



Thanet District Council

Tenancy Strategy
2018

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Foreword

A secure home is an essential foundation to a person's life chances, something that some take for granted. Evidence shows that a stable home and environment has a positive impact on our ability to secure employment, our health and wellbeing and whether our children will succeed in education.

The impact of failed tenancies to us as the landlord, and our tenants are obvious as are the wider costs when families fall into homelessness or take up insecure, short-term tenancies.

With this in mind, whilst this strategy is designed to take advantage of the flexibilities introduced in the Localism Act 2011, it will also ensure that the fundamental principle of having a secure home in a balanced and stable community is at the heart of our approach.

The Localism Act 2011 introduced a discretionary option to consider granting flexible tenancies as an alternative to secure 'lifetime' tenancies.

Further legislation contained in the Housing and Planning Act 2016 introduces a mandatory secure 'fixed term' tenancy to be granted for all new tenancies, with limited exemptions. This will effectively bring to an end the current secure 'lifetime' tenancy. Regulations are yet to be issued and this policy is yet to be implemented.

In addition, the introduction of significant welfare reforms has made an affordable, secure home an even greater priority for those people where renting is the only option available to them.

This Strategy aims to set out how we will make best use of our housing stock to meet the needs of the districts residents. Each Local Authority is required to develop a Tenancy Strategy to which other Registered Providers should have 'due regard' when letting their properties in the District.

The strategy is split into two main themes:

- **Tenancies** – the type of tenancies available, for what period and under what circumstances. This section also provides the general principles for fixed term tenancies.
- **Affordability & Sustainability** – how rent levels should be set and how tenancies should be managed to minimise the risk of tenancy failure, increased homelessness and the hardship on vulnerable people.



National Context

Tenancy sustainability has become an increasingly pressing issue due to the scale of welfare and housing reforms in recent years. The government has introduced a programme of reforms which fundamentally change the way social housing is provided and managed to support tenants to sustain their tenancies.

The Localism Act 2011 made changes to the way people access social housing, the way homeless duty is discharged and gave powers to local authorities to provide flexible tenancies. The broad aim of these changes was to provide local councils with the ability to respond to local needs, increase mobility and ensure that social housing is used for those in need. Restrictions to the rules regarding succession of tenancy were also introduced.

In recent years, the government have also established a wide-ranging set of reforms to the welfare system starting with the Welfare Reform Act 2012. The introduction of Universal Credit brought together a range of existing benefits into a single monthly payment with housing costs paid direct to the tenant. Reductions in Local Housing Allowance rates have resulted in many households having to make additional rent payments above their benefit entitlement. At the same time housing benefit reductions for working age tenants under occupying their home, restrictions to single room rates for people under the age of 35, the introduction of a new benefit cap and changes to non-dependent charges have all added pressure to household budgets for families that rely on these sources of income.

A number of further reforms were introduced with the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 including the 1% rent reduction for social housing per annum for four years, a further lowering of the benefit cap, a four year freeze on the main working age benefits, and restrictions on Child Tax Credits and the Universal Credit to 2 children.

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 announced the end of secure lifetime tenancies in local authority housing. This aspect of the Act will not be implemented until regulations are published. However, the policy is expected to place a duty on authorities to grant secure 'fixed term' tenancies of between two and ten years to all new tenants, thus taking away the opportunity to grant new secure 'lifetime' tenancies, except in limited circumstances.



The 2016 act also amended rules about succession in secure tenancies and restricted tenancy succession rights to spouses and partners only, irrespective of the original tenancy date.

The 2016 Act also placed a duty on local authorities to consider selling our higher value empty properties in order to meet the levy payable to Government to fund the proposed extension of Right to Buy for housing association tenants. Regulations governing the implementation of this duty are still to be brought forward by government.

Local Context

The National Census 2011 identified that there were 134,200 people living in Thanet.

There are 66,892 dwellings in Thanet, 60% are owner occupied, 26% privately rented and 14% social or affordable rented.

Our local plan is currently being produced, and the SHMA (Local authorities are required to produce a Strategic Housing Market Assessment under the National Planning Policy Framework. This assesses the full housing needs within the area and the future scale and mix of housing requirements) has identified that 17,000 homes are needed by 2031, this is more than 1,000 annually. Land has been allocated to meet this housing allocation. Our previous delivery of housing falls short of this with target averaging 678 units a year 2006-11 and from 2011 to 2016 311 per year. There is currently sites with planning consent for over 2,000 homes which have yet to commence development. There are also 2,488 empty and second homes within Thanet.

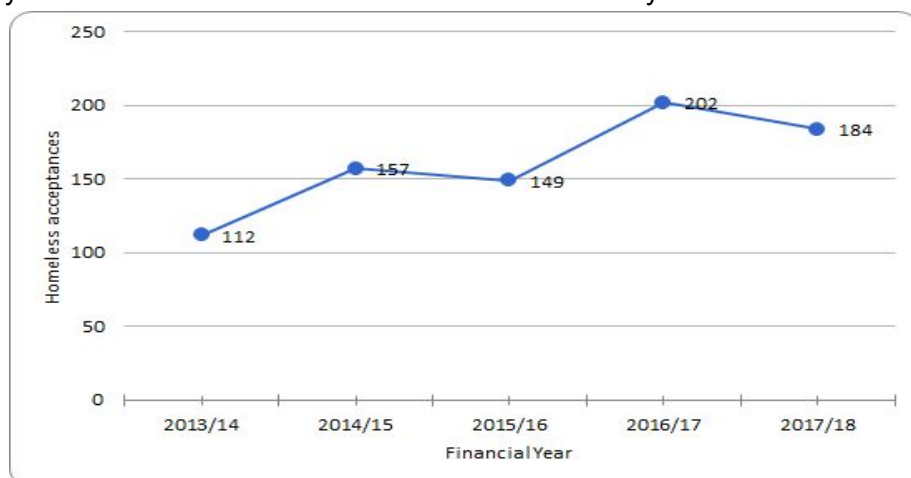
East Kent Housing (EKH) was formed in 2011, and manages the Council's landlord service on behalf of Thanet District Council. EKH is jointly owned by the four East Kent councils of Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone & Hythe District Council and Thanet. It is run by an independent management board, made up of tenants, independent members and councillors representing the four districts. EKH remains accountable to the Councils through contractual agreements setting out the services to be provided.

EKH currently manages 3,007 homes in Thanet. Right To Buy (RTB) sales have reduced the number of homes owned by the Council overtime, since 2009 the number of RTB sales has increased by over 114%.

As at March 2018, there were 2447 households on the housing register, broken down as follows;

- 1203 households require one bed
- 594 households require two beds
- 458 households require three beds
- 157 households require four beds
- 35 households require five bedrooms or more

Over the past 5 years Thanet District Council has seen a significant increase in the amount of households approaching the authority as either homeless or at risk of homelessness. The graph below shows the amount of 'Homeless decisions' Thanet District Council has made over the past 5 years. As at October 2018 there are currently 135 households in temporary accommodation.



The Council periodically published a housing strategy setting out the housing needs of the district, the priorities for meeting these needs and the resources available for housing. A new housing strategy is due to be published during 2019. This Tenancy Strategy, together with a number of other key documents sit within the framework of the housing strategy, as shown below.



The Allocations Policy sets out the Council's approach to the letting of social and affordable rented homes in the district. It applies to council owned housing and housing owned by participating housing associations. The policy sets out eligibility criteria and priorities for housing, ensuring that reasonable preference is given to those in housing need. The policy has regard to the legal definitions of reasonable preference as set out in the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). Allocations are made using a choice based lettings system which enables applicants to express an interest in available property. Choice based lettings provides fair and transparent access to social and affordable housing for people in Thanet. The allocations policy allows for homes to be let outside of the Choice based lettings system in particular circumstances, for example to homeless families in temporary accommodation.

This Tenancy Strategy sets out the types of tenancies that will be offered, and the circumstances under which each type of tenancy will be offered. It also sets out the Council's approach to setting rents.

The Housing Assistance and Disabled Adaptations Policy sets out the financial assistance and support that the Council can offer to households living in the private sector. Support is available to carry out repairs, improvements and adaptations focused on enabling residents to remain in a home that is free from hazards and reasonably suited to their needs.

Tenancies

This strategy sets out the general principles that the Council will follow when offering tenancies and includes arrangements for flexible tenancies.

The general principles set out in this strategy consider the minimum term of a tenancy that would usually be granted and the circumstances when it would be appropriate to grant longer term tenancies. They also consider the circumstances where tenancies may be renewed or brought to an end.

The Council has also considered a number of issues relevant to Thanet, including;

- The impact that flexible tenancies can have as tenants may be less inclined to invest in their homes, may be more likely to end their tenancy or manage their tenancy responsibly. This could have an adverse impact on maintenance costs.
- The impact that frequent turnover of tenancies could have on an area or community, particularly in areas that may already suffer from high turnover and low demand.
- Making best use of specifically adapted properties which have benefitted from major investment.

- Ensuring that under-occupation is avoided in the future, particularly where affordability is an issue.

The range of different tenancies available and the circumstances in which they apply, are detailed in **Appendix 1**.

The Council will use the most secure type of tenancy appropriate to the area, community, type of accommodation and circumstances of the tenant. The purpose of this overriding principle is to promote sustainable communities and to provide tenants with a home they can make plans for and invest in.

Length and type of Tenancy

Flexible tenancies are ordinarily for a term of 5 years:

- New tenants will be offered a 12 month Introductory Tenancy followed by a flexible tenancy for a further 5 years.
- Transferring or exchanging tenants will be offered a 5 year flexible tenancy. However, if they have a secure (lifetime) tenancy granted before 1st April 2012, then they will retain their secure, lifetime tenancy.
- Existing tenants with a secure lifetime tenancy who have no choice but to transfer within our stock will be protected and these tenants will retain their secure lifetime tenancy - for example where a property is to be demolished.
- Existing tenants with a secure lifetime tenancy who are under-occupying their home will be offered another lifetime tenancy if they transfer to a smaller home.
- Existing tenants who are placed into temporary accommodation following an emergency in their accommodation will be issued the same tenancy when rehoused that they previously had.

Flexible tenancies can be extended for further terms. These tenancies will be reviewed 6-9 months before the end of the term of tenancy. We will seek to renew the tenancy for a further term unless there is a specific reason not to renew.

In exceptional circumstances, flexible tenancies can be granted for terms shorter than 5 years, and only used in exceptional and infrequent circumstances for example:

- Lettings carried out for management reasons. E.g. tenants moving into properties to allow emergency works on their existing home.
- Regeneration areas where property demolition or disposal is expected to take place

Homeless households placed in temporary accommodation owned by the Council will generally be offered a non-secure tenancy.

New Homes

The Council is committed to supporting the development of new affordable housing. Tenancies of any new homes will be granted in accordance with this strategy.

Joint Tenancies

The Council will offer new tenants joint tenancies where appropriate. This would include;

- Married couples
- Civil partners
- Applicants living together as a couple

Succession to Tenancies

When a tenant dies, the property will usually be returned to the landlord. However, it may be possible for a spouse or partner to succeed to the tenancy.

Previously under the Localism Act 2011, as well as spouses, partners, civil partners and those living together as a couple, other family members were also be eligible to succeed to a tenancy, but only if the original tenancy started before April 2012. Where the original tenancy started after April 2012 successions were restricted to spouses, partners, civil partners and those living together as a couple.

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 further restricted the right to succeed to spouses and civil partners and those who live together as a couple irrespective of the date the tenancy started. Other family members living within tenancies will no longer have a statutory right to succeed to a tenancy. Rent reviews will take place when succession tenancies are granted.

Mutual Exchanges

A mutual exchange is an assignment of an existing tenancy. The Localism Act brought in a new procedure, which can allow a secure tenant to swap with flexible or assured shorthold tenancies, or assured tenants to swap with flexible or assured shorthold tenants. This procedure is set out in Section 158 of the Localism Act 2011. In this procedure, instead of assigning the tenancy to each other, both tenancies are surrendered and the landlord grants a new tenancy to each tenant. The tenancy type will be determined by the local authority and will generally be a 5 year flexible or fixed term tenancy. For an exchange to happen under the Localism Act 2011, the periodic secure tenancy (or fully assured tenancy) involved must have started before 1 April 2012.

Mutual exchanges can be refused due to current rent arrears, anti-social behavior or any other breach of tenancy.

An applicant may be able to appeal a decision if a mutual exchange is refused or you do not receive a response within six weeks.

The Council may also agree to the surrender and re-granting of tenancies on a discretionary basis, where a statutory right to exchange does not exist.

Victims of Domestic Abuse Act 2018

Introduced by Government in May 2018, the Secure Tenancies Victims of Domestic Abuse bill, ensures that the lifetime tenancies of social homes who are victims of domestic abuse are granted a further lifetime tenancy where they either need to leave or have just left their home to escape domestic abuse and are being rehoused by a local authority. Also if they are a joint tenant and wish to remain a tenant of their home after the perpetrator has left or been removed and the local authority decided to grant them a sole tenancy of their home.

Review of Flexible Tenancies

East Kent Housing (EKH), on behalf of the Council will review tenancies 6-9 months before the end of the term of tenancy. Tenants are obligated to take part in these reviews. We will seek to renew the tenancy unless there are specific grounds not to do so, these grounds must be clearly set out and published in the Allocations Policy and must include details of how to appeal against decisions.

Where a flexible tenancy is not to be renewed, we will write to the tenant setting out the reasons for the decision with details about how to appeal. We will provide a robust programme of support,

advice and assistance to find alternative accommodation. The appeal will be heard by Thanet District Council.

When reviewing a flexible tenancy we will take into account the following considerations before making the decision about whether to renew or not:

- The household make up, particularly whether the household includes dependents of pre-school age or in full-time education with the recognition that children stay with their parents well beyond school age for valid reasons and these should be considered on an individual basis;
- The circumstances in which the tenancy was originally offered, such as vulnerabilities (e.g. fleeing harassment or domestic violence, under a witness protection programme, was a person leaving Local Authority care or has mental health problems) and whether the household is still classed as being vulnerable;
- Whether the property has been adapted to meet the needs of a disabled person and that person still resides in the property and needs the adaptations;
- The support needs of the household and what is currently in place and whether this would be jeopardised by a decision to end the tenancy;
- The occupancy levels of the household and whether they still require the size of property. Consideration should also be given in this regard to whether the property was under occupied at the time of granting the tenancy and whether those circumstances have changed, whether the tenant can afford the rent with any benefit deductions and also the demand and stability of the area;
- Health needs of household members, in particular where a household member is seriously or terminally ill;
- Any caring responsibilities of the tenant to a member of the household and/or relatives/neighbours within close proximity.
- The conduct of the tenancy, in particular whether the household is engaged in anti-social activities and is in breach of the tenancy conditions.

Affordability and Sustainability

The Council and its Housing Association partners increasingly provide homes for households that are excluded from owner occupation and the private rented sector due to its cost. The overall shortage of affordable housing has means that only those most in need are likely to be granted a council or housing association property.

It is therefore critical that rents are set at a level that tenants can afford and that appropriate support is available to help tenants maintain their tenancy and fulfill their obligations as tenants. This strategy sets out the guiding principles that we will follow when setting rents and providing support.

Housing Rent Levels

The Council and its housing association partners provide homes under two separate rent regimes. These are known as 'social rents' and 'affordable rents' and are applied in different circumstance. This strategy sets out how these rents are calculated and when they apply.

58% of the Council's tenants receive financial support with the cost of their rent. This is in the form of either housing benefit or the housing element of universal credit and the maximum amount payable is through these benefits is linked to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate for the area. This strategy therefore takes the LHA rate for the area into account when setting rents. LHA rates are set for properties with up to 4 bedrooms and are published periodically by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA).

Social rents

Councils and housing associations have traditionally had freedom to set rents locally. However since April 2002, social rents have been set based on a formula set by Government. The intention was to align council rents with those of housing associations by adopting a formulaic approach to calculating rents, known as rent restructuring. The formula calculates a target rent for each property based on a combination of individual property values and average earnings in each area.

Landlords were expected to move the actual rent of a property to the formula rent over staged increases. Staged increases were restricted to the Retail Price Index (RPI) plus 0.5% plus £2. Then CPI + 1%. This was subsequently amended by the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, which required social landlords to reduce rents payable by 1% each year for 4yrs from April 2016. The baseline for these 1% reductions was the rent payable on 8th July 2015.

The Council still has some properties with an actual rent charge below that of formula rent. When one of these properties becomes vacant, the rent will be recalculated based on the 2015/16 formula rent and the subsequent 1% reductions. From 2020 to 2025 government have announced that rents will increase annually by CPI +1% and that further guidance will be issued from the period beyond 2025.

The majority of the Council's homes have a social rent. In particular circumstances homes have an affordable rent and these are detailed below.

Social rents are exclusive of service charges. Service charges are set separately by the Council each year based on the actual costs of maintenance, cleaning and utilities for communal areas.

Affordable rents

Affordable rents were introduced by Government in 2012 for all new affordable homes provided with public funding. Affordable rents are initially defined as a rent that is up to 80% of the market rent for the property. Subsequently measures were included in the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, which required social landlords to reduce affordable rents payable by 1% each year between 2016/17 and up to and including 2019/20. The baseline for these 1% reductions was the rent payable on 8th July 2015.

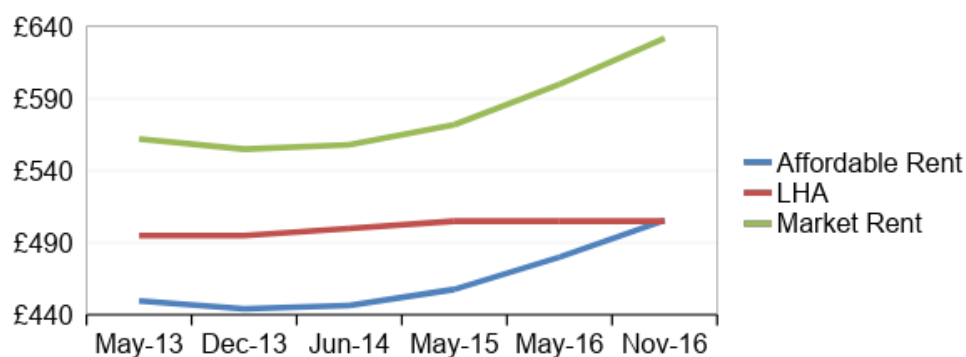
Inflation in local market rents and restrictions on the LHA rate now means that an affordable rent set at 80% of the market rent exceeds the LHA rate in many areas. To ensure that affordable rents are truly affordable for tenants, the Council will restrict affordable rents to the lower of 80% of the market rent or the relevant LHA rate.

Affordable rents should not be lower than the formula rent calculated for the social rent regime. If an affordable rent would otherwise be lower than the formula rent, then the formula rent will be the actual rent charged. Affordable rent guidance requires that on each occasion that an affordable tenancy is issued, whether let to a new tenant or if an existing tenancy is re-issued, the rent must be reviewed taking into account a new valuation. The only exception is where the property is re-let to the same tenant following a probationary period coming to an end. The Council will complete these reviews and reset the rent based upon the lower of 80% of the new market rent or the relevant LHA rate, except where this would cause financial hardship for the tenant. When a joint tenant becomes a sole tenant, due to relationship breakdown the actual rent will not be increased on review.

New build properties, acquired and renovated properties will be charged affordable rents.

Affordable rents are inclusive of service charges.

The chart below compares the affordable rent, market rent and LRA rate for a typical 2 bedroom property, and shows how LHA rates have fallen behind market rents overtime.



Temporary accommodation for Homeless Families

The Council uses a wide range of forms of temporary accommodation for homeless households. This strategy aims to set rent and charges for homeless households living in temporary accommodation that are both affordable and reasonably reflect the level of rent that they would be likely to have to pay in a permanent home.

Where the Council is the landlord we will set a rent equal to the normal rent for that particular property. This will be either a Social Rent or an Affordable Rent.

Where the Council is not the owner and has arranged the temporary accommodation through a third party, then the Council will pay for the costs of the accommodation in the first instance. However the Council is able to recover a reasonable charge from the resident to assist with the cost of the accommodation. The Council will raise a charge equal to the relevant LHA rate for the accommodation.

These charges are eligible for housing benefit and for the housing element of universal credit, provided the household qualify for a benefit payment. The Council will ensure that support is available to assist with the completion of housing benefit and universal credit applications.

It is a condition of the temporary accommodation placement that households pay the relevant charges and the Council may decide to end temporary accommodation payments if charges are not paid.

Homeless households living in temporary accommodation will also be offered move-on support to enable them to find a permanent home. This will include both support to find a private rented sector home and support to apply to the Council for housing through the housing register. More information about the housing register can be found in the Council's Allocations Policy. We will also publish a temporary accommodation policy setting out how we arrange and manage temporary accommodation.

Tenancy Support

Supporting people to successfully sustain their tenancy is an integral part of this tenancy strategy. This section describes the support that is available. The focus of tenancy support is to assist tenants to stay in their home and prevent homelessness.

East Kent Housing are responsible for the management of homes owned by the Council. EKH work closely with the Council's housing options service to provide housing management, tenancy support and to prevent homelessness. The support available is set out below.

Housing Options

TDC provides a Housing Options Service which can assist tenants with a wide range of advice to help them resolve the issues arising out of the termination or potential termination of their tenancies.

East Kent Housing will refer any households to Housing Options that are at risk of an eviction being issued. Housing Options will then take the appropriate steps to try and resolved the issue and assist the household in remaining in their property.

Thanet District Council is committed to sustaining tenancies and helping people cope with the effects of welfare reform to reduce poverty and increase life skills, employment and create communities where people want to live and stay.

Housing Options can provide support and advice to tenants who may need information about how and what benefits to apply for. They also have access to discretionary housing payment (DHP). DHP is a limited fund which can be used to assist households with things such rent arrears and paying for bedrooms that housing benefit does not pay for. Tenants are expected to be actively working with the Housing Options team in order to resolve the situation that they are in. Those who are affected by the bedroom tax, are expected to apply to the housing register where they will be appropriately banded to enable them to bid on suitable and more affordable properties. DHP is only awarded for a limited period of time, so tenants must take positive steps to resolve the financial situation that they are in.

Employment support

Thanet Step Up project provides employment and training opportunities to tenants in Thanet within local community venues. Accredited, Level 2 courses are free to those over 19 yrs of age and provided and funded by Adult Education, whereas Employability and Self confidence Workshops are facilitated and taught by the Step Up project coordinator. Accredited courses include Food Safety, First Aid, COSHH, Manual Handling and other employment related courses relevant to the local job market in Thanet District. Weekly job clubs are also held in Margate and Ramsgate where CV preparation, job search online via provided laptops and employability workshops are available. New, weekly Pre-Tenancy training to new tenants will also be provided by Step Up from April 2018.

Rent collection and Arrears

East Kent Housing will offer advice and assistance in relation to rent collection. They will work with statutory and other agencies to provide support to households to help them pay their rent.

Welfare and benefits advice

As is highlighted in the National Context section of this Strategy, there is a number of housing policy and welfare reforms that will have a direct impact on the affordability of rented housing in Thanet. This can be demonstrated by the numbers anticipated to be affected by recent reforms.

Citizens Advice Thanet (CAT) are also available to help tenants in times of difficulty. CAT can assist clients with a range of issues including debt advice, problems claiming benefits, unemployment and housing matters. CAT helps people tackle their problems head-on with advice, information and practical support. As well as working with clients to sort out their individual problems, the service also works to improve areas and policies which are not working for our clients.

Under Occupation

If someone is assessed as having more bedrooms in their homes than is necessary

It is good practice to reduce the under occupation of social and affordable rented homes to ensure the best possible use of the available homes.

The Council may decide not to renew a flexible or fixed term tenancy on review, if the property is under-occupied. If this is the case we will provide advice and assistance to the tenants to find a new home. This will include additional priority on the housing list for a transfer to a smaller home.

To encourage tenants to voluntarily move to a smaller home a range of financial incentives are available. These can be accessed through EKH and can include: a moving allowance of £1000, and a decorating pack. Consideration will also be given to moving costs.

Consultation, Monitoring and Review

The Council will review this strategy one year after its adoption and publication and thereafter it will be reviewed alongside reviews of the Housing Strategy, , Allocations Policy and the Housing Assistance and Disabled Adaptations Policy. As part of these reviews the Council will also monitor how fixed term tenancies and tenancy reviews impact on homelessness enquiries and presentations and the effectiveness of the Tenancy Strategy on the reduction and prevention of homelessness.



Evidence to assess this will include:

- Outcome of tenancy reviews assessed by vulnerability and protected characteristics
- Number of tenancies renewed and not renewed following review and reasons
- Number of homeless applications arising as a result of termination of fixed term tenancy
- Outcome of homeless applications
- Number of void properties as a result of termination of fixed term tenancies
- Housing management issues and tenancy breaches from fixed term tenants
- Number of appeals and reviews against adverse decisions
- Impact of welfare reform

An equality impact statement has been produced alongside consultation of this strategy covering all protected characteristics

Appendix 1 – Types of Tenancy

Type of Tenancy	Features of the tenancy	Circumstances under which this will be granted
Secure lifetime tenancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifetime tenancy • Right to succeed • Right to buy • Right to assign the tenancy • Can only be ended by a Court Order 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies to existing secure lifetime tenants only. • Rights will be preserved if existing secure lifetime tenants are required to move, for example for the purposes of demolition and regeneration.
Introductory tenancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A probationary tenancy lasting for a period of 12 months • Limited rights compared to secure and flexible tenancies • Becomes a flexible/fixed term tenancy at the end of the introductory period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New tenancies.
Flexible tenancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed for a period of 2-10 years • Right to succeed • Right to buy • Right to Improve • Right to assign the tenancy • Tenancy is reviewed 6-9 months prior to the end of the term • Tenancy can be renewed for further terms. • Can only be ended by a Court Order • Can be demoted by way of court order 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New tenancies • Transferring tenants
Non-Secure tenancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entitlement to live in the property. • Entitlement to the right to repair. • Notice to quit can be served at anytime 	Used when homeless households are placed into temporary accommodation owned by the Council.

Appendix 2 – Links to Other

Our Corporate Plan 2015-2019 has four main priorities, one being 'supporting neighbourhoods'. We will work with partner agencies through the Thanet Health and Wellbeing Board to support people to make better lifestyle choices and operationally through our range of services provided directly to residents.

This will involve

- Continuing our commitment to work with the public, private, voluntary and community sector to ensure the best outcomes for Thanet.
- Ensuring local residents have access to good quality housing, which meets peoples changing needs and aspirations that is safe and affordable.
- Continuing to work with partners to improve community safety
- Proactively enabling a collaborative partnership to reduce health inequalities.

Appendix 3 – Glossary

Affordable Rent	Rents charged at up to 80% of market rents levels within the local area inclusive of service charges.
Affordability	A term used to assess the cost of living and housing expenses against someone's income to determine whether an individual can afford to meet the rent payments and other essential living expenses.
Consumer Price Index	Official measure of inflation of consumer prices in the UK.
Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)	Extra payments to help people pay their rent. Given to households who are receiving housing benefit or the housing costs element of Universal Credit who need more help with their housing costs.
East Kent Housing	The Arms Length Management Organisation set up by the Council in 2011 to manage the Council's homes across the borough
Housing and Planning Act 2016	Act introduced by the Government setting out changes to rent levels, planning regulations, sale of high cost empty properties amongst other things. Detailed regulations on certain parts of this act are not yet released from the Government
Homes England	Homes England help create successful communities by making more homes and business premises available to the residents and businesses that need them.
Housing Strategy	A document outlining how Thanet will meet housing need across the district and encourage development
Local Housing Allowance	Local Housing Allowance is the maximum amount that can be paid for different types of properties up to maximum of four bedrooms.
Localism Act 2011	Act introduced by the Government in 2012 which introduced the use of secure 'fixed term' tenancies as an alternative to secure 'lifetime' tenancies along with other changes and policies
Retail Price Index	An index of the variation in the prices of retail goods and other items.
SHMA	Strategic Housing Market Assessment sets out estimates for Thanet's future housing requirements.
Social Rent	Rent levels set for social housing determined by the national rent regime
Sustainability	A term used to demonstrate the ability to maintain to a certain level – sustainability of tenancy is to ensure tenants do not lose their tenancies and community sustainability is keeping communities stable and together

Tenure	The conditions under which land or buildings are held or occupied – private tenure, council tenure – these refer to different types of tenancies
Tenancy Strategy	The localism Act 2011 placed a duty on all local authorities to publish a tenancy strategy setting out which types of tenancy will be granted, under what circumstances different types of tenancy will be granted, the length of 'fixed term' tenancies and the circumstances where tenancies will be renewed
Welfare Reform Act 2012	Act introduced by the Government which started a series of reforms to the welfare state including Universal Credit, Social Size Criteria deductions, benefit cap, Personal Independence payments and other reforms
Welfare Reform Act 2016	Act introduced by the Government to drive forward further changes to the welfare state including a 1% reduction to social housing rents, further lowering of the benefit cap, child tax credit reductions and more

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