ensure that tenancy agreements for Flexible Tenancies and their processes for ending tenancies fully comply with statute and case law, which can prove complex.

The council also expects that procedures for bringing tenancies to an end will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

11. Survivors of Domestic Abuse

The council expects RPs to co-operate with other agencies tackling domestic abuse and enable tenants to access appropriate support and advice.

The Secure Tenancies (Victims of Domestic Abuse) Act 2018 requires all Local Authorities and RPs, when rehousing an existing Secure Tenant who needs to move or has recently moved from their social home to escape domestic abuse, to grant a Secure Tenancy for their new home.

The council wants to ensure that survivors of domestic abuse will not fear losing security of tenure and to provide families with a stable new home. The impact of this on the turnover of

social housing stock should be minimal and should be offset by the subsequent eviction of the perpetrator from the former home, thereby releasing another affordable property.

12. Tenancy Management

The council expects RPs to provide effective Tenancy Management services, including:

- Effectively managing all conditions of the tenancy agreement.
- Ensuring that social housing tenants behave appropriately and in accordance with their responsibilities.
- Ensure that the statutory rights of tenants are respected and managed effectively.
- Managing tenancy changes, mutual exchanges and the Right to Buy process.
- Dealing effectively with the impacts on local communities of anti-social behaviour, nuisance, alcohol or drug misuse.
- Tackling tenancy fraud.
- Supporting tenants to maintain their tenancy or licence. If a tenancy or licence ends, they must offer affected tenants advice and assistance.
- Assisting in reducing the risk of homelessness.
- Supporting the development of sustainable neighbourhoods.

13. Tenancy Sustainment

It is important that Registered Providers ensure that tenants who are vulnerable or who need additional support to sustain their tenancy, can access appropriate services to enable them to remain in their home, their community and their support networks, reducing the risk of homelessness through loss of tenancy.

Tenants who are required to move must be provided with timely advice and assistance about housing options before the tenancy or licence ends.

14. Tenant Involvement

All RPs are encouraged to ensure regulatory requirements are met and to promote meaningful, inclusive tenant involvement. All policies and procedures must be based on a sound knowledge of their tenants and their views. RPs should recognise this is an opportunity to continuously improve the quality of services, improve the quality of neighbourhoods and ensure they meet the needs and aspirations of their tenants.

15. Making best use of social housing

Tenants may need to move home, and the council supports household mobility. This can be for many reasons, including poor health, to reduce overcrowding and to address under occupation.

The council would like to see RPs develop proactive tenancy policies and services that provide practical support to help people living in social housing to “rightsize”, or to explore opportunities for home ownership or other tenures, helping to free up homes to make best use of their housing stock.

16. Social Housing Fraud

Affordable housing is a limited resource, and therefore great importance should be placed on tackling social housing fraud. RPs are expected to prevent and uncover fraud, and work with the council and its partners to both address this issue and share good practice.

17. Rents

RPs must comply with the Regulator of Social Housing’s Rent Standard and Guidance. It contains the outcomes RPs are required to deliver in setting and increasing rents for their

social housing in line with Government policy in the Policy statement on rents for social housing.

18. Service Charges

Service charges are not part of the same legislative and regulatory framework as rent but are subject to statute and extensive case law.

It is expected that RPs will endeavour to keep service charges to a minimum and that increases are within the guideline limit of CPI plus 1% per annum.

It is essential to ensure that all service charges are eligible for Housing Benefit, otherwise the service charges can be too expensive for lower income households.

The council expects that RPs will:

- Have a reasonable and transparent method of calculating service charges that reflect the service provided to tenants.
- Ensure that services and works are of a reasonable standard.
- Supply tenants with clear information on how service charges are set.
- Identify service charges separately from the rent charge.
- Where new or extended services are introduced, and an additional charge may need to be made, the Registered Provider will consult with tenants.
- If actual expenditure is less than the current charge, the service charge will be reduced accordingly.

19. Mutual Exchanges

Mutual exchanges are a valuable way to help tenants to improve their housing situation and for landlords to make more effective use of their housing stock.

RPs are expected to offer a mutual exchange service which:

- Allows tenants who may be eligible for mutual exchange, whether by a statutory right or by a policy of the RP, to easily access details of available matches without payment of a fee.
- Publicise the availability of mutual exchange services.
- Provide support for accessing mutual exchange services to tenants who might otherwise be unable to use them.
- Ensure that tenants who are mutually exchanging are aware of the implications for their tenancy, including:
    - Changes to their Secure or Assured status.
    - Differences in rent levels between Social Rent and Affordable Rent.
    - Any gain or loss of the Right to Buy.

The introduction of Affordable Rents and Flexible Tenancies has implications for tenants who wish to exercise their right to mutual exchange. It created a new mechanism for mutual exchanges to protect certain lifetime tenants. If Assured Lifetime and Secure Lifetime tenants who were granted their tenancy before the 1 April 2012 exchange with a Flexible Tenant, then a new Tenancy is issued to each party, and the tenant is granted another Secure or Assured tenancy. The Flexible Tenant is granted a new tenancy, but there is no particular provision regarding its status. It will be a matter for the RP to decide what type of tenancy to offer.

The council encourages RPs to grant security equal to that which is being given up, even if they are not obliged to do so, to ensure that mutual exchanges remain an effective tool.

20. Succession

Under the Housing Act 1985, a range of family members were able to succeed to a tenancy on the death of a Secure Tenant, including spouses, partners, civil partners, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces and adopted children.

The Localism Act 2011 amended the succession framework, whereby there can only be one succession, and when one joint tenant dies, this counts as the one succession. Under the Localism Act, Secure Tenancies that started after 1 April 2012 are limited to the succession of the spouse or civil partners as an automatic right.

RPs can make express provision in the tenancy agreement to expand the group of family members that can succeed. However, given the level of housing need in the district, the council does not support this, except in exceptional circumstances. Successions to tenancies should therefore be applied in accordance with legislation and government guidance applicable at the time of the succession application.

Following the death of a tenant, if there is someone living in the home as their principal residence, who is not entitled to succeed, the RP should:

- Provide housing advice and assistance to the person on their options.
- Consider the interests of vulnerable people and make sure that their policies offer appropriate protection.
- Where appropriate, offer alternative accommodation that meets the household's needs.

If a person succeeds to a tenancy but needs to move, reference should be made to the council's Housing allocations policy for more details on help available.

21. Use of the private rented sector

If RPs use homes in the private rented sector to provide accommodation, the council prefers:

- Rents no higher than Local Housing Allowance rates.
- If this is not possible, an affordability check to ensure that a tenancy is sustainable.
- Tenancies granted for a minimum term of two years, preferably longer.
- Provision of good quality housing management and maintenance services.
- The property to be in a good state of repair and fit for purpose.
- A process to ensure that the tenant understands their housing options when the tenancy comes to an end.
- That the use of the private rented sector does not adversely affect homelessness.

22. Tenancy Policies

All RPs shall publish clear and accessible policies that meet the requirements of the Tenancy Standard and this strategy. These policies should be available online and provided on request to any resident. The council will publish its own tenancy policy in its role as a social housing landlord.

23. Review

This Tenancy Strategy was reviewed in April 2026. It will be reviewed as changes in legislation, regulation or guidance may dictate. It is likely that this will be necessary when the Renters Rights Act affects social housing tenancies.

Minor changes which do not make a significant difference to service provision will be made to the document by delegated authority to the Head of Housing & Community.

Significant changes will be taken through the council's committee process.

24. Equality and diversity

The council is committed to ensure that this strategy does not impact disproportionately on different equality groups. This strategy has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA). All RPs are expected to undertake and publish an EIA of their own tenancy policies.

Appendix 4

Draft Tenancy Policy

June 2026

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1. Introduction

Canterbury City Council ("the Council") is a local authority registered provider of social housing. This Tenancy Policy is the council's response to the Tenancy Strategy 2026 and explains the types of tenancy it grants, the principles that guide tenancy management, and how the Council meets its regulatory duties under the Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) consumer standards.

This policy replaces the Tenancy Policy adopted on 7 December 2020. Many aspects of this new Tenancy Policy are unchanged from the 2020 edition, but it has been updated to reflect changes to legislation, regulation, national and local housing policy including:

- Updated regulatory requirements, particularly the strengthened Tenancy Standard and consumer regulation framework, which came into in force from April 2024, with more emphasis on transparency, fairness, data-led assurance and demonstrable outcomes for tenants

- The Council's decision to cease granting Flexible Tenancies, which now exist only as legacy arrangements for a small number of households and are governed through Annex A of this policy; and

This policy is part of a suite of aligned housing strategies and policies that collectively set out how the Council manages its social homes. Documents can be viewed on the Council's Housing Plans webpage https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/strategies-and-policies/housing-plans

Operational processes are explained in separate procedural documents, service standards and the Tenant Handbook, which form the detailed operational framework supporting the principles in this document.

This Tenancy Policy is intended to be accessible, transparent and clear for tenants, staff, councillors and regulators. It explains what tenants and prospective tenants can expect from the Council as a landlord and the principles that guide tenancy related decisions.

2. Purpose

This Tenancy Policy sets out the principles that guide the Council's approach to:

- The types of tenancy it offers

- Granting, managing, altering and ending tenancies

- The rights and security associated with each type of tenancy

- Making decisions affecting a tenancy that take account of the need to provide secure homes, support vulnerable households, create and support sustainable communities

- Acting fairly, transparently and consistently in all tenancy-related decisions

- Complying with current legislation, regulatory standards, Government guidance and the Council's Tenancy Strategy

- Ensuring tenants receive the level of security appropriate to their circumstances

- Making the best use of the Council's limited housing stock, supporting effective occupation, household mobility, and information about housing options to meet identified needs

- Helping tenants to understand their rights, responsibilities and the Council's expectations, supported by clear information in the Tenancy Agreement and the Tenant Handbook

- Discretionary decisions (such as succession, assignment, and right-sizing moves) are taken with consideration to fairness, vulnerability, proportionality and the efficient use of the limited supply of council homes

- Ensuring that tenancy related decisions in age restricted accommodation have particular regard to its purpose, and the needs and expectations of existing residents

- The expectation that each property is occupied only by the approved household

- Ensuring that no person may live at a Council property on a permanent or long-term basis unless they were a member of the approved household at the start of the tenancy or the Council has given written permission

- Ensuring that any request for additional household members considers whether the proposed occupation will overcrowd the property and whether it is compatible with the nature and purpose of the accommodation, including any age restriction

- Identifying and tackling tenancy fraud, unlawful occupation and misuse of properties

- Enforcing tenancy conditions in ways that are always lawful, proportionate and aligned with the Council's strategies for community safety and neighbourhood management

- Ensuring that in exercising its duties as a landlord, all decisions by the Council comply with the Regulator of Social Housing's regulatory standards.

3. Scope

This policy focuses on the residential properties owned and managed by Canterbury City Council in the HRA and their occupants.

It does not apply to:

- The allocation of social housing, which is covered by the Housing Allocation Scheme 2023
- Homelessness duties and the use of private rented sector accommodation
- Leasehold or shared ownership accommodation
- Operational tenancy management processes, which are governed by separate internal procedures and the Tenant Handbook

4. Background

The situation facing RPs is challenging. Expectations of social landlords have increased, with updated regulatory standards, and greater prominence for the Regulator of Social Housing and the results of their inspections. There is more emphasis on improving the quality of housing management and maintenance, on healthy homes, fire safety and compliance, based on sound information about the housing stock and tenants, and by listening to the tenants' voice.

High property prices and rents in Canterbury District mean that many local households cannot afford to rent or buy a home on the open market. Affordable housing is in short supply:

accommodation provided by the council and RPs makes up about 11% of all homes in the district, so many people who need an affordable home cannot get one.

There is considerable political and financial support nationally and locally to build more affordable housing. The council is making strenuous efforts to increase the number of new homes it owns and to rationalise its existing residential portfolio by disposing of properties that cannot be brought up to modern standards at reasonable cost.

The council has also stopped offering Flexible Tenancies in the light of case law and legal advice, although other RPs may choose to continue.

The Government would like to extend the Renters Rights Act to the social housing sector, but first the Regulator of Social Housing must amend the Tenancy Standard to clarify the expectations of RPs under the new system. This change will require statutory consultation, and it is not yet known when the new system will apply to social tenancies. Therefore, the Tenancy Policy reflects the current legal position and will be amended in due course.

Since the adoption of the Tenancy Policy 2020, the Council:

- No longer grants Flexible Tenancies because of evolving case law and legal advice
- Reaffirmed its commitment to secure lifetime tenancies for eligible households following the successful completion of an introductory period
- Increased its focus on preventing and addressing tenancy fraud
- Embedded enhanced consumer regulatory requirements, including proactive assurance, transparency of policies, and evidence-based reporting

5. Legislation and Guidance

Canterbury City Council's Tenancy Policy is developed in accordance with the statutory framework governing social housing in England, including but not limited to:

- Housing Act 1985
- Housing Act 1988
- Housing Act 1996
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Localism Act 2011
- Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013
- Care Act 2014 and Children Act 2004
- Housing and Planning Act 2016
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Social Housing regulation Act 2023
- Consumer Standards 2024
- Secure Tenancies (Victims of Domestic Abuse) Act 2018
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2018

6. Related strategies, policies and key documents

The Tenancy Policy sits within a framework of strategies, policies, statutory documents and operational information that guide how the Council manages its homes and fulfils its duties as a social landlord and include:

- Draft Tenancy Strategy 2026
- Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018 - 2023
- Draft Housing Strategy 2026 – 2030
- Housing Allocations Scheme 2023
- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2019

- HRA Rent Setting Policy 2020

Key documents provide tenants with clear information about their rights, responsibilities and how the landlord service operates are:

- **Tenancy Agreement**

The legally binding contract between the Council and the tenant, setting out respective rights and responsibilities. Except for minor changes, variations to the tenancy agreement will be made through sections 102 and 103 of The Housing Act 1985.

- **Tenant Handbook**

Provides practical guidance on day-to-day tenancy matters, service standards and operational processes. The handbook supports the Tenancy Agreement but does not form part of the tenancy contract or this policy.

Supporting procedures
A range of supporting procedures provide the operational detail to deliver the principles in this Tenancy Policy. These procedures are operational in nature and do not form part of this policy or its decision-making criteria.

These procedures include, but are not limited to:
- Tenancy management procedures
- Succession and assignment guidance
- Mutual exchange assessment processes
- Tenancy fraud framework
- Tenancy audit and visit arrangements
- Vulnerability and reasonable adjustments framework
- Neighbourhood and estate management standards

These procedures are reviewed periodically to support the application of this policy and to reflect changes in legislation, regulation and Government guidance.

7. The types of tenancy the Council grants

The Council grants appropriate types of tenancies and occupation agreements, depending on the household's circumstances, eligibility, property type, and statutory requirements. The Council ensures applicants understand the nature of the tenancy offered.

7.1 Introductory tenancies

All new Council tenants are granted an Introductory Tenancy for a period of 12 months.

An Introductory Tenancy:

- Acts as a trial period to demonstrate that the tenant can sustain the tenancy successfully
- Contains fewer rights than a Secure Tenancy
- May be extended by up to six months where there are concerns about tenancy conduct
- May be ended early where the terms of the tenancy agreement are breached

Following successful completion of the Introductory period, the tenancy normally converts automatically to a Secure Tenancy. The Council no longer grants a Flexible Tenancy following an Introductory Tenancy.

7.2 Secure tenancies

Secure Tenancies are granted to eligible tenants who have successfully completed their Introductory period. The Council's offers Secure (lifetime) Tenancies in most cases, providing long-term stability for households.

Secure Tenancies:

- Do not have a fixed end date
- Provide enhanced statutory rights, such as Right to Buy, succession, and assignment in limited circumstances
- May only be ended through lawful possession proceedings, if justified
- Are the default tenancy type for most general needs and sheltered housing

Certain property types, such as older persons designated housing or adapted properties may have additional eligibility criteria and there may be circumstances when Secure Tenancies may not be granted for that property type, for example, if a non-statutory successor does not have a requirement for an adaptation or the size of a property.

7.3 Flexible tenancies

The Council issued tenancies with a five-year term between April 2016 and November 2021 and stopped because of developing case law and legal advice.

A small number of flexible tenancies granted previously remain in place as legacy arrangements. Flexible Tenancies remain lawful for the remainder of their existing terms, and the Council will continue to manage them fairly and transparently.

7.4 Demoted tenancies

A Demoted Tenancy may be granted following a court order where serious anti-social behaviour or tenancy breaches have occurred.

Demoted Tenancies:

- Last for 12 months (unless extended by the court)
- Provide reduced security like an Introductory Tenancy
- Allow the Council to take prompt action if further breaches occur
- Convert to a Secure Tenancy after the demotion period if no further action is taken

The Council will apply for demotion only where it is reasonable, proportionate and supported by evidence.

7.5 Non Secure tenancies

Non-Secure Tenancies are used for temporary accommodation provided under the Council's homelessness duties. They:

- Offer short-term accommodation in HRA accommodation
- Do not qualify for the same statutory rights as Secure Tenants
- Last only while the homelessness duty is being assessed or discharged
- Convert to an appropriate tenancy type if the household is permanently rehoused n Council accommodation

7.6 Licences to occupy

The Council may use licence agreements in temporary accommodation where the Housing Act 1996 places an interim duty to accommodate, such as s.188 of the Housing Act 1996.

Use of licences is appropriate where:

- The household is awaiting a decision about a homelessness application
- Accommodation is provided on a nightly or emergency basis

- The household does not meet the criteria for a tenancy

The Council will ensure licence holders understand their rights and responsibilities and that licences are used lawfully and proportionately.

8. The circumstances in which a further tenancy will be granted when an existing tenancy ends

This section relates to:

- Introductory Tenancies
- Demoted Tenancies
- Flexible Tenancies
- Non-Secure Tenancies

8.1 Introductory tenancies

At the end of the 12-month introductory period, the tenancy will normally convert automatically to a Secure Tenancy unless:

- The Council has issued a Notice of Proceedings for Possession
- The introductory period has been extended due to tenancy breaches
- The tenant has not complied with the terms of their tenancy agreement, such as serious rent arrears or anti-social behaviour

The Council will provide clear reasons and rights of review where action is taken to extend or end an Introductory Tenancy.

8.2 Secure tenancies

Secure Tenancies do not end unless:

- The tenant voluntarily surrenders the property
- A court grants possession to the council
- The tenancy ceases to be the tenant's only or principal home
- Statutory succession or assignment leads to the creation of a new tenancy

Secure tenants are not subject to fixed term review, so it is not necessary to grant another tenancy.

8.3 Flexible tenancies

The Council no longer grants Flexible Tenancies. This section applies only to tenants who were granted a Flexible Tenancy before the Council discontinued their use in November 2021. Flexible Tenancies remain lawful for the remainder of their existing terms, and the Council will continue to manage them fairly and transparently.

8.3.1 Nature and length of Flexible Tenancies

The Council issued tenancies with a five-year term between April 2016 and November 2021.

For existing Flexible Tenants:

- The fixed term remains valid until its expiry
- Tenants retain all rights and responsibilities that apply to Flexible Tenancies under the Housing Act 1985, as amended
- During the fixed term, tenants have security of tenure unless they breach tenancy conditions

8.3.2 Reviews prior to the end of the fixed term

Between 9 and 12 months before a Flexible Tenancy is due to end, sometimes sooner if appropriate, the Council reviews the household's circumstances. The purpose of the review is to determine whether a new tenancy should be granted and, if so, the most appropriate tenancy type and property.

The outcome of the review may be:

- A new Secure (Lifetime) Tenancy for the same property
- A new Secure Tenancy for a different property if the household's needs have changed
- A decision not to grant another tenancy, with appropriate statutory notice and appeal rights

There remains a presumption in favour of granting a Secure Tenancy unless specific grounds apply.

8.3.3 Circumstances when a further tenancy may be offered for a different property
A new tenancy may be offered for a different home if:

- The current property is underoccupied by one or more bedrooms
- The property contains significant adaptations no longer required by the household
- The household's size or mobility needs have changed
- The property is needed for better use of the stock of council homes
- Any alternative property must be suitable, reasonable, and consistent with the Housing Allocation Scheme

8.3.4 Circumstances in which a further Secure (lifetime) Tenancy will be refused
The Council may decide not to grant a new tenancy at the end of a flexible term if:

- There are rent arrears or other housing related debts owed to the Council
- The tenant has breached the tenancy agreement
- The tenant does not occupy or intend to occupy the property as their only or principal home
- There is evidence of tenancy fraud

If the Council intends to refuse a new tenancy:

- At least six months' written notice will be provided
- Reasons will be set out clearly
- The tenant will be informed of their right to appeal

8.3.5 Notice and support if another tenancy is not granted
If a new tenancy is not granted, the Council will:

- Serve the required statutory notice
- Provide clear advice on alternative housing options
- Offer referral to Housing Solutions for support into private rented or other accommodation
- Avoid homelessness wherever possible in line with statutory duties
- Pursue eviction proceedings only if the tenant refuses to move after the notice period expires

8.3.6 Appeal process for legacy Flexible Tenants
Flexible Tenants who disagree with a refusal to grant a new tenancy may request:

Stage 1 Review
Submit a written appeal within 15 working days
Reviewed by a manager uninvolved in the original decision

Written outcome normally within 10 working days

Stage 2 Review
Submit a written request within 15 working days of Stage 1
Reviewed by senior officers
Written outcome within 10 working days (or advised of alternative timescale)
Review decisions will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998

8.3.7 Tenancy rights during review and notice period

Until the fixed term ends, Flexible Tenants retain:

- All rights set out in their current tenancy
- The right to request repairs
- The right to be treated fairly and consistently
- Protection from eviction without a court order

8.4 Non Secure Tenancies

A Non-Secure Tenancy ends when:

- The council has discharged its homelessness duty
- The household is no longer eligible for temporary accommodation
- The household is permanently rehoused
- A notice to quit or equivalent lawful notice has been served

The granting of a further tenancy in these cases will be governed by:

- The outcome of the homelessness decision; and
- The housing allocation scheme

A Non-Secure Tenancy does not normally convert to a Secure Tenancy unless a permanent tenancy is granted for a home in the HRA.

If a Non-Secure Tenancy is replaced by a License to Occupy, this will be indicated in a published officer decision with an effective date.

9. Tenancy Management

9.1 Tenancy Sustainment

The Council aims to support all tenants to maintain successful and secure tenancies. Sustainment activities are delivered operationally through tenancy management procedures and may include early intervention, referral to support services, and collaborative work with partner agencies.

9.2 Sole tenancies and joint tenancies

Both sole and joint tenancies are permitted under the Housing Act 1985. Decisions relating to granting or changing the legal status of a tenancy must:

- Reflect statutory succession rights
- Ensure fairness and transparency
- Consider risk management and safeguarding best practice
- Avoid creating fraudulent or non-qualifying occupation; and
- Consider the suitability of the household for the property

9.3 Requests to change a sole tenancy to a joint tenancy

The Council will consider requests for joint tenancies in line with statutory eligibility, the risk of tenancy fraud, and evidence of long-term, settled residence. A joint tenancy will not be granted where:

- The household member seeking to join the tenancy does not meet statutory or policy eligibility criteria
- Granting the tenancy would undermine the council's duty to prevent fraud
- The property would be under-occupied or otherwise unsuitable

It is made clear that the additional tenant is normally protected by a right of succession.

Request for a joint tenancy must be made in writing to the council. The council always informs the applicant of its decision in writing.

9.4 Requests to change a joint tenancy to a sole tenancy

When either or both joint tenants give notice to the Council that they wish to end the tenancy, the tenancy ends for both joint tenants.

However, if one joint tenant gives notice and vacates the property, leaving the remaining joint tenant in occupation, it may be possible for the remaining former joint tenant to become a sole tenant. In certain circumstances it may be possible to assign the tenancy.

In all other cases (where assignment cannot apply), the council considers granting a new sole tenancy to the remaining tenant, which is usually granted if:

- The property is the right size and type for the former joint tenant who wishes to become the sole tenant (according to the active Housing Allocation Scheme).
- Any adaptations made to the property are required by them.

In deciding whether to grant a new sole tenancy, the Council considers all relevant circumstances. These may include (but are not limited to) whether:

- The tenant who wishes to remain would be eligible for housing under the council's Housing Allocation Scheme
- There are any rent arrears
- There are any breaches of the terms of the tenancy agreement.
- Any other housing debt is owed to the council
- There is a valid Notice in place for any breach of the tenancy agreement, or a County Court Order has been obtained because of such a breach
- There is evidence that the person who wishes to remain does not intend to use the property as their main or principal home
- The proposed sole tenant is subject to immigration control

Where a joint tenancy ends following notice served by one joint tenant, the Council's Housing Management Service will take the lead in establishing the facts of occupation and determining the tenancy position. Referral to the homelessness service will be made only where the Council's landlord decision results in the occupier being threatened with homelessness.

The Council always changes a joint tenancy into a sole tenancy if instructed to do so by the County Court after a divorce or legal separation. Therefore, it is strongly advised that joint tenants consider their tenancy when getting legal advice on these matters.

If a new tenancy is granted, the type of tenancy is determined by the criteria set out this policy.

The council always informs applicants of its decision in writing.

9.5 Succession

Succession is the statutory or contractual right for another person to take over a council tenancy following the death of a tenant.

9.6 The right to succeed

A council tenancy can only be succeeded to once. Where a joint tenant dies, the tenancy passes automatically to the surviving joint tenant. This counts as the single statutory succession.

If the deceased tenant themselves became the tenant because of succession, no further person has a right to succeed to the tenancy.

9.7 Who can succeed to a tenancy

The right to succeed to a council tenancy is governed by the Housing Act 1985, as amended, and by the terms of the Council's tenancy agreement.

While legislation limits statutory succession rights for certain secure tenancies, the Council's current tenancy agreement provides succession rights which extend beyond the statutory minimum.

Where the tenancy agreement applies, the tenancy may pass on the death of the tenant to:

- The tenant's husband, wife or civil partner, or a person living with the tenant as if they were their husband, wife or civil partner, provided the property was their only or principal home at the time of the tenant's death; or
- Where there is no such partner, another qualifying family member who occupied the property as their only or principal home for at least 12 months prior to the tenant's death, as defined in the tenancy agreement

Where the (non-statutory) successor occupies a property that is larger than reasonably required for their household, the Council will, after an appropriate bereavement period, work with the successor to move to accommodation that is more suitable for their housing need.

9.8 Changes to succession rights

Succession rights are determined by the terms of the tenancy agreement in force at the time of the tenant's death.

Any future changes to succession rights arising from amendments to the Council's tenancy agreement will be made lawfully and in accordance with the statutory framework that applies to the type of tenancy concerned.

In the case of Secure Tenancies, any variation of tenancy terms will be subject to consultation and notice requirements under sections 102 and 103 of the Housing Act 1985.

Nothing in this policy removes or limits any succession rights granted by the tenancy agreement.

9.9 If there is no right to succession

Where no legal or contractual right to succession exists, the Council may, at its discretion, grant a new tenancy.

A new tenancy may be granted for the same property where:

- The occupier has lived with the tenant for at least 12 months prior to the tenant's death
- The property is the right size for their household; and
- The occupier would have qualified as a successor had a previous succession not already occurred

If the property is not the right size for the household, the Council may consider granting a new tenancy of alternative accommodation of a suitable size.

In deciding whether to grant a new tenancy, the Council will have regard to:

- Whether any duty is owed under homelessness legislation; and
- The qualifying criteria of the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme

If no housing duty is owed, the decision will be made under delegated authority by the appropriate officer according to the council's scheme of delegations.

The factors considered may include, but are not limited to:

- The person's age
- Length of occupation
- Household size
- Medical needs
- Suitability of the property, including adaptations
- Income
- Social and welfare needs

All relevant circumstances are considered, and the applicant is informed of the decision in writing.

9.10 Assignment

In certain circumstances, Secure Tenants have the right to assign their tenancy to someone else. As assignments use up the right of succession and a tenancy can only be succeeded to once, someone who was granted their tenancy as a succession cannot carry out an assignment.

Secure Tenants have the right to assign their tenancy if:

1) A succession to the tenancy has not previously taken place
and
2) The proposed assignee would be eligible for housing under the council's Housing Allocation Scheme

and either

a) The proposed assignee would be eligible to succeed to the tenancy on the death of the tenant
or
b) An order is made by the Court

If an assignment takes place, this uses the right of succession and there is no further right of succession to the tenancy. The Council will not approve assignments intended to circumvent statutory succession rules.

9.11 Mutual exchanges

Mutual exchanges are recognised as an important means by which tenants may improve their housing circumstances and by which the Council promotes the effective and sustainable use of its housing stock.

Secure Tenants and legacy Flexible Tenants with preserved statutory rights have the right to mutually exchange their tenancy with another qualifying tenant of a local authority or Registered Provider, subject to the Council's consent and the relevant legal and regulatory provisions.

The Council will offer and publicise access to a mutual exchange service, enabling eligible tenants to identify potential exchange matches without payment of a fee, in line with the Regulator of Social Housing's Tenancy Standard.

Link to a free mutual exchange service https://www.homeswapper.me/

The Council takes reasonable steps to ensure that tenants who may otherwise be unable to access the mutual exchange service are provided with appropriate assistance.

Tenants seeking to mutually exchange are provided with clear information about the potential implications of an exchange, including the impact on tenure, rent and service charges, if applicable.

Applications for mutual exchange are determined in accordance with Schedule 3 of the Housing Act 1985, associated legislation, and regulatory requirements. Consent is not withheld unreasonably.

The Council may refuse consent where one or more statutory grounds for refusal apply, including (but not limited to):

- The existence of possession proceedings, legal notices or court orders relating to breach of tenancy
- Breaches of tenancy conditions
- If the accommodation is not suitable for the incoming household, including under occupation or overcrowding
- If the property has been adapted for a person with disabilities and the exchange would result in the loss of suitable provision
- If the property is not occupied as the tenant's only or principal home; or
- Any other ground set out in schedule 3 of the housing act 1985

If consent is refused, the Council will provide clear written reasons, setting out the statutory basis for the decision.

9.12 The Assisted Moves Scheme

The Council supports tenants to rightsize if appropriate, enabling better use of the council's homes and supporting independence. This scheme is carried out through our Sustainment offering.

9.13 Tenant engagement and consultation

The Council is committed to involving tenants in shaping policies and services. This may include formal consultations where required and engagement through resident panels, workshops and surveys.

9.14 Tenancy fraud

It is fundamental to the effective management of the Council's housing stock that homes are allocated and occupied only by households who are eligible and entitled to do so. The Council therefore adopts a zero-tolerance approach to tenancy fraud.

Tenancy fraud undermines the integrity of the housing system, deprives eligible households of access to a home, and may constitute a criminal offence under the Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013. If tenancy fraud is identified, the Council will take appropriate civil and/or criminal action, which may include possession proceedings and prosecution.

The prevention of tenancy fraud is addressed across the full housing lifecycle, with clear accountability at each stage.

The Council's Allocations Team is responsible for establishing and verifying an applicant's eligibility and qualification for social housing prior to any offer being made, whether the resulting tenancy is granted by the Council or through nomination to a Registered Provider. This provides assurance that allocations decisions are lawful, fair and consistent with the Council's Allocation Scheme.

The Council's tenancy management function is responsible for maintaining the integrity of occupation throughout the life of the tenancy and for identifying, investigating and responding to suspected tenancy fraud after a tenancy has been granted.

Tenancy fraud includes, but is not limited to:

- Providing false or misleading information, or failing to disclose material information, when applying for housing or responding to an allocation offer
- Unlawful subletting or parting with possession of the property
- Retaining a property following the death of a tenant where there is no right to succeed
- Carrying out an unauthorised mutual exchange
- Selling or transferring keys for financial gain
- Providing false information in connection with statutory housing rights, including right to buy and succession

The Council maintains appropriate governance arrangements to ensure effective information sharing between allocation, nomination and tenancy management functions, and with Registered Providers where applicable, to prevent, detect and address tenancy fraud.

The Council also promotes reporting of suspected tenancy fraud and publicises enforcement action where appropriate, as part of its wider deterrence strategy.
https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/housing/report-tenancy-fraud

To support these principles, the Council may carry out tenancy audits and proportionate verification activity to confirm that homes are occupied by the approved household as their only or principal home. This may include announced checks and, if appropriate, unannounced visits to make contact and seek verification.

Tenants are expected to provide accurate and complete information about household composition and occupation and must not withhold material information where it affects their tenancy rights, eligibility or the lawful occupation of the home. The Council will carry out all verification and audit activity in a way that is lawful, proportionate, and respectful, balancing effective fraud prevention with tenants' right to live in their home without unreasonable interference.

9.15 Tenant improvements

Tenants may only carry out improvements or alterations to their home with the Council's prior written consent unless the works are expressly permitted without consent under the tenancy agreement. Requests for permission must be put in writing to the council.

The Council recognises that a tenant's home is their principal place of residence and that tenants may wish to make improvements or alterations to better meet their household's needs.

Consent is not withheld unreasonably, but the Council must ensure that any works are safe, lawful, and do not adversely affect the condition, value, or future management of its housing stock. Therefore, tenant's must obtain permission first which will usually require a specification of works. If permission is granted, access must be given for post inspections ensure works are completed to a satisfactory standard.

9.16 Household changes

The Council takes a proportionate, risk-based approach to requests that affect who is permitted to live in a Council home, including requests for additional long-term household members.

Requests for changes to household composition are considered on a case-by-case basis, having regard to the tenancy agreement, safeguarding considerations, the prevention of unlawful occupation and the effective use of housing stock.

The Council expects each property to be occupied only by the approved household. No person may live at a Council property on a permanent or long-term basis unless they were included in the approved household at the start of the tenancy or the Council has given prior written permission. In considering any request for additional household members, the Council will assess whether the proposed occupation is compatible with the nature and purpose of the accommodation, including where the property is age restricted, for example, Independent Living Schemes sometimes still referred to as sheltered housing.

9.17 Abandonment

The Council expects all tenants to occupy their home as their only or principal residence, in accordance with the tenancy agreement.

If it appears that a tenant has permanently vacated the property without formally bringing the tenancy to an end, the Council may treat the tenancy as having been abandoned.

In cases where abandonment is clear and unambiguous, the Council may recover possession of the property without serving a Notice to Quit, where it is lawful to do so.

If this occurs, the handling of any goods left at the property and any further action is carried out in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions and the Council's procedures.

Decisions relating to suspected or confirmed abandonment are made fairly, proportionately and with due regard to the prevention of unlawful eviction, the protection of tenant rights, and the effective use of the Council's housing stock.

10. Rents and service charges

The council's approach to rents and service charges is explained in detail in the HRA Rent Setting Policy.

11. Making best use of the council's homes

Underlying themes of this policy are support for household mobility and making the best use of the council's limited housing stock by:

- An effective Housing Allocations Scheme, which is available on the council's website at https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/strategies-and-policies/housing-plans
- Carefully managing successions and assignments
- Encouraging and facilitating mutual exchanges https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/housing/council-tenant-services/swap-your-council-house-someone
- Enabling transfers through the Housing Needs Register. Information on eligibility and the process is available in the council's Housing Allocation Scheme
- The Assisted Moves Scheme
- Addressing tenancy fraud to ensure council housing is available only to those that qualify and in greatest housing need. https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/housing/report-tenancy-fraud
- A continuous programme of tenancy audits to understand the needs of tenants, including overcrowding or under occupying, as well as any tenant or landlord responsibilities outstanding

12. Use of the private rented sector

The council has a duty to provide accommodation for certain people who are homeless or about to become homeless through no fault of their own. Under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 the council can house homeless households in the private rented sector. This is not the council's default position but is a useful additional resource to prevent and tackle homelessness.

The council runs a successful social lettings and management agency, Canterbury Lettings https://canterburylettings.co.uk/ which provides professional services to local landlords, enabling tenants to rent well managed and well-maintained homes. Services include:

- Basic reference and affordability check
- Accompanied viewings
- Inventory
- Tenancy training and instruction
- Tenant support
- Tenancy agreements
- Deposit or deposit guarantee
- Payment of housing benefit direct to landlord where applicable
- An arranged gas safety check
- Energy performance certificate if required
- Utilities set up
- Rent collection
- Arranged maintenance
- Day to day tenancy management
- Assistance to end tenancy

12.1 The types of tenancy Canterbury Lettings grants, the circumstances in which they are granted and the length of the terms

12.2 The types of tenancy Canterbury Lettings grants

The Social Lettings Agency grants Assured Periodic Tenancies only, with no fixed term and no end date, operating on a rolling basis (usually monthly).

Tenancy agreements are based on the government produced guidance for use in the private rented sector, adapted as necessary to reflect the requirements of the Renters' Rights Act 2025; https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/model-agreement-for-a-shorthold-

assured-tenancy. Canterbury Lettings uses the documents provided by The National Landlords Residents Association (NRLA).

12.3 Monitoring of tenancies and continuation of occupation
Tenancies are monitored throughout their duration as a standard feature of the service. Any issues arising from either the tenant or landlord perspective are reviewed on an ongoing basis.

As Assured Periodic Tenancies do not come to an end unless ended by the tenant or lawfully terminated by the landlord, there is no renewal process. The tenancy continues automatically, providing tenants with long-term stability and continuity, while minimising administrative burdens for landlords and the Agency.

The Social Lettings Agency supports and sustains tenancies wherever possible, to enable tenants to establish stable homes and to provide consistency for landlords.

12.4 Circumstances in which a tenancy may be brought to an end or not supported
While the tenancy does not require renewal, the Social Lettings Agency may not support the continuation of a tenancy, and a landlord may seek possession using the appropriate legal grounds, where one or more of the following apply:

- There are significant or persistent rent arrears
- There are serious breaches of the terms of the tenancy agreement
- The property is statutorily overcrowded
- There is evidence of domestic abuse or serious safeguarding concerns affecting occupancy
- The landlord intends to sell the property or requires possession for another lawful reason under the Housing Act 1988 (as amended)

Any decision to seek possession rests with the private landlord and must be made in accordance with the lawful possession grounds and procedures in force at the time.

12.5 Appeals and complaints

If a tenant wishes to complain about Canterbury Lettings or disagrees with how their tenancy has been managed, they may use the Council's complaints procedure.

Property agents are required by law to join a government authorised consumer redress scheme. Canterbury Lettings is a member of the 'Property Redress Scheme'
https://www.theprs.co.uk/

Tenants are considered consumers for the purposes of this scheme. If they remain dissatisfied after exhausting Canterbury Lettings' internal complaints process, they may escalate their complaint to the Property Redress Scheme in line with its published criteria and procedures, available at:
https://www.theprs.co.uk/Consumer

13. Policy review

The Tenancy Policy will be reviewed bi-annually and it will be reviewed as changes in legislation, regulation or guidance may dictate.

Minor changes which do not make a significant difference to service provision will be made to the document by delegated authority to the Head of Housing & Community.

Significant changes will be taken through the council's governance process.

14. Equality and diversity

The Council is committed to ensuring that this policy is applied fairly, consistently and without discrimination. In delivering this policy, the Council will:

- Comply with the equality act 2010, including the public sector equality duty
- Consider the diverse needs of tenants, including those relating to disability, age, gender, race, religion or belief, sexuality and family status
- Make reasonable adjustments for disabled tenants in accordance with its reasonable adjustments framework and vulnerability policy
- Ensure that tenancy related decisions are sensitive to issues of vulnerability, safeguarding, cultural needs and household composition
- Engage with a diverse range of tenants when reviewing policies, ensuring tenant voice influences decision-making
- Assess the impact of this policy through an equality impact assessment, to be reviewed with each substantive policy revision

Tenancy Strategy 2026 consultation

Number of responses: 3

1. **Which of the following best describes you? ***

Council tenant	-	-
Housing association tenant	1	33.3%
Applicant for social housing	-	-
Resident of the district	-	-
A local business	-	-
Member of a community of volunteer group	-	-
An MP	-	-
A social housing provider or partner organisation	1	33.3%
A neighbouring local authority	-	-
A councillor	-	-
A representative of a partner organisation (for example a charity, school, health service)	-	-
Other (please specify):	1	33.3%

Other (please specify):

Canterbury Housing Advice Centre

2. **Overall, how easy did you find the draft Tenancy Strategy to read and understand? ***

Very easy	1	33.3%
Easy	1	33.3%
Neither easy nor difficult	1	33.3%
Difficult	-	-
Very difficult	-	-

2a. **Please tell us more about your answer**

It was not easy but not difficult.

3. **Is it clear why the council is required to have a Tenancy Strategy? ***

Very clear	2	66.7%
Clear	1	33.3%
Neither clear nor unclear	-	-
Unclear	-	-
Very unclear	-	-

3a. **Please tell us more about your answer**

No comments

4. **To what extent do you agree that the strategy clearly explains the difference between the council's tenancy strategy and the tenancy policies that individual landlords must produce? ***

Strongly agree	1	33.3%
Agree	2	66.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	-	-
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-
Not sure	-	-

4a. **Please tell us more about your answer**

No comments

5. **To what extent do you agree that the strategy clearly explains the council's expectations of Registered Providers operating in the district? ***

Strongly agree	1	33.3%
Agree	2	66.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	-	-
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-
Not sure	-	-

5a. **Please tell us more about your answer**

No comments

6. **To what extent do you agree that the Tenancy Strategy gives sufficient importance to, and is clear about, the following?**

The types of tenancies granted

Strongly agree	1	33.3%
Agree	2	66.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	-	-
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-

When and why a particular type of tenancy is granted

Strongly agree	-	-
Agree	3	100.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	-	-
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-

The length of fixed term tenancies

Strongly agree	-	-
Agree	3	100.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	-	-
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-

When and why a further tenancy is granted; where an existing tenancy comes to an end

Strongly agree	-	-
Agree	3	100.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	-	-
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-

Complying with the set by the Regulator of Social Housing

Strongly agree	1	33.3%
Agree	2	66.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	-	-
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-

Cooperating with the council to address local housing needs.

Strongly agree	1	33.3%
Agree	2	66.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	-	-
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-

Ensuring that tenancy policies do not adversely affect homelessness.

Strongly agree	1	33.3%
Agree	2	66.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	-	-
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-

Balancing the interests of applicants for housing, tenants and landlords.

Strongly agree	-	-
Agree	3	100.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	-	-
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-

Encourage tenant mobility to make best use of the limited number of affordable homes

Strongly agree	1	33.3%
Agree	1	33.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	-	-
Disagree	1	33.3%
Strongly disagree	-	-

Please tell us more about your answer

Rightsizing = downsizing. Why not just use this term? If you really meant rightsizing you'd also talk about households who need bigger homes.

Creating and maintaining mixed and sustainable communities.

Strongly agree	1	33.3%
Agree	1	33.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	-	-
Disagree	1	33.3%
Strongly disagree	-	-

Please tell us more about your answer

There is not much said about this or how it's achieved

Helping vulnerable people to sustain their tenancies and prevent unnecessary evictions.

Strongly agree	-	-
Agree	3	100.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	-	-
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-

Ensuring that tenants abide by the terms of their tenancies, backed by appropriate sanctions when necessary.

Strongly agree	1	33.3%
Agree	2	66.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	-	-
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-

Combatting tenancy fraud.

Strongly agree	1	33.3%
Agree	2	66.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	-	-
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-

Encouraging simple and accessible appeals and complaints processes.

Strongly agree	1	33.3%
Agree	1	33.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	1	33.3%
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-

Please tell us more about your answer

Not much about this.

Encouraging the provision of advice and assistance to find alternative accommodation if another tenancy is not granted.

Strongly agree	1	33.3%
Agree	2	66.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	-	-
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-

Discretionary succession rights, taking account of the needs of vulnerable household members.

Strongly agree	2	66.7%
Agree	1	33.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	-	-
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-

7. **Is there anything you expected to see in the draft Tenancy Strategy that is not included?**

More emphasis on helping tenants with the bedroom tax, who can't afford to pay the bedroom tax and/or to pay off their rent arrears, to move quickly. No mention of the policy of many RPs requiring new tenants to pay rent in advance (RIA) which poses difficulties for many new tenants especially if the RIA is more than one week.

8. **Overall, to what extent do you support the Tenancy Policy as proposed? ***

Strongly support	1	33.3%
Support	1	33.3%
Neither support nor oppose	1	33.3%
Oppose	-	-
Strongly oppose	-	-

8a. **Please tell us more about your answer**

I think creating and maintaining mixed sustainable communities needs expanding on. It’s important when housing supply is in high demand and there are not enough homes for people, because if the only people getting housed are those who are highest on the housing register, this could have the opposite affect.

9. **Do you have any other comments about the draft strategy?**

Not all current service charges made by RPs are covered by housing benefit or UC housing costs.

How did you find out about this consultation? * Please tick those that apply

Email from the council	2	66.7%
Council Facebook post	-	-
Council Twitter post	-	-
Council LinkedIn post	-	-
Council website	-	-
Word of mouth	-	-
Other, please state:	1	33.3%

Other, please state:

Colleague

What age are you? Please tick one box only

Under 18	-	-
18 to 25	-	-
26 to 34	-	-
35 to 44	-	-
45 to 54	1	33.3%
55 to 64	1	33.3%
65 to 74	-	-
75 to 84	-	-
85 and above	-	-
Prefer not to say	-	-
No reply	1	33.3%

What gender are you? Please tick one box only

Male	-	-
Female	2	66.7%
Prefer to self-describe (for example, non-binary, gender fluid etc)	-	-
Prefer not to say	-	-
No reply	1	33.3%

Do you consider yourself to be disabled? Please tick one box only

Yes	-	-
No	2	66.7%
Prefer not to say	-	-
No reply	1	33.3%

What is your ethnic background? (select the group that best describes you)

White (English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British)	1	33.3%
Irish	-	-
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	-	-
Any other White background (please specify):	-	-
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	1	33.3%
Asian / Asian British	-	-
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	-	-
Other ethnic group (please specify):	-	-
Prefer not to say	-	-
No reply	1	33.3%

Appendix 6

Draft Tenancy Policy

Consultation responses

1. Introduction

We invited residents, council tenants and local organisations to share their views on our draft Tenancy Policy.

The Tenancy Policy sets out how the council manages its own homes.

It covers tenancy types, rights and responsibilities, succession and household changes, and how decisions are made fairly and consistently.

We wanted to hear from current and prospective council tenants, and anyone with an interest in how social housing is managed in the Canterbury district.

The survey asked for views on:

- how easy the draft policy is to understand
- how clearly tenancy types are explained
- whether the council's approach to introductory and secure tenancies is fair
- how well the policy balances supporting tenants with making best use of limited housing
- whether the policy shows a clear commitment to supporting tenants to sustain their tenancies
- anything missing from the draft

The consultation ran from Monday 15 June to Monday 7 September 2026.

2. Executive summary

- Of the six respondents, four were another interested resident or organisation and two were current council tenants.
- Most respondents found the draft Tenancy Policy reasonably accessible, with four describing it as neither easy nor difficult to understand.
- A further two respondents found the policy easy or very easy to understand and no respondents reported finding it difficult or very difficult.
- All six respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the council's approach of normally offering an introductory tenancy before a secure tenancy.
- Three respondents strongly supported or supported the policy overall and three were neither supportive nor opposed.
- No respondents opposed the policy.

3. Consultation methodology

Consultation took place between Monday 15 June and Monday 7 September 2026.

The following methods were used to seek views:

- an online questionnaire, which received six responses
- a paper version of the questionnaire, for which no responses were received
- A meeting of the Resident Engagement Panel, where members had the opportunity to speak to a council officer
- written representations, for which no responses were received

The consultation was promoted in the following ways:

- an article on the council's newsroom site
- posts on the council's social media channels
- Canterbury City Council corporate newsletters
- an agenda item at the Resident Engagement Panel
- direct emails to a wide range of stakeholders encouraging them to respond to the consultation
- notifications sent to individuals who had requested to be informed about council consultations

4. Findings

The survey asked for views on the clarity of the draft policy, the council's approach to tenancy types and decision-making and overall support for he policy.

4.1 Respondent profile – overall

4.1.1 Respondents were asked: Which of the following best describes you?

Four of six respondents identified as another interested resident or organisation and two were council tenants.

Response	Number	Percentage
A current council tenant	2	33.3%
Applying for council housing	-	-
Living with or supporting a council tenant	-	-
Another interested resident or organisation	4	66.7%
Other (please specify):	-	-

4.1.2 Respondents were asked: What age are you?

Response	Number	Percentage
Under 18	-	-
18 to 25	-	-
26 to 34	-	-
35 to 44	1	16.7%
45 to 54	-	-
55 to 64	-	-
65 to 74	1	16.7%
75 to 84	1	16.7%
85 and above	-	-
Prefer not to say	1	16.7%
No reply	2	33.3%

4.1.3 Respondents were asked: What gender are you?

Response	Number	Percentage
Male	-	-
Female	2	33.3%

Prefer to self-describe (for example, non-binary, gender fluid etc)	-	-
Prefer not to say	2	33.3%
No reply	2	33.3%

4.1.4 Respondents were asked: Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	1	16.7%
No	1	16.7%
Prefer not to say	2	33.3%
No reply	2	33.3%

4.1.5 Respondents were asked: What is your ethnic background?

Response	Number	Percentage
White (English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British)	1	16.7%
Irish	-	-
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	-	-
Any other White background (please specify):	1	16.7%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	-	-
Asian / Asian British	-	-
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	-	-
Other ethnic group (please specify):	-	-
Prefer not to say	2	33.3%
No reply	2	33.3%

4.2 Respondents were asked: Overall, how easy was the draft Tenancy Policy to understand?

Four of six respondents said the policy was neither easy nor difficult to understand.

One respondent said it was very easy and one said it was easy.

No respondent said it was difficult or very difficult.

Response	Number	Percentage
Very easy	1	16.7%
Easy	1	16.7%
Neither easy nor difficult	4	66.7%
Difficult	-	-
Very difficult	-	-

Respondents then had the opportunity to explain their answers.

One respondent commented: *“It was easy enough to understand.”*

4.3 Respondents were asked: How clear is the explanation of tenancy types (for example introductory, secure, non-secure or licences)?

Four respondents found the explanation of tenancy types very clear and one found it clear.

No respondent found it unclear or very unclear.

Response	Number	Percentage
Very clear	4	66.7%
Clear	1	16.7%
Neither clear nor unclear	1	16.7%
Unclear	-	-
Very unclear	-	-

Respondents then had the opportunity to explain their answers; however, no additional comments were provided.

4.4 Respondents were asked: To what extent do you agree with the council’s approach of normally offering an introductory tenancy first, followed by a secure (lifetime) tenancy where the tenancy has been conducted satisfactorily?

All six respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the council's approach of normally offering an introductory tenancy before a secure tenancy.

Response	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	4	66.7%
Agree	2	33.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	-	-
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-
Not sure	-	-

Respondents then had the opportunity to explain their answers; however, no additional comments were provided.

4.5 Respondents were asked: To what extent do you agree that the policy is fair about how tenancy decisions are made (for example succession, household changes, or ending a tenancy)?

Four respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the policy is fair about how tenancy decisions are made.

One respondent neither agreed nor disagreed and one was not sure.

Response	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	2	33.3%
Agree	2	33.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	1	16.7%
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-
Not sure	1	16.7%

Respondents then had the opportunity to explain their answers; however, no additional comments were provided.

4.6 Respondents were asked: How clear is the policy about tenants' right and responsibilities?

Five respondents found the policy very clear or clear about tenants' rights and responsibilities.

One respondent was neutral.

Response	Number	Percentage
Very clear	1	16.7%
Clear	4	66.7%
Neither clear nor unclear	1	16.7%
Unclear	-	-
Very unclear	-	-

Respondents then had the opportunity to explain their answers; however, no additional comments were provided.

4.7 Respondents were asked: To what extent do you agree that the policy strikes the right balance between supporting tenants, and making best use of limited council housing?

Four respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the policy strikes the right balance.

Two respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.

Response	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	1	16.7%
Agree	3	50.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	2	33.3%
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-
Not sure	-	-

Respondents then had the opportunity to explain their answers; however, no additional comments were provided.

4.8 Respondents were asked: If you live in, or may move into, age restricted accommodation: to what extent do you agree that the policy properly explains how decisions will reflect the purpose of these schemes?

Three respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the policy properly explains how decisions will reflect the purpose of age restricted schemes.

Three respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.

Response	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	1	16.7%
Agree	2	33.3%

Neither agree nor disagree	3	50.0%
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-
Not sure	-	-

Respondents then had the opportunity to explain their answers; however, no additional comments were provided.

4.9 Respondents were asked: To what extent do you agree that the policy shows a clear commitment to supporting tenants to sustain their tenancies and taking vulnerability into account?

Five respondents agreed that the policy shows a clear commitment to supporting tenants to sustain their tenancies.

One respondent neither agreed nor disagreed.

Response	**Number**	**Percentage**
Strongly agree	-	-
Agree	5	83.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	1	16.7%
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-
Not sure	-	-

Respondents then had the opportunity to explain their answers; however, no additional comments were provided.

4.10 Respondents were asked: Is there anything you expected to see in the draft Tenancy policy that is not included?

One respondent said a glossary of terms would be useful.

One respondent said there should be more emphasis on enabling tenants affected by the bedroom tax to move quickly to a right-sized property when they cannot afford to pay the bedroom tax and/or rent arrears.

One respondent asked where Annex A was.

4.11 Respondents were asked: Overall, to what extent do you support the Tenancy Policy as proposed?

Three respondents strongly supported or supported the Tenancy Policy.

Three respondents neither supported nor opposed it.

No respondent opposed the policy.

Response	Number	Percentage
Strongly support	1	16.7%
Support	2	33.3%
Neither support nor oppose	3	50.0%
Oppose	-	-
Strongly oppose	-	-

Respondents then had the opportunity to explain their answers; however, no additional comments were provided.

4.12 Respondents were asked: Do you have any other comments about the draft policy?

One respondent referred again to Annex A.

4.13 Respondents were asked: Does anything in the policy feel unclear, or difficult to apply in real life?

Two respondents commented on the use of the term ‘discretionary succession’, stating that it is misleading because it does not exist in law.

They suggested that ‘direct let’ would be a more appropriate term and would better align with the allocations policy.

5. Resident Engagement Panel

The Head of Housing and Community, Tracy Chambers presented an overview of the Tenancy Strategy and Tenancy Policy refresh at the Resident Engagement Panel on 16 June 2026.

Tracy noted that the Tenancy Strategy sets out how tenancies are managed and is a statutory requirement for registered providers.

The policy is being refreshed to reflect changes in social housing regulation, tenant feedback, the move away from flexible tenancies and forthcoming Renters' Reform changes.

Key principles of the refreshed policy were outlined as:

- meeting housing need
- providing stability and secure tenancies
- making best use of housing stock
- supporting tenants' rights
- complying with rent standards
- ensuring succession policies are applied fairly

Attendees raised the following:

- **Notice period on death of a tenant:** Attendees asked how long a property can remain occupied following a tenant's death before it must be vacated.

  The standard notice period is 28 days, though the council aims to work flexibly with the family where possible.

- **Tenancy sustainment support:** In response to a question about sustainment support, Tracy confirmed a dedicated sustainment team is in place (1.5 FTE), and that a wider review of capacity is underway.

  The importance of supporting tenants to claim benefits and access appropriate help was acknowledged.

- **Universal Credit transition delays:** Attendees asked what steps are being taken to address delays in rent payment when tenants transfer to Universal Credit.

  Tracy confirmed it aims to make early contact with affected tenants as soon as a transfer is identified, given that Universal Credit payments are not routed directly to the council and offer less flexibility than legacy housing benefit.
- **Positive feedback:** One attendee shared positive feedback about support

received from the sustainment team.

- **Succession rights:** A question was raised regarding succession rights, referencing a specific case where a request had been declined following the death of a family member.

  Tracy clarified that under the policy, a tenancy can only be succeeded once (for example from one spouse to another); further succession to a subsequent generation is not permitted.

  This position was explained as necessary to ensure fair and appropriate use of housing stock over time, rather than a property remaining within one family indefinitely.

  Mutual exchanges and transfers of social tenancies from other local authorities also count towards this one-succession limit.

6. Written representations

No written representations were received as part of this consultation.

6. Conclusions

Six responses were received during the consultation period.

Respondents generally found the draft Tenancy Policy clear, particularly the explanation of tenancy types and the council's approach to introductory and secure tenancies, which all six respondents agreed with.

Three respondents supported the policy overall, and three were neither supportive nor opposed. No respondent opposed the policy.

Two respondents raised the same specific point: that the term ‘Discretionary Succession’ does not exist in law and that ‘Direct Let’ would be a more appropriate term.

Individual respondents also raised a glossary of terms, support for tenants affected by the bedroom tax, and a query about a missing annex.

Given the low number of responses, these findings should be treated as indicative rather than representative of wider tenant or resident opinion.

Overview Committee

8 October 2026

Subject: **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Plan to End Homelessness**

Director and Head of Service:

Marie Royle, Director of People

Tracy Chambers, Head of Housing and Community

Officer:

Tracy Chambers, Head of Housing and Community

Cabinet Member:

Pip Hazelton, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

Key or Non Key decision: Non Key

Decision Issues:

No decision required.

Is any of the information exempt from publication:

This report is open to the public.

CCC ward(s): All

Summary and purpose of the report:

This report seeks recommendations to Cabinet for the approval of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Homeless Action Plan. The Strategy sets out the vision and priorities for Canterbury City Council to prevent homelessness, reduce rough sleeping, improve outcomes for vulnerable residents and meet statutory duties. The Homelessness Action Plan sits alongside this to meet the statutory requirement of the National Plan to End Homelessness.

To Recommend:

To Cabinet the approval of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Homelessness Action Plan.

Next stage in process:

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Homelessness Action Plan will go to Cabinet for approval on 3 November 2026.

1. Introduction

A revised Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been developed following a review of homelessness need within the district and consultation with residents, partner organisations, stakeholders and individuals with lived experience of homelessness. The Strategy sets out the Council's strategic approach to preventing and reducing homelessness and rough sleeping over the next four years and establishes the key priorities that will guide service delivery and partnership activity across the district.

Alongside the Strategy, and in response to the requirements of the Government's National Plan to End Homelessness, a local Action Plan has been developed. The Action Plan provides a detailed framework for how the Council and its partners will contribute to the national ambition of preventing homelessness, reducing rough sleeping and improving outcomes for residents experiencing housing insecurity. Together, the Strategy and Action Plan provide the strategic and operational framework for homelessness service delivery and partnership working within the Canterbury district.

2. Detail

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a statutory duty on local housing authorities to publish a homelessness strategy at least every five years. The strategy must set out how the authority, and its partners will prevent homelessness, ensure sufficient accommodation and support is available for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and reduce the incidence of homelessness and rough sleeping within the district.

The draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (Appendix 3) has been developed following a review of homelessness need and service provision within Canterbury district. In developing the Strategy, consideration has been given to the priorities and objectives contained within the Government's National Plan to End Homelessness, the Canterbury City Council Housing Strategy, the Council's Corporate Plan, and the Kent and Medway Housing Strategy. The Strategy also reflects local evidence, emerging trends and feedback received during stakeholder engagement and consultation activities.

The Strategy identifies four strategic priorities which will guide the Council's approach over the next four years:

1. Increase the prevention of homelessness through earlier intervention and targeted support.
2. Reduce and prevent rough sleeping through partnership working and sustainable housing solutions.
3. Improve access to homelessness services, advice and information.
4. Improve the quality and suitability of temporary accommodation and make the best use of available housing stock.

A public consultation on the draft Strategy was undertaken, and feedback was received

from residents, statutory partners, voluntary and community sector organisations, housing providers and individuals with lived experience of homelessness. The Strategy has subsequently been amended to reflect the consultation responses received. Subject to approval, the Strategy will provide the Council's strategic framework for homelessness and rough sleeping services for the period 2026 to 2030.

In addition to the statutory homelessness strategy requirement, the Government's National Plan to End Homelessness requires all local authorities to develop and maintain a local Action Plan setting out how they will contribute to the national ambition of ending homelessness. The draft Plan (Appendix 4) has therefore been developed alongside the Strategy and translates the strategic priorities into a programme of deliverable actions, outcomes and performance measures.

The Action Plan adopts the Government's five national pillars:

1. Universal Prevention: Tackling the root causes of homelessness.
2. Targeted Prevention: Supporting those at greatest risk of homelessness.
3. Preventing Crisis: Helping people remain in their homes.
4. Improving Emergency Responses: Delivering safe, suitable and effective temporary accommodation and support.
5. Recovery and Prevention of Repeat Homelessness: Supporting long-term housing stability and reducing repeat homelessness and rough sleeping.

The plan may be subject to slight changes and additional actions as work continues with partners.

The Government has advised that all local authorities must have an approved local Action Plan in place by 1 December 2026. Approval of both the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and the accompanying Plan will ensure Canterbury City Council meet its statutory obligations, aligns with national policy requirements and has a clear framework in place to address homelessness and rough sleeping across the district over the coming years.

3. Relevant Council policy, strategies or budgetary documents

Canterbury City Council Corporate Plan 2024 to 2028

Canterbury City Council Local Plan

Canterbury City Council Housing Strategy

Kent and Medway Housing Strategy

Canterbury City Council Housing Allocations Policy

A National Plan to End Homelessness

4. Consultation planned or undertaken

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy went out to an online consultation

between 10 June 2026 and 2 September 2026 and details of the consultation can be found in Appendix 5. The feedback has influenced the content of the strategy, and changes have been incorporated in the revised version of the strategy.

There is no requirement for consultation of the Homelessness Action Plan, this has however been created giving consideration to feedback from the consultation of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

5. Options available with reasons for suitability

Option 1 – Recommend to Cabinet the approval of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Homelessness Action Plan. (Recommended option)
This is the most suitable option to allow us to meet our statutory requirements and ensure a plan is in place before the deadline set by central government (1 December 2026).

Option 2 – Require amendments to the strategy and or the plan

Minor alterations to the draft strategy or plan could be accommodated. However, any major changes would delay the implementation and impact upon the statutory requirement to have an action plan in place.

6. Reasons for supporting option recommended, with risk assessment

Option 1 is recommended to ensure we meet the statutory requirement to have a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, and the timescales can be met to have a plan in place to meet the requirements of the National Plan to End Homelessness.

7. Implications

(a) Financial

The strategy and plan will be delivered within current allocated budgets and resources.

(b) Legal

There is a statutory requirement to have a homelessness strategy as per the Homelessness Act (2002). There is also a requirement to have a plan in line with the National Plan to End Homelessness.

(c) Equalities

No negative impacts have been found for any groups, there are however several groups who may benefit from objectives within the strategy, by making best use of council stock to ensure disabled households can access properties and adaptation services, improving communication and access to services for vulnerable and excluded groups, intervening early to prevent homelessness and improving our response to survivors of domestic abuse.

(d) Environmental including carbon emissions and biodiversity

No impact found.

Contact Officer: Tracy Chambers, Head of Housing and Community

Background documents and appendices

Appendix 1 – Climate Change Impact Assessment
Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 3 – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
Appendix 4 – Homelessness Action Plan
Appendix 5 – Consultation Report

Additional document(s) containing information exempt from publication:

No

Appendix 1 Climate Change Impact Assessment (Checklist)

Please provide an assessment of the impact of the proposal under each of the headings below. If none, please say so.

1. **Climate Change impacts**

Topic	**Impact of proposal** Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	**Explanation of impact** If you have any relevant data, please include that in the explanation and reference the source.	**Mitigation**
Impact on the council's target of being carbon neutral by 2030 This applies to emissions of carbon dioxide as a direct result of our **own** activities and services. Please consider the whole life impact of your proposals	Neutral	No impact	
Impact on carbon emissions in the Canterbury district This applies to the carbon dioxide emissions in the district as a result of your proposal. Please consider the whole life impact of your proposals.	Neutral	No impact	
Emission of other climate changing gases including methane, CFCs, nitrous oxide	Neutral	No impact	

2. Adaptation to climate change - Impact on our resilience to the effects of climate change

The greatest risks posed by climate change to the UK are:

- Flooding and coastal changes including erosion from extreme events
- Risks to health caused by high temperatures
- Water shortages and drought
- Risk to natural environments & services - landscape, wildlife, pollinators, timber etc
- Risk to food production & trade

- Emergence of new pests and diseases affecting people, plants & animals

What impact do your proposals have on our ability to resist or tackle these problems in the future?

Impact of proposal Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	**Explanation of impact**	**Mitigation**
Neutral	No impact	

3. Further assessment work

Is a further more detailed assessment required at a later stage of this proposal? If yes, please give a brief description

Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment

Date of initial assessment	7 September 2026
Division	Housing and Community
Proposal to be assessed	Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Homelessness Action Plan
New or existing policy or function?	New version of existing policy and new action plan
External (i.e. public-facing) or internal?	External
Statutory or non-statutory?	Statutory
Your name	Tracy Chambers
Your job title	Head of Housing and Community
Your contact telephone number	
Decision maker (e.g.Community Committee, Management Team etc.)	Cabinet Committee
Estimated proposal deadline	3 November 2026

Please outline your proposal, including: ● Aims and objectives ● Key actions ● Expected outcomes ● Who will be affected and how ● How many people will be affected	There is a statutory requirement for local housing authorities to produce a Homelessness Strategy and a plan to meet the requirements of the National Plan to End Homelessness. The strategy and plan aim to prevent homelessness, reduce rough sleeping and improve outcomes for vulnerable residents This will impact anyone who is homeless or risk of homelessness. In 2025/26, we carried out 1,300 homeless assessments. This included 350 families with children, 593 clients where the main applicant was female, 689 clients where the main applicant was male, 10 clients were transgender and 8 preferred not to say. We had an overall age range of 16-88, with 148 main applicants aged between 16-20 405 main applicants aged between 21-30 297 main applicants aged between 31-40 207 main applicants aged between 41-50 130 main applicants aged between 51-60 77 main applicants aged between 61-70 and 36 main applicants aged between 71-88.

What relevant data or information is currently available about the customers who may use this service or could be affected? Please give details; for example “x% of customers are female” or “x% of customers are aged over 60”	N/a

Is the decision relevant to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty, which are listed below? Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC’s PSED Technical Guidance		
Aim	Yes/No	Explanation
Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	No	
Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes	All who approach the service will have access to a consistent level of service appropriate to need
Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	No	

Assess the relevance of the proposal to people with different protected characteristics, and assess the impact of the proposal on people with different protected characteristics.
Your explanation should make it clear who the assessment applies to within each protected characteristic. For example, a proposal may have high relevance for young people but low relevance for older people; it may have a positive impact on women but a neutral impact on men.

Protected characteristic	Relevance to proposal High/ Medium/ Low/None	Impact of proposal Positive/ Neutral/ Negative	Explanation
Age	Medium	Positive	Will improve how our services will be communicated and accessed to ensure vulnerable residents, including older people are not disadvantaged.
Disability	Medium	Positive	Will improve how our services will be communicated and accessed to ensure vulnerable residents, including that disabled people are not disadvantaged. The review of our Allocations Policy will also ensure those in the highest priority need are allocated

			social housing and that we are making the best use of grants for the adaptation of properties to allow people to stay in their homes.
Gender reassignment	Medium	Positive	Improving how services are communicated and accessed will support early intervention and promote fairness and encourage those who may have a fear of engaging to do so.
Marriage and civil partnership	None	Neutral	
Pregnancy and maternity	Medium	Positive	Improving how services are communicated and accessed supports earlier intervention, promotes fairness, and ensures that vulnerable residents, including families with children are not disadvantaged.
Race	Medium	Positive	Improving how services are communicated and accessed supports earlier intervention, promotes fairness, and ensures that vulnerable residents, including families with children, young people and those with additional support needs, are not disadvantaged. We will ensure that barriers to accessing services such as lack of awareness, digital exclusion, language needs or fear of engagement are considered and improved.
Religion or belief	Medium	Positive	Improving how services are communicated and accessed supports earlier intervention, promotes fairness, and ensures that vulnerable residents, including families with children, young people and those with additional support needs, are not disadvantaged. We will ensure that barriers to accessing services such as lack of awareness, digital exclusion, language needs or fear of engagement are considered and improved.
Sex	Medium	Positive	We know that victims of Domestic Abuse are predominantly female. We are currently working towards Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation to ensure staff are equipped to deal with victims of domestic abuse.
Sexual orientation	None	Neutral	

Other groups: for example – low income/ people living in rural areas/ single parents/ carers and the cared for/ past offenders/ long-term unemployed/ housebound/ history of domestic abuse/ people who don't speak English as a first language/ People without computer access etc.			Our strategy sets out how we will continue working towards the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation and ensure our staff have the relevant training and understanding to communicate with, and advise domestic abuse victims, continuing our face-to-face presence at our local One-Stop Shops We will review the information on our website to highlight access points to vulnerable residents and those with support needs and consider a range of options for how contact can be made We will consider running regular satellite advice sessions offering homeless advice in rural areas to ensure we are reaching everyone in our District

Are you going to make any changes to your proposal as a result of these findings, in order to mitigate any potential negative impacts identified? If yes, what are they? If no, why not?	No
Is there any potential negative impact which cannot be minimised or removed? If so, can it be justified? (for example, on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for another protected characteristic)	No

What additional information would increase your understanding about the potential impact of this proposal?	None.

If a consultation exercise is required as part of your proposal, please complete the consultation planning form on iCan.

Appendix 3

Draft - Canterbury City Council

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

2026 - 2030

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Foreword

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Foreword

We know the importance and difference that secure and safe accommodation can make to the life chances of all those who live in our district.

We know the impact not having a place to call home can have on health and, of course, the adverse effects on the development and achievements of children affected by homelessness.

Homelessness remains a key priority for Canterbury City Council, and we aim to build on the achievements of the last strategy to improve our response to homelessness and provide positive outcomes for those approaching our services for assistance.

Our overarching priority must be to prevent people becoming homeless in the first place. To tackle this, we will need to work with our partners and support services to identify those at risk at the earliest possible opportunity. We must also make sure our services are as accessible as possible to ensure we are getting advice and support to people at the time they need it most. To do this, we will use the data we hold to review and shape our services.

If people do become homeless, we will offer temporary accommodation and remain committed to helping people to move on into longer term accommodation as quickly as possible. Since the last Strategy we have reduced our reliance on expensive, unsuitable bed and breakfast accommodation and invested in purchasing our own temporary accommodation.

We do not underestimate the challenges we face, both economically and in practise, including the forthcoming changes as part of the Local Government Reorganisation. But our commitment to preventing homelessness and rough sleeping, providing safe and secure options in the private rented sector along with increasing our provision of affordable and social housing remain at the heart of our commitment to our residents.

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1 Introduction

The Homelessness Act (2002) details housing authorities must create and implement a homelessness strategy at least every five years that sets out their key priorities for preventing and reducing homelessness and rough sleeping in their district. This is our Strategy for the four-year period (2026-2030).

The Council remains committed to our statutory obligations to prevent and relieve those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping. We have all faced many challenges over the last few years, including the Covid 19 Pandemic and the ongoing cost of living crisis, and we are aware of the impact this has had on our residents. Homelessness has increased, not only in the Canterbury District but also nationally. These wider issues present a longer-term challenge and along with the pressures on council budgets, we must prioritise our plans and resources whilst being as ambitious and creative as we can.

Our Strategy focusses on the below four strategic priorities:

1. **Increase prevention of homelessness through early intervention**
2. **Reduce and prevent rough sleeping**
3. **To improve access and information available for our services**
4. **Raise the standards of temporary accommodation and make best use of housing stock**

A Child-Centred Approach

This Strategy adopts a child-centred approach, recognising that homelessness has a profound and long-lasting impact on children's health, emotional wellbeing, education and life chances. Where children are part of a household affected by homelessness, their best interests will be a primary consideration in all decision making, in line with the Children Act 1989 and the Council's wider safeguarding responsibilities.

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We recognise that homelessness can disrupt schooling, access to early years provision, stability of relationships, and access to health and support services. Even short periods in temporary or unsuitable accommodation such as bed and breakfast accommodation, can have lasting consequences for children. Preventing homelessness for families, minimising disruption when homelessness cannot be avoided and supporting swift and stable move-on are therefore key priorities of this Strategy.

A child-centred approach means that:

- Children are seen, heard and considered in homelessness assessments and housing decisions;
- Families with children are prevented from becoming homeless wherever possible;
- Where temporary accommodation is required, it is safe, suitable and as close as possible to schools, support networks and health services;
- Length of stay in temporary accommodation is minimised, with a strong focus on rapid move-on to settled housing;
- Services work in partnership with children's services, education, health and the voluntary sector to address needs early and holistically.

This approach applies across all priorities in this Strategy and will inform how our services are designed, delivered and reviewed.

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2. Context

Understanding Homelessness

Homelessness is a complex issue with wide-ranging causes and impacts. A person is considered homeless if they have no accommodation available to them which they have a legal right to occupy, or if it is not reasonable for them to continue to occupy their current accommodation. Homelessness can also include people who are unable to secure entry to their accommodation, those living in temporary or insecure arrangements, or those fleeing domestic abuse or other forms of harm.

Homelessness is not limited to those sleeping rough. Many people experience homelessness in less visible ways, including staying in temporary accommodation, sofa-surfing with friends or family, or living in accommodation that is overcrowded, unsafe or unsuitable. For families, homelessness can be particularly destabilising, often disrupting children's education, health, wellbeing and access to support networks.

Rough sleeping represents the most acute and visible form of homelessness. Rough sleepers are people who are bedded down or about to bed down in the open air or in places not designed for habitation, such as doorways, parks, stairwells, vehicles or derelict buildings. While numbers in Canterbury remain relatively low compared with national figures, rough sleeping continues to present significant risks to health, safety and wellbeing and remains a priority within this Strategy.

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Legislative and Policy Framework

This Strategy is developed within the statutory framework set out in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The legislation places duties on local housing authorities to prevent and relieve homelessness for all eligible households, regardless of priority need, local connection or intentionality.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 marked a significant shift towards earlier intervention, extending the period during which a household is considered threatened with homelessness from 28 to 56 days and placing new requirements on councils to work proactively with households to prevent homelessness wherever possible.

Local authorities also have responsibilities under wider legislation, including the Children Act 1989, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and safeguarding duties, which require that the welfare and safety of children are central to decision making where families are affected by homelessness.

National Context

Homelessness has increased nationally in recent years, driven by a combination of factors including:

- Rising housing costs and affordability pressures
- A shortage of social and genuinely affordable housing
- Growing demand within the private rented sector
- Wider economic pressures, including the cost-of-living crisis
- Increasing complexity of need among households seeking assistance

National data also shows an increase in the number of households living in temporary accommodation and an increase in families with children affected by homelessness. The use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation has risen in many areas, despite recognition that it is often unsuitable for families and can have detrimental impacts on children's wellbeing and development.

Local Context: Homelessness in the Canterbury District

Homelessness remains a significant and growing challenge within the Canterbury district. Demand for homelessness advice and assistance has increased sharply in recent years. In 2024/25 there were 939 approaches for homelessness advice, rising to 1,270 in 2025/26—an increase of 35%.

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In September 2025, there were 160 households living in temporary accommodation, including 50 households with children, comprising 123 children. This reflects the increasing pressure on temporary accommodation and the growing number of families requiring support.

The most common reasons for households approaching the Council as homeless include:

- The ending of an assured shorthold tenancy
- Being asked to leave by family or friends
- Domestic abuse

There has also been a notable increase in households presenting with support needs, rising from 71 at the end of March 2024 to 116 by March 2025. This reflects the increasing complexity of homelessness and the need for joined up, multi-agency responses.

Children, Families and Young People

Children and young people are disproportionately affected by homelessness. Alongside the growing number of families in temporary accommodation, the Council has seen a significant increase in young people aged 18–24 assessed as being owed a homelessness duty, rising from 37 at the end of March 2024 to 55 by March 2025.

For children, homelessness can result in:

- Disruption to education and early years provision
- Increased emotional and mental health needs
- Reduced access to healthcare and support services
- Social isolation and instability

Recognising these impacts, this Strategy places a strong emphasis on prevention for families, minimising time spent in temporary accommodation, and ensuring that housing solutions support children's safety, stability and development.

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Housing Supply and Affordability

The shortage of affordable housing remains one of the most significant structural drivers of homelessness locally. At the end of March 2025, there were 1,356 households on the social housing register, rising to 1,377 in 2026, reflecting ongoing pressure on available housing stock.

Limited turnover of social housing, combined with affordability pressures in the private rented sector, means that many households face prolonged stays in temporary accommodation or difficulty securing settled housing. Addressing these pressures requires not only increasing supply but also making the best use of existing housing stock and strengthening partnerships with registered providers and private landlords.

Why This Strategy Matters

This Strategy sets out Canterbury City Council's response to these challenges over the next four years. It recognises that homelessness is preventable in many cases, that early intervention delivers better outcomes for residents and better value for public services, and that children's welfare must be central to local responses.

By focusing on prevention, partnership working, a child centred approach and effective use of housing resources, the Council aims to reduce homelessness, prevent rough sleeping, and improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities across the district.

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3. Our priorities

Priority 1: Increase our prevention of homelessness through early intervention

Preventing homelessness at the earliest possible stage delivers the best outcomes for residents and represents the most effective use of public resources. For individuals and families, remaining in their existing home avoids the disruption that homelessness can cause to employment, education, health and support networks. For children, prevention is particularly critical, as homelessness can have lasting impacts on wellbeing, development and educational attainment.

Demand for homelessness services in the Canterbury district has increased significantly, reflecting wider pressures within the housing market and rising living costs. Early intervention allows the Council and its partners to identify risks sooner, provide timely advice and support, and reduce the number of households entering crisis. By strengthening prevention activity, the Council can reduce reliance on temporary accommodation, limit avoidable trauma for households, and create more sustainable housing outcomes.

How we will achieve this:

- By building stronger relationships with our partners and support services, by looking at regular meetings to encourage collaboration which identifies those at risk at the earliest possible opportunity. This includes our public service and voluntary sector colleagues. We will review how effective this has been by analysing our Duty to Refer approaches and data gathered from internal systems.
- By widening our approach to how our homeless services can be accessed, taking our services into the district to make sure harder to reach communities are encouraged to seek assistance as soon as they need it. We will consider how we can reach those in rural areas and also how we can work with community and voluntary organisations to ensure our approach is inclusive.
- By effectively engaging and building relationships with landlords in the private sector to ensure we are offering advice and support to prevent homelessness at an early stage.
- Consider the introduction of Single Point of Contact for those leaving prison to co-ordinate and give consistency leading up to discharge.

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- Work with our partners to support newly granted refugees in our area to ensure they receive information and advice at the earliest opportunity
- Continue to work with partners on those leaving care to look at ways to prevent homelessness by making the best use of our Housing Needs Register, offers in the Private Sector and also understanding what options we need to consider for supported accommodation
- Develop family focused prevention pathways, including, early budgeting and debt advice for families and interventions through schools.
- By maximising our funding opportunities from Central Government to target the prevention of homelessness. This may be by providing rent in advance or deposits for properties in the private sector or adaptations to properties that will allow people to stay in their homes.

Priority 2: To reduce and prevent rough sleeping

Rough sleeping represents the most visible and severe form of homelessness and poses serious risks to health, safety and wellbeing. While the number of people sleeping rough in Canterbury is relatively low compared to national figures, the district experiences persistent challenges related to long-term and repeat rough sleeping, often involving individuals with complex needs.

Preventing rough sleeping and supporting rapid routes off the street improves outcomes for individuals and communities and reduces pressure on emergency services. Effective responses require early identification of risk, coordinated multi-agency support, and access to suitable accommodation options. This priority reflects the Council's commitment to preventing people from entering street homelessness and ensuring that those who do are supported to move quickly into stable accommodation with the right level of ongoing support.

How we will achieve this:

- By increasing early intervention, using data and risk assessments to identify vulnerability 3-6 months before crisis
- Develop personalised recovery plans for entrenched rough sleepers
- Increase the number of individuals who are able to remain in their accommodation through earlier interventions.

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- Expand our private sector links as part of the Rapid Rehousing model
- Develop ways to work with our partners to offer early advice and support to single people at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping
- Support wider inclusion health strategies to ensure no-one is discharged onto the streets, using our Hospital Pathways Homeless worker to assist and advise on in-patients with multiple needs
- Increase accommodation offers for those rough sleeping to provide a personalised and immediate offer
- Strengthen pathways for 16–25-year-olds, particularly care leavers and young parents, working jointly with Children's Services and commissioned youth homelessness services.
- Work with services to ensure those in accommodation receive the support the need to maintain their tenancy

Priority 3: To improve how we communicate and provide advice

Accessible, timely and high-quality advice is fundamental to preventing homelessness and ensuring residents receive the right support at the right time. Barriers to accessing services such as lack of awareness, digital exclusion, language needs or fear of engagement can result in households seeking help only when they are already in crisis.

Improving how services are communicated and accessed supports earlier intervention, promotes fairness, and ensures that vulnerable residents, including families with children, young people and those with additional support needs, are not disadvantaged. Clear communication and consistent advice also help residents to understand their rights and responsibilities, support meaningful engagement with personalised housing plans, and contribute to better housing outcomes.

How we will achieve this:

- We will review the information on our website to highlight access points to vulnerable residents and those with support needs and consider a range of options for how contact can be made.
- We will produce clear Personalised Housing Plans for each household, which are reviewed regularly and where expectations on both sides are understood and committed to.

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- We will consider running regular satellite advice sessions offering homeless advice in rural areas to ensure we are reaching everyone in our District
- We will continue working towards the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation and ensure our staff have the relevant training and understanding to communicate with, and advise domestic abuse victims, continuing our face-to-face presence at our local One-Stop Shops
- We will regularly review our data to identify those who may experience barriers including any harder to reach groups , such as those with disabilities in accessing our services and use that data to shape the provision of our services.
- We will use the results of our data to establish work with partners to ensure we have links to relevant agencies or third sector organisations to provide targeted support. We will review points of contact, to ensure people do not need to tall their story more than once and where we can, create Single Points of Contact within our services.
- Develop child aware assessments, ensuring officers consider:
  - Children's educational needs
  - Health, disability or SEND needs
  - Impact of accommodation location and suitability

Priority 4: Raise the standards of temporary accommodation and make best use of housing stock

Safe, suitable and good-quality temporary accommodation is essential to supporting households experiencing homelessness, particularly families with children and those with additional vulnerabilities. Although temporary accommodation is intended to be a short-term measure, housing supply pressures mean some households experience longer stays, making standards of safety, suitability and location increasingly important.

Alongside this, a shortage of affordable housing remains a key driver of homelessness locally and nationally. High demand for social housing, limited turnover and affordability pressures in the private rented sector increase reliance on temporary accommodation.

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By improving the quality and suitability of temporary accommodation and making better use of existing housing stock, the Council can reduce reliance on unsuitable placements such as bed and breakfast, improve move-on rates, and ensure housing resources are targeted effectively to those in greatest need.

How we will achieve this:

- By continuing to undertake robust suitability assessments when placing households into temporary accommodation and we will look at how we can ensure standards of Temporary Accommodation are met and maintained
- Reduce reliance on private sector accommodation through purchasing of own temporary accommodation
- Limit the usage of bed and breakfast accommodation
- Reduce levels of out of area placements for temporary accommodation
- Work with our social housing landlords to build relationships to further help us in housing our statutory homeless households, including:
    - Having input into decisions on planning arrangements for any new build properties and making sure they are agreed and informed by the make-up of our district
    - Where we are able, we will seek agreement to a small percentage of new build properties being allocated to homeless households
- We will review our Allocations Policy to ensure it still reflects the need of our District and that properties continue to be allocated to those in the highest priority need
- We will consider schemes to assist those under occupying social housing to move to a smaller property, which will free up larger family accommodation.
- We will continue to build our links across council services to make sure we are doing all we can to help people stay in their own homes where possible, making the best use of our Disabled Facilities Grant for adaptations to properties.
- We will engage in the requirement to produce a Supported Housing Strategy to understand current availability currently and establish our future needs for this type of accommodation.

4. How we will deliver our strategy

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Delivery of this Strategy will be underpinned by partnership working, strong governance, a child-centred approach, and continuous review of outcomes.

Partnership Working

We recognise that homelessness cannot be addressed by the Council alone. Effective delivery will rely on strong collaboration with partners, including:

- Kent County Council, including Children's Services and Public Health
- Education providers and early years services
- Health services
- Housing providers and private landlords
- Voluntary and community sector organisations

We will strengthen referral pathways, information sharing (where appropriate), and joint planning to ensure families and individuals receive timely, coordinated support.

Child-Centred and Trauma-Informed Practice

All homelessness services will work in a way that:

- Considers the needs and wellbeing of children in homeless households
- Is trauma-informed, recognising the impact of homelessness, domestic abuse and instability
- Ensures safeguarding responsibilities are understood and acted upon at all stages

Governance and Accountability

- The Strategy will be overseen through existing Council governance arrangements.
- A delivery action plan will sit alongside this Strategy, setting out:

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- Clear actions
- Lead officers
- Timescales
- Performance measures

Monitoring, Review and Data

We will use data to:

- Track homelessness trends, including the number of households with children in temporary accommodation
- Monitor length of stay in temporary accommodation for families
- Identify inequalities or barriers to access

The Strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains responsive to:

- Changes in demand
- Legislative changes
- Economic pressures
- The needs of children and families in the district

Listening and Learning

We will seek feedback from:

- Residents who have experienced homelessness
- Families and young people using our services
- Partner organisations

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This learning will be used to improve service design and outcomes over the lifetime of the Strategy.

5. Links to other strategies

Housing, homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2018 - 2023

Canterbury City Council Corporate Plan 2024 to 2028

Canterbury City Council Local Plan

Kent & Medway Housing Strategy

Housing Allocations Policy

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Appendix 4

Draft - Canterbury City Council

Homelessness Action Plan – Response to the National Plan to End Homelessness

2026

The Government's National Plan to End Homelessness requires local authorities to develop and maintain a local action plan setting out how they will contribute to the national ambition to prevent homelessness, reduce rough sleeping and improve outcomes for people experiencing housing insecurity. This Action Plan has been developed in response to that requirement and provides Canterbury City Council's framework for delivering these objectives at a local level over the coming years.

The Council recognises that homelessness cannot be addressed by housing services alone. The causes of homelessness are often complex and linked to poverty, poor health, domestic abuse, employment insecurity, contact with the criminal justice system, family breakdown and a lack of suitable housing. Successful prevention therefore requires coordinated action across public services, housing providers, health partners, support agencies, the voluntary and community sector and people with lived experience of homelessness.

The Plan builds on the evidence set out within Canterbury City Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and is informed by the Government's Local Outcomes Framework.

This Action Plan adopts the five national pillars of the National Plan to End Homelessness:

1. Universal Prevention: Tackling the root causes of homelessness.
2. Targeted Prevention: Supporting those at greatest risk of homelessness.
3. Preventing Crisis: Helping people remain in their homes.
4. Improving Emergency Responses: Delivering safe, suitable and effective temporary accommodation and support.
5. Recovery and Prevention of Repeat Homelessness: Supporting long-term housing stability and reducing repeat homelessness and rough sleeping.

This Action Plan reflects Canterbury City Council's commitment to preventing homelessness wherever possible, ensuring that homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring, and working with partners to improve outcomes for residents across the district.

The plan should be read in conjunction with our long-term rough sleeping plan, which outlines the activities we will undertake to address this specific area of homelessness in more detail.

Pillar 1 – Universal Prevention, tackling the root cause of homelessness

Our overarching priority must be to prevent people becoming homeless in the first place. To tackle this, we will need to work with our partners and support services to identify those at risk at the earliest possible opportunity. We must also make sure our services are as accessible as possible to ensure we are getting advice and support to people at the time they need it most.

We will make sure social housing reaches the people who need it most by making the best use of our housing stock. This will include:

- Working with our social housing landlords to build relationships to further help us in housing our statutory homeless households, including:
    - Having input into decisions on planning arrangements for any new build properties and making sure they are agreed and informed by the make-up of our district
    - Where we are able, we will seek agreement to a small percentage of new build properties being allocated to homeless households
- Reviewing our Allocations Policy to ensure it still reflects the need of our District and that properties continue to be allocated to those in the highest priority need
- Considering schemes to assist those under occupying social housing to move to a smaller property, which will free up larger family accommodation.
- Using the Ending Rough Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool (ERSRAT) and management information to identify vulnerability 3–6 months before crisis.
- Revisiting the development of a Prevention Hub, building on Porchlight's previous work, bringing together outreach staff, tenancy sustainment, and early advice for single people at risk.
- Delivering earlier practical interventions to reduce the likelihood of crisis intervention.
- Attending pre-eviction meetings with Porchlight to prevent repeat homelessness.
- Holding weekly move-on meetings to ensure that supported housing allocations reflect the highest need individuals.
- Expanding Private Rented Sector links as part of the Rapid Rehousing model – potentially linking into a wider workstream to access to the private rented sector.

We also recognise that supported housing that provides help with life skills for young people as well as those with mental health needs or physical conditions can be a helpful tool in the prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping.

We will engage in the requirement to produce a Supported Housing Strategy to understand current availability currently and establish our future needs for this type of accommodation and strengthen current supported accommodation pathways, so capacity is consistently available for those requiring intensive support.

Pillar 2 – Targeted prevention, support for people at higher risk of homelessness

We know that those leaving the care system, prison or hospital are more likely to face homelessness or rough sleeping. We also know that survivors of domestic abuse or migrants may need tailored support to meet their needs.

Our targeted interventions will strengthen key working, multi-agency planning, and transitions from institutions. We will

- Build stronger relationships with our partners and support services to identify those at risk at the earliest possible opportunity. This includes our public service and voluntary sector colleagues. We will review how effective this has been by analysing our Duty to Refer approaches and data gathered from internal systems.
- Establish a multi-agency panel to coordinate support around our Target Priority Group, involving East Kent Mental Health Rough Sleeping Service, Primary Care, Adult Social Care, Forward Trust, Porchlight, DWP, and Rising Sun.
- Use coordinated case management to reduce crisis escalation and support pathways into recovery.
- Work to ensure no one is discharged onto the streets by supporting the Pathways team and wider inclusion health strategies.
- Ensure our Hospital Pathways Homeless Officer attends weekly multi-disciplinary team meetings for in-patients with complex needs.
- Strengthen partnerships to reduce the need for formal escalation routes to Adult Social Care.
- Improve shared understanding of duties, risk, and opportunities for joint working.
- Test personalised, flexible interventions for entrenched rough sleepers.
- Contribute directly to national ambitions to halve long term rough sleeping.
- Continue to attend regular prison release panel meetings so that we are able to plan for safe accommodation from day of release
- Support people leaving prison with accommodation searches and reconnection, enabling work readiness and stability

- Consider the introduction of Single Point of Contact for those leaving prison to co-ordinate and give consistency leading up to discharge
- Continue to work with partners on those leaving care to look at ways to prevent homelessness by making the best use of our Housing Needs Register, offers in the Private Sector and also understanding what options we need to consider for supported accommodation.
- Work with our partners to support newly granted refugees in our area to ensure they receive information and advice at the earliest opportunity. This will be supported by the work happening towards achieving District of Sanctuary status.
- Continue working towards the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation and ensure our staff have the relevant training and understanding to communicate with, and advise domestic abuse victims, continuing our face-to-face presence at our local One-Stop Shops
- Improve joint work with IDVA services where domestic abuse intersects with criminal justice involvement and homelessness risk

Pillar 3 – preventing crisis – helping people stay in their homes

Preventing homelessness at the earliest possible stage delivers the best outcomes for residents and represents the most effective use of public resources. For individuals and families, remaining in their existing home avoids the disruption that homelessness can cause to employment, education, health and support networks

Early intervention allows the Council and its partners to identify risks sooner, provide timely advice and support, and reduce the number of households entering crisis. By strengthening prevention activity, the Council can reduce reliance on temporary accommodation, limit avoidable trauma for households, and create more sustainable housing outcomes.

For those at imminent risk of homelessness we will help them to stay in their current home by:

- Engaging and building relationships with landlords in the private sector to ensure we are offering advice and support to prevent homelessness at an early stage.
- Consider running regular satellite advice sessions offering homeless advice in rural areas to ensure we are reaching everyone in our District
- Developing family focused prevention pathways, including, early budgeting and debt advice for families and interventions through schools
- Maximising our funding opportunities from Central Government to target the prevention of homelessness. This may be by providing rent in advance or deposits for properties in the private sector.

- Continuing to build our links across council services at an early stage to make sure we are doing all we can to help people stay in their own homes where possible.
- Make the best use of our Disabled Facilities Grant for adaptations to properties.
- Introduce a landlord liaison post to improve relationships with private providers to increase access to private accommodation and prevent homelessness in the private sector at the earliest possible stage.
- Increase the number of individuals who are able to remain in their accommodation through earlier interventions, ensuring assessments of housing need are completed in a timely way and excluders/services are contacted at the earliest stage.
- Reduce repeat homelessness through tailored engagement, practical support, and personalised housing plans.
- Improve transitions from outreach to Housing Led units.
- Strengthen housing and support alignment to maintain long term stability.
- Hold monthly multi-agency operational panels for individuals at immediate risk of losing supported housing.
- Work with partners to raise awareness of services and emphasise the shared responsibility across partners to prevent crisis escalation.

Pillar 4 – Improving emergency responses – improving temporary accommodation and making people's experiences better if they do become homeless

Safe, suitable and good quality temporary accommodation is essential to supporting households experiencing homelessness, particularly families with children and those with additional vulnerabilities. Although temporary accommodation is intended to be a short-term measure, housing supply pressures mean some households experience longer stays, making standards of safety, suitability and location increasingly important.

If we cannot prevent homelessness and need to offer temporary accommodation, we will

- Continue to limit the usage of bed and breakfast accommodation.
- Reduce levels of out of area placements for temporary accommodation.
- Continue to reduce reliance on private sector accommodation through purchasing of own temporary accommodation
- Continue to undertake robust suitability assessments when placing households into temporary accommodation, recognising that needs might change.

- Use our Landlord Liaison Post to increase access to the private sector to offer longer term solutions in the private sector for those in temporary accommodation.
- Continue to build relationships with our temporary accommodation providers to address and resolve issues quickly and with minimal disruption to clients.
- Embed emergency accommodation provision within the year round pathway, improving triage and reducing returns to rough sleeping.
- Improve the flow of individuals through supported accommodation, ensuring stays are brief, safe, and purposeful, and that clear move on plans are in place.
- Prioritise entrenched rough sleepers who require consistent, relationship based support.
- Ensure no one facing acute risk (mental health, safeguarding, or substance use) is placed without a multi-agency safety plan

Pillar 5- recovery and preventing repeat homelessness- ensuring people don't experience homelessness more than once and halving long-term rough sleeping

We know that once a person is in accommodation, without support form services and the wider community, this can sometimes not be enough. We need to have measures in place to stop repeat homelessness. To do this, we will:

- Use our links to our voluntary, community and faith sector organisations to inform our clients of the support available to them in the community.
- Engage with the Local Health Alliance to review wider health impacts and look at interventions to reduce repeat homelessness.
- Through personalised assistance, signposting and practical interventions, we will help individuals maintain accommodation, improve wellbeing and reduce the risk of repeat homelessness.
- Develop personalised recovery plans for entrenched rough sleepers.
- Coordinate with partners to meet national long-term reduction targets.
- Embed lived experience into service planning and evaluation via the Canterbury Homeless Partnership.
- Support a peer navigation role to aid engagement and recovery.
- Strengthen engagement with the Primary Care homeless nurse.
- Improve communication with ICB mental health teams to support stability.
- Expand volunteering, training, and employment readiness opportunities with Catching Lives, Porchlight, and local charities

Rough Sleeping Reduction and Long-Term Rough Sleeping Plan

A separate Rough Sleeping Delivery Plan which supports the national ambition to halve long-term rough sleeping will support this plan.

The detailed Rough Sleeping Delivery Plan will be maintained as a supporting document and reviewed annually.

Temporary Accommodation Standards, Safety and Suitability

The Council is committed to ensuring all temporary accommodation is safe, suitable and appropriate for the households placed within it.

Accommodation Standards

All temporary accommodation providers must:

- Meet statutory housing health and safety requirements.
- Comply with fire safety legislation.
- Meet minimum space standards.
- Provide safe and secure accommodation.
- Maintain appropriate safeguarding procedures.
- Undergo regular inspections by the Council.

Suitability Assessments

Before every placement the Council will consider:

- Household composition.
- Medical requirements.
- Disability needs.
- Education requirements.
- Employment location.
- Risk of domestic abuse.
- Support requirements.
- Access to transport and services.

Suitability reviews will be completed whenever circumstances change.

Management Standards

Providers are expected to:

- Have clear management arrangements.
- Maintain 24-hour emergency contact provision.
- Provide behaviour management policies.
- Operate safeguarding procedures.

Location Principles

The Council will aim to:

- Minimise out-of-area placements.
- Keep households close to support networks.
- Keep children near schools where possible.
- Prioritise accommodation within Canterbury district.
- Use accommodation outside the district only where no suitable local option exists.

There will be a separate Temporary Accommodation Policy to support these objectives.

Local Outcomes Framework Targets

Targets have been set for annual improvements against the Government's Local Outcomes Framework metrics using the July-September 2025 baseline.

Outcome Measure	Baseline Sept 2025	2026 Target	2027 Target	2028 Target
Households with children in temporary accommodation per 1000 households	0.73	Baseline	-2%	-4%
Households with children in B&B over 6 weeks	0	Zero	Zero	Zero
Success at preventing and relieving homelessness	45%	46%	48%	50%
Success at preventing and relieving homelessness for those experiencing multiple disadvantage	23%	Baseline	30%	37%
People sleeping rough long-term	21	-10%	-30%	50%
People sleeping rough on a single night	29	-10%	-30%	50%

Annual targets will be reviewed following publication of updated Government datasets and Local Government Reorganisation arrangements.

Rationale for targets

For households with children in temporary accommodation per 1000 households, we are currently tracking lower than the South East at 2.45 and also Kent at an average of 2.08. The target has therefore been set to reduce the baseline 0.73 per 1,000 households to 0.7 per 1,000 households by 2028.

Households with children in B&B over six weeks – we have been meeting this target for some time, in line with legislation and will continue to do so, the target has therefore been set at zero to continue this trend.

Success at preventing and relieving homelessness – the South East baseline is 44% and Kent has an average of 47.6%. The target set for 50% by 2028 is in line with this.

Success at preventing and relieving homelessness for those experiencing multiple disadvantage – this is a relatively newly monitored data set. The average across Kent at September 2025 was 37% and 35% for the South East. The target has therefore been set to align us with other Kent authorities.

People sleeping rough on a single night - the governments ambition is to halve rough sleeping by the end of this parliament and as such the target has been set at 50% reduction by 2028.

People sleeping rough long-term – as above the target has been set at 50% for long term rough sleeping, alongside rough sleeping on a single night to assist with the overall reduction.

Governance and Monitoring

A Homelessness Strategy Board will be set up to oversee delivery of the Plan. Subject to agreement, the intended membership will include:

- Head of Housing and Community
- Street Population Co-ordinator
- Homelessness Policy and Programme Officer
- Public Health
- Kent County Council Adult/Children’s Services
- Probation Service
- Department for Work and Pensions

- Homeless support services in Canterbury

The Board will meet quarterly to:

- Monitor performance against Local Outcomes Framework measures.
- Review homelessness trends.
- Monitor rough sleeping and temporary accommodation use.
- Review delivery of agreed actions.
- Escalate barriers requiring strategic intervention.

Operational Governance

A monthly Homelessness Delivery Group will monitor through business as usual reporting and will:

- Review operational performance.
- Monitor the use of temporary accommodation and review the number of complaints received.
- Review long term rough sleeping cases and record increases and outcomes.
- Monitor prevention and relief outcomes.
- Track delivery of action plan milestones.
- Review the number of out of area placements and arrangements for move on where families are out of area
- Review the outcome of inspections with Private Sector Housing to monitor and review temporary accommodation within the Canterbury district.

Appendix 5

Homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2026-2030

Consultation report

September 2026

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1. Introduction

We invited residents, organisations and community partners to share their views on our draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2030.

Under the Homelessness Act 2002, housing authorities must produce and implement a homelessness strategy at least every five years.

This strategy sets out our key priorities for preventing and reducing homelessness and rough sleeping across the Canterbury district for the period to 2026 to 2030.

We wanted to hear from residents, frontline organisations and anyone with lived experience of homelessness, to make sure our priorities reflect the needs of our communities.

The consultation asked for views on:

- the four strategic priorities in the draft strategy and whether the proposed approaches would be effective
- how well the strategy supports children and families affected by homelessness
- whether anything was missing from the draft
- how realistic the strategy is to deliver given the current funding and housing pressures
- which partners the council should be working with

The consultation ran from Wednesday 10 June to Wednesday 2 September 2026.

2. Executive summary

Responses received

- 21 responses were received to the online survey, three of which were from people with lived experience of homelessness
- 15 people with lived experience of homelessness were interviewed by the Housing Solutions Team and Porchlight
- 15 representatives from community and partner organisations attended a stakeholder workshop
- three written representations were received

Survey findings

- all 21 survey respondents strongly supported or supported each of the four strategic priorities, with no respondent opposing or strongly opposing any of them
- Priority 2, to reduce and prevent rough sleeping, received the highest proportion of strongly support responses (20 of 21)
- views on whether the proposed approaches for each priority would be effective were more mixed than views on the priorities themselves
- 13 of 21 respondents were not sure what the early intervention approaches would be effective and 11 of 21 were not sure about the rough sleeping approaches
- communication and advice received the most confidence, with 13 of 21 respondents saying the proposed approaches would be effective
- views on deliverability were evenly split, with 10 respondents saying the strategy is realistic and deliverable given the current funding and housing pressures, one saying it is not, and 10 not sure
- 17 of 21 respondents found the draft strategy very easy or easy to read understand

Themes from free-text responses

- across the survey's free-text responses, the need for clearer delivery detail was the most consistent theme, raised in relation to nearly every priority: respondents asked for specific actions, targets, timelines and clarity on how commitments would be sourced.
- concerns about funding and resourcing were raised most frequently in relation to deliverability (15 comments) but recurred across several other questions too
- housing supply and affordability was another recurring theme, raised in relation to nearly every priority
- support for prevention and early intervention was raised strongly in relation to both Priority 1 and Priority 2 (20 comments each), often alongside calls for a genuinely joined-up, multi-agency approach rather than single-service responses

Lived experience interviews

- interviews with 15 people with lived experience of homelessness highlighted the value of responsive and helpful staff
- staff from both council and the voluntary sector were highlighted repeatedly, with regular proactive contact and updates described as reducing stress
- early contact with services such as health visitors, probation and the Job Centre helped connect some participants to housing support before their situation escalated
- referral through a voluntary sector support worker was described as leading to a fast move into safe accommodation in one case, and financial support with rent in advance and a deposit was credited with preventing homelessness in another
- they also identified barriers including confusing or repetitive processes, having to retell their story to multiple services and response times that felt long relative to the urgency of a person's situation
- barriers such as embarrassment or stigma prevented some people from seeking help earlier
- gaps in understanding of welfare and housing law, and in how vulnerability is assessed, were also raised
- safety concerns and poor physical conditions were raised in relation to temporary accommodation
- one participant described a disability or neurodivergent condition not being sufficiently understood or accommodated by services
- the strategy could be strengthened by providing continuity through a single point of contact, clear up-front information about temporary accommodation, greater consistency in how vulnerability and disability are recognised and stronger partnership with voluntary sector organisations, which were credited with playing a role in several positive outcomes

Stakeholder engagement

- a stakeholder workshop, attended by 15 representatives from voluntary and charitable organisations, the police, education providers and health services, identified named contacts, single points of contact and closer multi-agency working as key to improving how services work together
- participants also raised concerns about staff capacity, funding security, and access for people who are digitally excluded, and discussed how the four priorities could be strengthened and delivered in practice

Written representations

- three written representations were received, one of which was from a person with lived experience of homelessness
- these included a recommendation for a Personal Development Record and allocated mentor for families in temporary accommodation, a submission from a resident with limited knowledge of the subject supportive of engaging directly with people with lived experience and a submission from CPRE Kent raising concerns about the strategy's treatment of rural homelessness and the affordability of housing in rural areas

3. Consultation methodology

Consultation took place between Wednesday 10 June and Wednesday 2 September 2026.

The following methods were used to seek views:

- an online questionnaire, which received 21 responses
- a paper version of the questionnaire, for which no responses were received
- interviews conducted by the Housing Solutions Teams, Rough Sleeper Teams and the charitiy Porchlight, with people with lived experience of homelessness, of which 15 were completed
- a stakeholder engagement workshop, was attended by 15 representatives from a range of community groups and organisations, including voluntary and charitable organisations, the police, education providers and health services
- three written representations were received

The consultation was promoted in the following ways:

- an article on the council's newsroom site
- posts on the council's social media channels
- Canterbury City Council corporate newsletters
- a briefing note shared with the Resident Engagement Panel
- invitation to a stakeholder engagement workshop
- interviews with people with lived experience of homelessness
- direct emails to a wide range of stakeholders encouraging them to respond to the consultation
- notifications sent to individuals who had requested to be informed about council consultations

4. Findings

The survey asked for views on the draft strategy four priorities, its deliverability and who the council should be working with to deliver it.

4.1 Respondent profile - overall

4.1.1 Respondents were asked: Which of the following best describes you?

Residents of the district made up the largest respondent group (nine of 21), followed by representatives of partners organisations.

Three respondents were members of a community or volunteer group and two were city, county, parish or town councillors.

Which of the following best describes you?	**Percentage**
Resident of the district	42.9% (9)
A local business	-
Member of a community or volunteer group	14.3% (3)
A city, county, parish or town councillor	9.5% (2)
An MP	-
Representative of a partner organisation (for example a charity, school, health service)	23.8% (5)
Other (please specify)	9.5% (2)

4.1.2 Respondents were asked: Do you have a personal experience of homelessness or rough sleeping?

16 of 21 respondents said they had no personal experience of homelessness or rough sleeping.

Three respondents said they had experience in the past, two preferred not to say and no respondents said they were currently experiencing homelessness or rough sleeping.

Do you have a personal experience of homelessness or rough sleeping?	**Percentage**
Yes - currently	-
Yes - in the past	14.3% (3)
No	76.2% (16)
Prefer not to say	9.5% (2)

4.1.3 Respondents were asked: What age are you?

Respondents were spread across a range of age groups, with the largest group aged 55 to 64.

What age are you?	Percentage
Under 18	-
18 to 25	4.8% (1)
26 to 34	-
35 to 44	19.9% (4)
45 to 54	14.3% (3)
55 to 64	23.8% (5)
65 to 74	14.3% (3)
75 to 84	14.3% (3)
85 and above	-
Prefer not to say	4.8% (1)
No reply	4.8% (1)

4.1.3 Respondents were asked: What gender are you?

10 of 21 respondents identified as female and six as male.

Three respondents preferred to self-describe their gender.

What gender are you?	Percentage
Male	28.6% (6)
Female	47.6% (10)
Prefer to self-describe (for example, non-binary, gender fluid etc)	14.3% (3)
Prefer not to say	4.8% (1)
No reply	4.8% (1)

4.1.4 Respondents were asked: Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

16 respondents said they did not consider themselves as disabled and three said they did.

Do you consider yourself to be disabled?	Percentage
Yes	14.3% (3)
No	76.2% (16)

Prefer not to say	4.8% (1)
No reply	4.8% (1)

4.1.4 Respondents were asked: What is your ethnic background?

The respondent group was predominantly White British (18 of 21).

One respondent identified as Irish.

One preferred not to disclose their ethnicity and one did not answer the question.

What is your ethnic background?	**Percentage**
White (English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British)	85.7% (18)
Irish	4.8% (1)
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	-
Any other White background (please specify):	-
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	-
Asian / Asian British	-
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	-
Other ethnic group (please specify):	-
Prefer not to say	4.8% (1)
No reply	4.8% (1)

4.2 Readability of the draft strategy

4.2.1 Respondents were asked: Overall, how easy did you find the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to read and understand?

"It is a clear report and hopefully is easily understood. Perhaps in the final report, the use of more graphics, tables and photos would also help to break up the text and make it easier to follow."

17 respondents found the draft strategy very easy or easy to read and understand.

Three respondents were neutral and one found it difficult.

No respondents found it very difficult.

Overall, how easy did you find the draft strategy to read and understand?	**Responses**	**%**
Very easy	4	19.0%
Easy	13	61.9%
Neither easy nor difficult	3	14.3%
Difficult	1	4.8%
Very difficult	-	-

Respondents then had the opportunity to explain their answers.

The responses were reviewed and grouped into the following themes.

Some longer responses have been broken down into separate comments.

Theme	**Number of written comments**
Issues clearly explained	14
Easy to understand	10
More detail on how challenges will be addressed is required	6
Clear plans to address the issues	3
Improve by adding visuals and simplifying language otherwise not accessible	3
Clear priorities and child centred approach	2
CCC needs to work with partners	2
Oversimplified at times	1
Supportive of emphasis on prevention, early intervention and partnership working	1
More detail on how voluntary and community sectors can contribute	1

4.3 Support for children and families

4.3.1 Respondents were asked: The strategy places children's needs at the centre of decision-making about homelessness. To what extent do you agree that it does enough to support children and families affected by homelessness?

"I have concerns that saying you'll do something is not the same as illustrating how this area of work is going to be resourced - how many people will be working on this? How long will they be in post and is that role secure for a year/three years/ten years?"

15 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the strategy does enough to support children and families affected by homelessness.

Four respondents neither agreed nor disagreed and two disagreed.

No respondents strongly disagreed.

Of the respondents who said they had personal experience of homelessness or rough sleeping in the past, one strongly agreed, one agreed and one neither agreed nor disagreed.

To what extent do you agree that the strategy does enough to support children and families affected by homelessness?	**Responses**	**%**
Strongly agree	2	9.5%
Agree	13	61.9%
Neither agree nor disagree	4	19.0%
Disagree	2	9.5%
Strongly disagree	-	-

Respondents then had the opportunity to explain their answers.

Where appropriate, closely related sub-themes have been grouped under a broader theme.

Theme and count	**Sub-theme**	**No.**
Support for a child-centred and trauma-informed approach (12)	Supportive of child centred approach	10
	Importance of trauma-based approach	1
	Own bed for all children and babies is necessary	1
Clearer delivery plans and measurable outcomes are required (8)	Clearer actions required	4
	Actions and measurable outcomes required	1
	Timelines are required	1

	Need information on how this will be resourced	1
	Strategy is not realistic	1
Housing supply, affordability issues and reduce reliance on B&Bs (8)	Priority for stable / suitable homes	3
	Lack of suitable accommodation	2
	Reduce reliance on B&Bs	1
	Affordability issues	1
	Financial impacts on households	1
Importance of prevention and partnership working (7)	Importance of early prevention	4
	Multi-agency approach needed	3
Ensuring fair and inclusive support is required (4)	Need guidelines so those in abusive relationships are not disadvantaged	2
	Legal duty to notify all parties involved	1
	Should not be delivered at expense of rough sleepers	1
Other feedback (3)	Mixed views on support available	2
	Pets should be allowed	1

4.4 Support for the four priorities

4.4.1 Respondents were asked: Overall, how much do you support the four priorities set out in the draft strategy?

All 21 respondents strongly supported or supported each of the four strategic priorities.

No respondent opposed or strongly opposed any priority.

Priority 2: To reduce and prevent rough sleeping, received the highest proportion of strongly support responses (20 of 21).

	Strongly support	Support	Neither support nor oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose
Priority 1: Increase our prevention of homelessness through early intervention	18	3	-	-	-
	85.7%	14.3%	-	-	-
Priority 2: To reduce and prevent rough sleeping	20	1	-	-	-
	95.2%	4.8%	-	-	-
Priority 3: To improve how we communicate and provide advice	18	3	-	-	-
	85.7%	14.3%	-	-	-
Priority 4: Raise the standards of temporary accommodation and make best use of housing stock	19	2	-	-	-
	90.5%	9.5%	-	-	-

4.4.2 Respondents were asked: The strategy sets out a priority to *“increase our prevention of homelessness through early intervention”*. Do you think the proposed approaches will be effective?

“There are a lot of factors that impact on people and a truly joined up approach, with Health and ASC as well as the voluntary sector, would be very beneficial. I think it goes further than 'working with stakeholders' and should be focussed on creating permanent, system-embedded cultures to make sure that people don't fall through the cracks between services.”

“I think early intervention is key, particularly in identifying vulnerable groups, for instance, young care leavers, those being discharged from the services, those on prison release and those who have been long-term sick in hospital. It will be difficult, but

if the resource required to do this job is provided, it would make a difference."
13 of 21 respondents were not sure whether the proposed early intervention approaches would be effective.

Seven respondents said yes and one said no.

Of the respondents who said they had personal experience of homelessness or rough sleeping in the past, two were not sure and one said yes.

The strategy sets out a priority to *"increase our prevention of homelessness through early intervention"*. Do you think the proposed approaches will be effective?	**Responses**	**%**
Yes	7	33.3%
No	1	4.8%
Not sure	13	61.9%

Respondents then had the opportunity to explain their answers.

Theme and count	**Sub-theme**	**No.**
Support for prevention and early intervention (20)	Prevention and early identification challenges	7
	Early intervention with vulnerable groups	7
	Family centred approach and engagement is required	4
	Provide early budget and debt advice	2
Partnership working and engagement with external organisations (12)	Multi-agency approach is needed	7
	Stronger relationships with landlords are needed	5
Housing supply, temporary accommodation and affordability barriers (10)	Lack of affordable private and social houses	4
	Temporary accommodation should be avoided	3
	Limited turnover of social houses	2
	Increasing poverty is an issue	1
Mixed or conditional views (10)	Yes	5
	Unsure	3
	Depends on what individual wants	2
	No	1
Access to services and support (6)	Staff capacity and accessibility pressures	3
	Increase homelessness services across district	2
	Application processes are difficult to navigate	1
Delivery, resources and implementation (4)	Actions are measurable outcomes are needed	2
	Need more information on Renters Rights Act	1

	How will it be resourced?	1

4.4.2 Respondents were asked: The strategy sets out a priority to *"reduce and prevent rough sleeping"*. Do you think the proposed approaches will be effective?

"Not sure. There are factors preventing this that are not within the control of Canterbury City Council. These include the movement of, for example, rough sleepers between local authority areas and the discharge of prisoners on Fridays and/or without accommodation. Other negative structural factors include the cost-of-living crisis and rising poverty; rising housing costs and the lack of affordable housing in the private rented sector; the fact that Housing Association social housing is generally expensive and the lack of Council social housing in our district."

11 respondents were not sure whether the proposed approaches to reducing and preventing rough sleeping would be effective.

Eight respondents said yes and two said no.

Of the respondents who said they had personal experience of homelessness or rough sleeping in the past, two were not sure and one said yes.

The strategy sets out a priority to *"reduce and prevent rough sleeping"*. Do you think the proposed approaches will be effective?	**Responses**	**%**
Yes	8	38.1%
No	2	9.5%
Not sure	11	52.4%

Respondents then had the opportunity to explain their answers.

Theme and count	**Sub-theme**	**No.**
Support for early intervention and targeted support (20)	Early intervention with vulnerable groups	8
	Early intervention is needed	5
	Bespoke solutions required	3
	Build relationships and trust first	2
Housing supply and accommodation options (11)	Lack of affordable private and social housing	6
	Alternative accommodation	4
	Lack of affordable housing is not addressed	1
Partnership working and specialist services (9)	Multi-agency approach is needed	4
	Praise for Hospital Pathways Team	4
	Advice from CHAC is critical	1
Overall views (9)	Yes	7

	Unsure	2
Challenges beyond the council's direct control (6)	There are uncontrollable factors	3
	Cost of living crisis	2
	Some people may prefer rough sleeping	1
Concerns about delivery and capacity (5)	More information required	2
	How will it be achieved?	2
	Staff capacity and accessibility pressures	1
Perceptions of rough sleeping (3)	Concerns about visible rough sleeping and street begging	3

4.4.3 Respondents were asked: The strategy sets out a priority to *"improve how we communicate and provide advice"*. Do you think the proposed approaches will be effective?

"Communication will always be an improvement area in any public-facing service so I'm glad this has some specifics included. I wonder if the outreach in rural areas will be a bit tokenistic though and instead there could be a focus on underserved communities so people at higher risk of neglect and isolation are reached early?"

13 respondents said the proposed approaches to improving communication and advice would be effective.

Seven respondents were not sure, and one said no.

Of the respondents who said they had personal experience of homelessness or rough sleeping in the past, two said yes and one was not sure.

The strategy sets out a priority to *"improve how we communicate and provide advice"*. Do you think the proposed approaches will be effective?	**Responses**	**%**
Yes	13	61.9%
No	1	4.8%
Not sure	7	33.3%

Respondents then had the opportunity to explain their answers.

Theme and count	**Sub-theme**	**No.**
Importance of clear communication and early engagement (19)	Communication is key	9
	Early intervention and communication with vulnerable groups	6
	Early intervention and communication in rural areas	4
Overall views (8)	Unsure	4

	Yes	4
Accessible and inclusive advice services (7)	Face-to-face and one stop access	4
	Digital access is a barrier	3
Partnership working and community networks (7)	Multi-agency approach is needed	6
	No mention of street pastors	1
Need for evidence-based delivery and clear measures of success (6)	Use data to shape provision	3
	More information is required	2
	There is a need for measurable targets and outcomes	1
Resources and service delivery (4)	Funding and staffing resources	4

4.4.4 Respondents were asked: The strategy sets out a priority to *"raise the standards of temporary accommodation and make best use of housing stock"*. Do you think the proposed approaches will be effective?

"It is important that resources are used to provide more temporary accommodation for families in district. There should be further opportunities to buy accommodation from local developers. There is also more government funding available to build more temporary accommodation before 2023 and the council should ensure it is bidding at every opportunity."

"The strategy sets out some positive intentions — such as reducing reliance on B&Bs, purchasing more council-owned temporary accommodation, and strengthening relationships with social housing providers. However, it's difficult to say whether the proposed approaches will be effective because the strategy doesn't provide enough detail. Several key issues remain unclear, including: • how many additional temporary accommodation units the council plans to purchase • how standards will be monitored and enforced across different types of accommodation • how the council will reduce out-of-area placements when local supply is already stretched • what specific improvements will be made to ensure accommodation is suitable for children, disabled residents, and people with complex needs • how the council will increase move-on options when social housing turnover is low and private rents are unaffordable."

Responses were evenly split between yes (10 of 21) and not sure (10 of 21) on whether the proposed approaches to raising standards of temporary accommodation would be effective.

One respondent said no.

Of the respondents who said they had personal experience of homelessness or rough sleeping in the past, two said yes and one said no.

The strategy sets out a priority to *"raise the standards of temporary accommodation and make best use of housing stock"*. Do you think the proposed approaches will be effective?	**Responses**	**%**
Yes	10	47.6%
No	1	4.8%
Not sure	10	47.6%

Respondents then had the opportunity to explain their answers.

Theme and count	**Sub-theme**	**No.**
Need for more housing and suitable accommodation options (15)	Need for increased housing supply and suitable accommodation options	7
	Long term housing and move-on pathways needed	3
	Strengthen landlord relationships	2
	Support reallocation of under occupancy tenants	2
	Alternative housing solutions are necessary	1
Improving the quality of temporary accommodation (13)	Quality temporary accommodation required	6
	Reduce reliance on bed and breakfasts	4
	Reduce out of area placements	3
Overall views (7)	Yes	4
	Unsure	3
Meeting the needs of vulnerable groups (6)	Accommodation required for vulnerable groups	2
	Early intervention and support for vulnerable groups	2
	Accommodation suitable for vulnerable groups	1
	Homeless people are not a priority	1
Resources, funding and delivery capacity (5)	Reliance on resources	2
	Multi-agency approach is needed	2
	Lack of funding	1
Need for clearer delivery plans and evidence (4)	Information on housing stock needed	3
	Clear actions and targets	1

4.5 Partner organisations

4.5.1 Respondents were asked: Are there any organisations or partners you think the council should work more closely with to deliver this strategy?

“Schools - really vital that both primary and secondary schools are included in communications and become a part of this strategy. Some of our local schools are leading on trauma-based approaches to education and I think there is a wealth of experience here that the council could tap into.”

Respondents had the opportunity to provide a free-text response.

Of the respondents who said they had personal experience of homelessness or rough sleeping in the past, all three respondents named specific organisations, including local schools, parish and town councils, Catching Lives, Canterbury Housing Advice Centre, Porchlight, East Kent Hospitals NHS Trust, Kent and Medway Mental Health NHS Trust, Kent Community Health and Emmaus.

Are there any organisations or partners you think the council should work more closely with to deliver this strategy?	**Number of written comments**
Catching Lives	6
Porchlight	6
Faith Groups	6
NHS	5
Education	5
Community organisations	5
Maya's Community Support (Herne Bay)	2
Mental Health Service	2
Rising Sun Domestic Violence & Abuse Service	2
Forward Trust	2
Kent County Council	2
Hospital discharge teams	2
Voluntary and statutory partners	2
Criminal justice partners	2
Multi-agency teams	2
Kent Refugee Action Network	2
Face-to-face and One Stop Shops	2
Doctors and family hubs	2
Armed forces charities	1
CHAC	1
Kent Home Choice	1
Crisis	1
Kent Connect	1
Thanet Safe Haven	1
Canterbury Housing Advice Centre	1
Landlords and registered providers	1
Youth services	1

East Kent Mind	1
Happy Here (Herne Bay)	1
Oasis Domestic Abuse Service	1
Street Link	1
Police	1
Umbrella Centre	1
Retail and commerce	1
Emmaus	1
Samaritans	1
Parish and town councils	1
Unsure	1
Victim Support	1

4.6 Deliverability

4.6.1 Respondents were asked: Do you think the strategy is realistic and deliverable given current funding and housing pressures?

"It is a good strategy, and as with all good strategies, it is ambitious. To succeed, the department needs more funding and more resources. But it really is critical to the success of the district that we ensure our children, young people and families are able to thrive and not sink. This is a particular area, where the new unitary should be able to bring about more joined up policy across departments. We have to do more to support homeless people in our district."

Responses were evenly split on whether the strategy is realistic and deliverable given current funding and housing pressures, with five respondents answering yes and five answering no.

11 respondents were not sure.

Of the respondents who said they had personal experience of homelessness or rough sleeping in the past, all three said they were not sure.

Do you think the strategy is realistic and deliverable given current funding and housing pressures?	**Responses**	**%**
Yes	10	47.6%
No	1	4.8%
Not sure	10	47.6%

Respondents then had the opportunity to explain their answers.

Theme and count	**Sub-theme**	**No.**
Concerns about funding and resources (15)	Funding pressures	9
	Financial plan is required	2
	Government backing is required	2
	Investment in staffing capacity and resources is important	2
Overall views on deliverability (13)	Unsure	7
	Yes	4
	Not realistic	1
	Achievable due to low numbers	1
Housing supply and accommodation pressures (10)	Lack of affordable, private and social housing	6
	Limited detail on temporary accommodation	2
	Low social housing turnover	1
	Support for move-on pathways	1

Need for clearer delivery plans and accountability (5)	Focus on targets and measurable outcomes	2
	Lack of targets	1
	Clear actions and timelines are required	1
	Further retail required	1
Importance of partnership working (5)	Reliance on external partners	3
	Multi-agency approach is needed	2
Prevention and support approaches (5)	Early intervention is required	3
	Concerns about complex needs and entrenched rough sleeping	1
	Call for Housing First and accommodation-based support	1
External factors affecting delivery (4)	Strategy will be impacted by Local government reorganisation	2
	Living costs increasing	2

4.7 What respondents felt was missing

4.7.1 Respondents were asked: Is there anything you expected to see in the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy which is not there?

Respondents had the opportunity to provide a free-text response.

Theme and count	Sub-theme	No.
Prevention, early intervention and person-centred approach (13)	Early interventions for vulnerable groups	8
	Early interventions with families	2
	More interventions for single people and couples	2
	Focus on person-centred approach	1
Housing and accommodation solutions (10)	Housing First and housing led approaches	3
	Focus on move-on accommodation pathways	2
	Reduce time in temporary accommodation	2
	Plan to increase social housing	1
	Alternative accommodation provision is needed	1
	Specialist accommodation pathways are needed	1
Delivery, accountability and resourcing (8)	Clear measurable actions, targets and timelines are required	5
	Local government reorganisation will have an impact on delivery	2
	Financial plan is needed	1
Complex needs and inclusion (5)	Complex needs and service pressures	3
	Focus on rural outreach	1
	Educational interventions to avoid stereotypical assumptions	1
Partnership working and engagement (5)	Support multi-agency working	3
	Working together for positive change	1
	Collaborate with people experiencing homelessness	1
Housing market and affordability pressures (3)	Stronger landlord relationships and enforcement	2
	Affordability pressures	1
Views on the strategy overall (3)	Draft is suitable	2
	Should be more ambitious	1

5. Stakeholder engagement

As part of the consultation process, a stakeholder workshop was held with representatives from a range of community groups and organisations, including voluntary and charitable organisations, the police, education providers and health services.

The session took place on 11 August and discussed what is working well in the way the council and its partners respond to homelessness, how organisations could work more effectively together, which priorities need the most attention and how different organisations and services could help deliver the objectives.

Council officers gave a short presentation, after which participants were split into three groups for discussion.

The following notes were recorded by council officers.

Group 1

Question 1
What's currently working well in how the council and partners work together on homelessness?

- good CCC fund CAB and CHAC
- good connections for customers with Catching Lives and churches, although Catching Lives is not funded by CCC
- mixed views on being able to contact the service. Forward Trust have good connections but others including CAB have issues doing so
- Pathway Team works well
- integration of services
- would like central e-mail and contact people
- availability of supported accommodation

Question 2
How could we better work together?

- can’t make homeless application in person, which is a barrier
- concerns about consistent advice for homeless applications
- opening hours of office are a concern
- customers wait a long time on the phone to get through and can get cut off trying to make a homeless application
- when there is leave no one to cover
- RSI have monthly meetings and others are not aware/invited to the meetings, for example CAB/police. Folkstone’s meeting is well attended compared to CCC. Agencies would be able to help find other solutions.
- TPG - you have to ask for someone to be added and should not have to
- contact/support is based around rough sleeping and should be focused before they become rough sleepers

- women do not always get verified as rough sleeping – have a women's worker in other areas and this works well.
- hidden homeless is not monitored and recorded – found intentionally homeless and get lost in the system as they have somewhere to stay but they are homeless. Better help from agencies at the time will prevent them becoming homeless.
- training for agencies – used to be offered out.
- prison release – being released to the streets – high levels, needs attention.
- barriers in social care – vulnerable 70-year-old, ss would not keep them open and no support in place.
- local connection is a barrier – sometimes can't stay in area
- restricted time for telephones for homeless service
- detox – government reduced times in rehab to 14 days, no money for rehab after – 14 days temporary accommodation requested from CCC but not given, clients that are high risk. Approx 30 clients a year.

Question 3
Of the four priorities, which do you think needs the most attention and why?

- priority 1 & 2 are similar, priority 1 is more sustainable and could support a reduction in priority 2
- communications will be important for this and we should avoid silo working
- look at outreach with VS
- more trauma informed and reflective practice
- working with landlords for flexible offers for homeless clients as prevention/tenancy sustainment
- look at CASS accommodation for prison leavers, what support is available, accommodation is out of area making support more difficult
- look at making DHPs more accessible

Other priority groups

- need to include hidden homelessness
- prison releases including pre-planning
- NRPF
- look at Thanet model – accommodation officer
- affordability – sustaining tenancies by way of direct payments
- using Housing Association properties for direct offers to those in Band A

Question 4
How could your agency/service contribute towards achieving the objectives?

- more signposting to correct organisations/ need to know who does what
- commit to a direction of services
- commit to attending meetings when invited
- provide a meeting space
- provide assertive outreach
- support clients to appointments

- advocacy/advice on benefits
- Housing Needs Register applications
- work with digitally excluded people
- provide phone/computer access
- drop in appointment services
- training between services
- support with travel
- use feedback from lived experience
- avoid silo working

Group 2

Question 1
What's currently working well in how the council and partners work together on homelessness?

- quite oppositional experience with councils in the past
- believes we have to get local authorities to change their policies regarding care
- good that you can make a homeless application anywhere, not just in your local area
- council is very open to working with outside organisations
- Canterbury contributes a lot more funding of porchlight than other areas -> gives the organisation a lot more freedom
- there is also more supportive accommodation in canterbury than anywhere else
- chasing people in the RSI team and Housing services for responses and moving processes along
- never an alternative contact when someone is out of office
- Anti-poverty forum yields good discussions on homelessness
- unsure if council-led, but CCC potentially present
- Renters rights act has really led to a boost in resources (funding and staff) in housing
    - ‘Where resources allow’ basically means ‘where resources are allocated’
    - are funds given to councils and left to their discretion to administer to different teams? Maybe the funds are ringfenced?
    - without plenty of resources, work continues to be difficult
- crisis point needs to be reached with homeless and rough sleeping individuals before multi-agency cooperation is enacted and people are helped
    - more preventative work needs to be done to avoid this
- some people who are struggling but not rough sleeping may have a good experience with organisations like Catching Lives, but when told their support will come with being housed in Sheppey or Gravesend, they refuse
- Single point of contact for an organisation is very useful and effective
    - having a named person and a backup means there is a consistent communication and understanding of what’s going on regarding any particular case
        - ‘Imagine switching doctors every time you have a new problem.’

Question 2
How could we better work together?

- improved communication
    - named contacts
    - backups
- if you don't have a phone, you can't speak to anyone in Rose Lane in the afternoon
    - either need a free phone or an increase in face-to-face availability.
- more support for those who are digitally excluded
- forms are complex to fill out, and there are some User Interface issues with filling them in online – difficult for those who are not tech savvy, or new to the formalities of the process
- accessible, council funded hub for all the multi-agency operations would make the process so much easier for people and allow for more effective help from those agencies
- security of funding contracts – big issue
- A participant felt that the council has a poor reputation for paying invoices promptly.
    - has led to services being stopped because they can't be paid for.
- link up with other commissioned services could be improved and encouraged.
- greater cross-boundary approach would be beneficial, particularly with LGR coming into being in the next two years
- wherever you make your homeless approach *'beds you into that area'*, so can't even go down to Folkestone because Canterbury Council would remain responsible for your case (unsure if this has now changed given discussion earlier)
- Streetlink – collates information handed in by people which is then sent to the council
    - you had to be sleeping rough to be included in it
    - at best, it has just provided data to councils on their rough sleeping numbers
- Rough Sleeping Initiative – has forced councils consider rough sleeping as a much more serious issue
    - perhaps more legislation is needed?

Question 3
Of the four priorities, which do you think needs the most attention and why?

- priority 1 – Prevention.
    - big focus on childhood trauma, as so many situations leading to rough sleeping and homelessness begin with childhood trauma
    - temporary accommodation is difficult because there is no support (financial or care), and so people often fall back down to rough sleeping / homelessness
    - prevention is the best cure – all the other priorities will follow work on prevention is maximised
    - being asked to leave by family is now a big leader in homeless applications

    - less about which priority is best, but about how are you going to bring those priorities about
    - animals can be an issue as they can stop people being let into temporary accommodation, but naturally many pet owners refuse to give their pets up. It is a difficult situation.
    - current ‘how we will achieve’ targets under the priority aren’t specific/measurable
    - needs more creative thinking with partners and detailed targets/analysis

- any other priorities/groups not listed
    - addiction/substance use help
    - Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities
    - refugees and asylum Seekers
    - those suffering with poor mental health.
    - co-occurring conditions / multiple disadvantage
    - prison Leavers

Question 4
How could your agency/service contribute towards achieving the objectives?

- in order to contribute more, the organisations need to secure more funding (from the council)
- link with currently funded LWKM, MHT, Housing First
- explore TA prevention accommodation
    - In Thanet, 10 coaches making sure people are getting the medical care they need, helping them find a job
        - occupancy agreements; shorthold tenancies
- Housing First: deals with people with very complex needs -> not dependent on giving up drugs, unconditional rent, and rent in perpetuity
- housing led strategy is used by Porchlight, not quite Andy Burnham’s housing first strategy
    - can be helpful for some people just to have a roof over their head, but others still struggle with the weight of the responsibility/change and return to the streets
- dedicated council staff member in different agencies such as Porchlight and Catching Lives would help improve communication and link to the council

Group 3

Question 1
What's currently working well in how the council and partners work together on homelessness?

Strengths:

- Duty to Refer referrals are generally actioned quickly (You can get hold of someone when support is needed with DtRs)
- positive partnership links exist with services such as domestic abuse support providers and the Rising Sun charity
- trauma-informed approaches are sometimes used effectively

- having named contacts and established connections makes communication and problem-solving easier but doesn't happen all the time
- Microsoft teams meetings have helped partners remain connected and maintain working relationships, but there is a need for more face-to-face connections and conversations

This group also talked about challenges:

- care leavers should never have to go through duty to refer
- having named contacts and established connections makes communication and problem-solving easier, but doesn't happen all the time
- partnership working as inconsistent or hit and miss
- responses from some services and identifying the correct pathway for support is sometimes difficult
- stronger relationships and clearer joint working arrangements were needed between organisations
- access to up-to-date contact details and points of contact can be difficult

Question 2
How could we better work together?

Suggestions for improvement:

- create more opportunities for partners to meet in person and build relationships (put names to faces)
- develop greater understanding across services of homelessness legislation, including intentional homelessness, with a stronger focus on prevention.
- increase the use of trauma-informed approaches
- establish single points of contact (SPOCs) for key areas such as:
    - care leavers
    - mental health
    - domestic abuse
- improve flexibility and coordination between wellbeing services
- deliver joint training, shadowing opportunities and group supervision sessions
- increase opportunities for cultural learning and shared understanding between organisations
- improve understanding of partner priorities, performance measures and key objectives
- use co-design and co-production approaches when developing services.
- explore co-designed supported accommodation models
- increase organisational commitment to partnership working through named contacts and clearer accountability

Future considerations

- care leavers not to be found intentionally homeless and this should continue to be reflected in practice
- there are multiple legislations which the council will be required to work on, so the strategy should be a live document or shouldn't be updated before these are implemented too

Question 3

Of the four priorities, which do you think needs the most attention and why?

- priority 1 was viewed as needing the greatest focus
- prevention should remain the primary focus and that priorities 1 and 3 are closely linked
- improving prevention activity should help reduce homelessness and improve outcomes
- some concern was raised about the term "complex needs", with suggestions of alternative language may be more appropriate
- these were highlighted as important factors:
    - access to clear contact information
    - service user involvement
    - citizen participation in decision-making
    - considering inclusive language throughout the strategy
    - addressing digital exclusion and barriers to accessing services
- some felt priority 3 represented more of a "business as usual" activity and will require sufficient staffing and funding
- greater attention should be given to seldom-heard and harder-to-reach groups
- priority 1 was viewed as the most practical and impactful priority

Additional priorities or cohorts to consider

- care leavers, including increased focus and weighting within the strategy.
- people from overrepresented minority groups
- women as they are more likely to experience hidden types of homelessness
- prison leavers, particularly those at risk of rough sleeping on release
- there should be a KPI plan / action plan to ensure stakeholders understand when certain milestones will be achieved
- consideration of funding and resource requirements needed to deliver the strategy successfully

Question 4
How could your agency/service contribute towards achieving the objectives?

- support the development of a homelessness "one-stop shop" model
- contribute to wider system change and service improvement by piloting different initiatives like Built for Zero
- reduce waiting times where possible
- invest in stronger face-to-face engagement and relationship building
- increase the visibility of services and staff
- reduce reliance on online meetings where in-person engagement would be more effective
- allocate dedicated time for partnership working and collaboration
- improve digital access and inclusion
- provide both formal and informal support pathways
- help build stronger communities and local support networks
- encourage people to feel connected and part of the wider system of support

We've had some time left, so we as a group summarised some of the most discussed

topics and themes throughout the morning:

- the importance of relationships and named contacts
- earlier intervention and homelessness prevention
- improved partnership working through joint training, co-design and shared understanding
- increased focus on care leavers and other vulnerable groups
- addressing digital exclusion and improving accessibility
- building stronger, more person-centred and trauma-informed services

6. Additional lived experience perspectives and written representations

6.1 Additional lived experience perspectives

“Help people before they become homeless, help people understand the process and better communication is so important. More empathy and take each individual circumstances differently. Having a more joined up service where you just have one person dealing with you, a single point of access, so you’re not passed around and having to retell your story which is traumatic.”

To collect more views of people with lived experience of homelessness, the Housing Solutions Team and Porchlight spoke with a small number of people who had used homelessness services, to understand their experience of the process.

15 participants were asked questions about their experiences of homelessness, including what led to their situation, the support they received, any barriers they faced, their experiences of temporary accommodation and which of the proposed priorities would have made the greatest difference to them.

They were also invited to suggest any additional actions they felt should be included in the strategy.

Given the small number of interviews conducted, findings are presented as general themes rather than individual accounts.

Service leads have been provided the full interview transcripts to give a complete picture of the feedback received.

What worked well:

- several interviewees spoke positively about the helpfulness and responsiveness of council and charity sector staff, describing individual officers and support workers as supportive
- regular proactive contact and updates from a housing officer were highlighted as reducing stress during the process
- early contact with other services – including health visitors, probation services, the Job Centre and existing council teams – sometimes played a role in connecting people to housing support before their situation escalated further
- being able to apply online was seen as convenient by some
- referral through a voluntary sector support worker led to a fast move into safe accommodation and being met with empathy was described as making a significant difference
- good communication from a housing officer was highlighted as a positive experience of temporary accommodation, alongside feeling safe and close to family
- financial support with rent in advance and a deposit was identified by one respondent as preventing them from becoming homeless

- the specialist rough sleeper focused service was identified as helping a respondent into emergency accommodation quickly
- specialist advocacy support helped to resolve a financial or benefits barrier that had been preventing a respondent from accessing accommodation

What made things harder:

- where processes involved multiple separate forms or applications, this caused some initial confusion, though it was resolved with direct contact with the council
- more than one respondent found the process or requirements difficult to understand, describing it as involving a lot of steps to work through
- response times were raised as a concern, particularly where a standard response window felt long relative to the urgency of the person's situation
- personal factors – including embarrassment, stigma or a reluctance to ask for help – were noted as barriers to people engaging with support earlier
- for one respondent in temporary accommodation, being unable to keep a pet with them was raised as a difficulty
- not knowing what to expect from temporary accommodation in advance was also mentioned as something that could be improved
- one respondent described feeling unable to approach services while still living in an unsafe situation, meaning no early intervention took place before they presented as homeless
- one respondent described a lack of understanding of welfare and housing law (including universal credit deductions when started work) as a barrier
- having to repeat their story to multiple people or services was raised as difficult
- one respondent described being initially assessed as not 'vulnerable enough' for support and not being made aware of related entitlements (such as legal advice)
- poor attitudes from those in a position to help and reluctance from private landlords to let to people with a poor credit history, were both raised as barriers.
- difficulty reaching a named contact directly was raised as a source of stress, even where the outcome was ultimately positive
- extended periods spent staying temporarily with family before being offered formal support were described by one respondent as contributing to their situation deteriorating further, in one case leading to a period of rough sleeping
- one respondent described disability and neurodiversity not being sufficiently understood or accommodated during their contact with services, including difficulty meeting tenancy conditions as a result
- unsuitable conditions within temporary or supported accommodation were raised by more than one respondent, including safety concerns, the physical environment and impacts on health or wellbeing
- temporary or move-on accommodation located away from a respondent's support network or usual area was raised as a difficulty, including physical accessibility issues
- a long wait for ongoing mental health treatment or support was raised as a difficulty by one respondent
- support was described by one respondent as reducing or falling away following a move into settled accommodation
- one respondent described negative experience of enforcement activity while sleeping rough

- Infrequent contact from an allocated social worker and once located a private rented flat, would not help with the cost of getting there

Some of the circumstances that led people to becoming homeless were:

- unaffordable rent
- relationship breakdown
- loss of accommodation due to the end of a specific arrangement
- domestic abuse
- bullying
- being a victim of crime
- being asked to leave the family home
- loss of a family member's accommodation following bereavement or a move into care
- changes to benefit entitlement and reduced income
- job loss combined with reduced ability to access private rented housing
- overcrowding and family no longer able to accommodate
- their previous home becoming unsafe to live in due to other people's activity here

Possible implications for the strategy:

- streamlining or clearly signposting the relationship between different application processes.
- response time commitments could be reviewed against the urgency some applicants experience, particularly for initial contact
- the strategy's early intervention priority may benefit from considering how to reach people who are reluctant to self-refer due to stigma or embarrassment, not only those who are already in contact with other services
- clearer information about what to expect for temporary accommodation, including any restrictions on pets
- referral routes through probation appear to be working as an entry point into support and may be worth strengthening further
- consideration could be given to how people in unsafe home situations, who may not feel able to approach services, can be reached earlier
- a single point of contact throughout a person's journey through services was raised as something that would reduce distress and improve consistency of support
- continued and strengthened partnership working with voluntary sector support workers, who were identified as playing a critical role in some positive outcomes
- ensuring disclosed disabilities and neurodivergent conditions are consistently recorded, understood and accommodated by staff and within tenancy conditions could reduce the risk of a person being wrongly assessed as non-cooperative
- where possible, placing people in temporary of move-on accommodation close to their existing support network and within Canterbury could reduce isolation and improve accessibility
- ensuring support is maintained, rather than withdrawn, once someone moves into settled accommodation was raised as important to prevent repeat homelessness

6.2. Written representations

A written representation was received via a councillor on behalf of a resident of the district with lived experience of homelessness.

Thank you very much for taking the time to meet me over lunch today. I really appreciated the opportunity to discuss the Canterbury City Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026–2030. After reading through the strategy, I wanted to share some thoughts based on my own lived experience of temporary accommodation.

Whilst I appreciate the strategy's child-focused approach, I believe there is an opportunity to provide more structured, practical support for families during what is often one of the most traumatic periods of their lives.

My main recommendation would be the introduction of a Personal Development Record (PDR) for every family entering temporary accommodation.

The PDR would act as a structured support plan, with each family being allocated a trained mentor who would guide them throughout their time in temporary accommodation. This mentor would help families navigate services, reduce stress and ensure that no one falls through the gaps.

The Personal Development Record could include:
A personalised wellbeing plan for both the parent(s) and children.
Regular mental health and wellbeing check-ins.
Access to social prescribing.
Contact details for organisations such as the Samaritans, food banks, churches and faith groups, parent and baby groups, and other community support services.
Practical assistance with registering with a GP, dentist and schools. From my own experience, this was one of the most difficult aspects, particularly whilst trying to care for my children at the same time.
A timeline of agreed actions so that essential tasks are completed within appropriate timescales and regularly reviewed.
Regular meetings between the mentor and family to assess progress and identify any additional support required.

I also believe that schools should form part of the Personal Development Record. The mentor could liaise with the school every four to six weeks to discuss the child's emotional wellbeing, attendance, confidence and development. This would help identify concerns early and ensure appropriate support is put in place.

For children, I would also recommend:
Trauma-informed training for all schools and frontline services.
A discreet wellbeing card or "safe pass" that children can show a trusted member of staff when they are feeling overwhelmed, allowing them to leave the classroom without drawing attention to themselves or feeling embarrassed.
Monitoring for signs of trauma, including anxiety, sleep difficulties, bedwetting, withdrawal or behavioural changes, with referrals to appropriate services where required.

Stronger links with organisations such as Place2Be and similar mentoring and counselling services available within schools.

For parents, I believe there should be greater emphasis on rebuilding confidence, improving mental health and reducing isolation through supported access to leisure centres, swimming, gyms, walking groups and community activities. For many parents, particularly those recovering from domestic abuse or trauma, attending these activities independently can feel overwhelming, so practical encouragement and support would make a significant difference.

I also believe there is an opportunity to develop a volunteer mentoring programme. Many businesses already encourage staff volunteering, and trained volunteers could provide valuable practical and emotional support alongside professional services. This could help reduce isolation whilst improving long-term outcomes for families. Overall, I believe the strategy would be strengthened by embedding trauma-informed practice across all services. Housing alone does not resolve homelessness. Families also need consistent emotional support, practical guidance and someone who walks alongside them during what is often one of the most difficult periods of their lives. I hope these observations are helpful. They come from my own lived experience, and I would be very happy to discuss these ideas further if they would be of value in helping shape the final strategy.

Thank you once again for your time today, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

A written representation was received from a resident.

Sorry to say that I know very little about this subject what has been said does from my point of view seems the way forward. Listening to those who are in this state and finding out what they would like to improve the way we help them would be most beneficial to them in the short and hopefully the long term that were you information lies I think always best to go to the source, so as I say not my thing sadly it's not until you experience it personally would I know what or where to go.

A written representation was received from the Canterbury Committee of CPRE Kent – The Kent Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England.

Consultation: Canterbury City Council's Draft Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2030

We are CPRE, the Campaign to Protect Rural England. Formed in 1926, CPRE is a registered charity and one of the longest established and most respected environmental groups in England, with over 40,000 members and supporters living in our cities, towns, villages and the countryside. CPRE Kent is the largest of the CPRE County branches with over 1,300 members, including over 160 parish councils, civic societies and other Kent organisations and companies.

Our vision is of a beautiful and thriving countryside that enriches all our lives, and our mission is to promote, enhance and protect that countryside.

Tackling the problem of rural homelessness is a key issue for CPRE. Rural homelessness is an escalating, hidden crisis in England, with nearly 28,000 people currently homeless in the countryside nationwide, according to a CPRE analysis of Government statistics last year. It showed that rural rough sleeping and temporary accommodation use have surged by 73% since 2018, driven by record house prices and a chronic lack of affordable, social homes.

The situation is exacerbated by hidden homelessness, where individuals often resort to sleeping rough in farmland or woodland instead of on city streets, making them far less visible to local authorities. CPRE is campaigning to try to secure change:

1) Affordable housing: CPRE is campaigning for truly affordable housing to tackle the shortage of genuinely affordable housing across rural England.
Current 'affordable' schemes are not affordable to people on lower incomes, and developments are often dominated by expensive executive homes. This has led to growing numbers of households being priced out of the countryside and increased homelessness. We are calling for 'affordable housing' to be redefined to directly link to average local incomes. Our report, Unravelling a crisis: The state of rural affordable housing in England, called for restrictions on the resale of 'affordable housing' to be extended to all parishes with fewer than 3,000 inhabitants to ensure local workers can continue to use properties, rather than allowing them to become second homes or holiday lets. More support is also needed for local communities to deliver small-scale developments of genuinely affordable housing. We believe it should be made easier for councils to purchase land at reasonable prices, enabling the construction of social housing and vital infrastructure.

2) More focus on rural homelessness: Rural homelessness is a real and growing problem that requires targeted, locally informed and properly funded policy interventions, research commissioned by CPRE has found.
Without active interventions and good preventive services rural homelessness will keep increasing, according to the study, Homelessness in the Countryside: A Hidden Crisis. This research, conducted by academics from Kent and Southampton Universities, concluded that people with intersecting disadvantages are particularly at risk of homelessness in rural areas but their voices are rarely heard and support services are often unavailable.

We therefore would like to make the following comments on CCC's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2030:

Consultation survey Questions

1. Which of the following best describes you?
Other: Canterbury Committee of CPRE Kent - The Kent Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England

2. Do you have a personal experience of homelessness or rough sleeping?
No

3. Overall, how easy did you find the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to read and understand?

Difficult

Some parts of the strategy are phrased in a very opaque way.
For example on page 8: “There has been a notable increase in household presenting with support needs, rising from 71 at the end of March 2024 to 116 by March 2025. This reflects the increasing complexity of homelessness and the need for joined up, multi-agency responses. "It is not clear what these support needs are or which other agencies will need to be involved. This is a very significant rise of 63 per cent in one year. More explanation is needed. Also on page 8: “Alongside the growing number of families in temporary accommodation, the Council has seen a significant increase in young people aged 18-24 assessed as being owed a homelessness duty, riding from 37 at the end of March 2024 to 55 by March 2025.”
Again, it is not made clear why this rise of almost 50 per cent has occurred. Without this information it is not possible to comment on proposed solutions.

4. The strategy places children’s needs at the centre of decision-making about homelessness. Based on what you’ve read, to what extent do you agree that it does enough to support children and families affected by homelessness?
Disagree

The strategy states that children’s welfare will be central but It is unclear how children’s needs will be placed at the centre of decision-making.

5. Overall, how much do you support the four priorities set out in the draft strategy?
We support the priorities but believe that more emphasis is needed on rural homelessness and creating truly affordable housing. We would support additional priorities to cover these areas.

6. The strategy sets out a priority to “increase our prevention of homelessness through early intervention”. Do you think the proposed approaches will be effective?
Not sure

We welcome the commitment to widen how homeless services can be accessed and to consider how to reach those in rural areas. Rural homelessness is a growing and largely hidden problem and we welcome any attempt to engage with this issue.
It is difficult to comment when it is unclear what has caused such large rises in the number of households preventing with support needs and in the number of homeless young people aged 24-30. Without a fuller understanding of the problem it is difficult to know whether the proposed early intervention strategies will be effective.

7. The strategy sets out a priority to “reduce and prevent rough sleeping”. Do you think the proposed approaches will be effective?
No

There is no mention of rural areas in Priority 2: to reduce and prevent rough sleeping. Better reporting mechanisms and intervention mechanisms need to be in place for rural areas. Whereas street patrols can find urban rough sleepers, there is no comparable mechanism for getting help to those sleeping in tents or cars in the

countryside. Awareness of Streetlink, the service which allows members of the public to refer homeless people for relevant support or for homeless people to refer themselves, must be raised in rural areas. A network of community referrers should be built in rural areas, to improve the outreach capacity and to create links between rural settings and service providers.

8. The strategy sets out a priority to "improve how we communicate and provide advice". Do you think the proposed approaches will be effective?
No

We note that the plan to offer homeless advice in rural areas is only an idea under consideration while all the other bullet points in the list are definite commitments. It is vital that this strategy reaches everyone in the district so we urge the council to make this a firm commitment rather than just an idea being floated.
The experience and views of rural residents are too often ignored. Every homelessness and rough sleeping policy should be "rural-proofed" by consulting a wide range of rural stakeholders, including the CPRE.

9. The strategy sets out a priority to "raise the standards of temporary accommodation and make best use of housing stock". Do you think the proposed approaches will be effective?
No

We welcome the recognition that a shortage of affordable housing is a key driver of homelessness both locally and nationally. However, we are disappointed that there are no proposals to create truly affordable housing.
A greater number of homes for social rent is needed across Canterbury District. Canterbury's Housing Need Assessment Update (2025) called for 30% of affordable housing to be social rent, with 50% affordable rent and 20% affordable home ownership. It was extremely disappointing to CPRE Kent that Canterbury City Council failed to take this recommendation forward in its Draft Local Plan, which instead cut the proportion of social rent to just 10%, with 60% affordable rent and 30% affordable home ownership.

10. Are there any organisations or partners you think the council should work more closely with to deliver this strategy?
The council should work more closely with rural organisations such as the CPRE to ensure better inclusion of rural homelessness in the strategy. Parish councils, rural police, village churches, farming clusters and the Kent Downs National Landscape team should be among those involved in building links and delivering the strategy in rural areas.
Without the information highlighted in our answer to question 3 about what is driving the rise in households with support needs and the rise in homeless 18-24 year olds, it is difficult to comment on which organisation or partner would help tackle these issues.
Housing staff should engage with planning enforcement to better understand the prevalence of people living in unsuitable and unsafe housing in rural areas. Unscrupulous landlords are converting outbuildings or installing mobile homes without planning permission or proper facilities. Many residents are living in unsafe and unsatisfactory circumstances in the countryside. These unauthorised

developments will often have been reported to planning enforcement. More joint working between housing and enforcement staff would make it harder for landlords to exploit the poorest in this way.

11. Do you think the strategy is realistic and deliverable given current funding and housing pressures?
No

More needs to be done to ensure that affordable housing is truly affordable for local people and that more social rent housing is provided.

12. Is there anything you expected to see in the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy which is not there?
We anticipated more to be done to tackle the problem of "affordable housing" that is not affordable by local residents. We were disappointed at the failure to acknowledge the problem of rural homelessness. We also expected firm proposals that would include rural areas of Canterbury district. Rural homelessness is a growing and hidden problem.
There is also no mention of demographic changes to Canterbury district and how this has affected homelessness in the area. We would like to have seen detailed figures of homelessness by age band. Without these figures it is not possible to know whether the strategy should be focussing on any other age group, for example the elderly.
We would have liked to have been informed what were the successes and failures over the period of the last homelessness strategy and what had been learned from those policies.
We would like to know what the Key Performance indicators will be for judging the success of this new strategy.

Yours sincerely
Canterbury committee – CPRE Kent

7. Conclusions

21 survey responses, 15 lived experience interviews, a stakeholder workshop with 15 participants and three written representations were received during the consultation period.

All four strategic priorities received strong support in principle, but confidence in the proposed approaches was more mixed, particularly for early intervention and rough sleeping, where the largest group of respondents in each case was not sure the approaches would be effective, suggesting general agreement with the strategy's direction, but indicating that more detail on implementation would be welcomed.

A recurring theme across the survey comments and stakeholder workshop was the need for clearer delivery detail: measurable targets, timelines and clarity on how commitments will be resourced.

This was raised independently by survey respondents, workshop participants and CPRE Kent's written representations, suggesting it is a consistent gap.

Named contacts and continuity of support came through strongly across both the stakeholder workshop and the lived experience interviews.

Workshop participants and interviewees separately identified single points of contact and the risk of being passed between services or having to repeat their story, as areas that could be strengthened.

Housing supply and the standards and location of temporary accommodation were also raised consistently, across survey comments and lived experience interviews, and CPRE Kent's written representation, which additionally raised the shortage of genuinely affordable and social rent housing.

CPRE Kent's written representation raised rural homelessness as an area not sufficiently addressed in the draft strategy, including the visibility of rural rough sleeping and the applicability of the proposed priorities to rural areas.

The lived experience interviews provided a range of practical suggestions and as such, it is not possible to fully reflect every issue in the headline conclusions.

All the points raised were considered valuable and are best read alongside the full findings set out in this report.