Tamworth Borough Council

Better Homes for Tamworth

Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025 to 2030

September 2025

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1. Strategy on a Page

Our vision is to ensure that everyone has access to a safe, affordable, and sustainable home that supports their health and well-being.

Our **priorities** are to:

Increase the supply of homes, including social and affordable homes, to meet the needs and aspirations of our residents.

Raise the quality and accessibility of homes across all tenures, ensuring decent homes which support vulnerable residents, reduce health inequalities, and enhance well-being.

Boost energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty to address climate emergencies, increase climate resilience, and reduce energy costs for households.

Improve support for those experiencing and at-risk of homelessness through a focus on early-intervention and prevention, and pathways to suitable accommodation.

End rough sleeping by effective outreach and support for those who are at risk.

These priorities were informed and shaped through **targeted engagement** with Tamworth's residents, council employees, and local stakeholders.

We will **monitor progress** towards our vision and priorities through an action plan with regular updates reported back to our Housing & Homelessness Advisory Board.

2. Foreword

Councillor Ben Clarke
Portfolio Holder for Housing, Homelessness and Planning

I am honoured to present 'Better Homes for Tamworth', our new Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy. This sets out how we will work with our partners to deliver safe, affordable, and sustainable homes that support the health and well-being of our residents and communities. Better homes are essential to achieving our vision to 'Build a Better Tamworth', improving the quality of life for residents, creating more cohesive communities, and laying firmer foundations for the future of our local economy.

We hope this strategy can help us to navigate some of the challenges we face in ensuring better homes for Tamworth's residents, putting us in good stead to take advantage of opportunities presented through new funding and policy reforms at the national level. The new Government has set a purposefully ambitious target of delivering 1.5 million homes over this Parliament, which it has backed up with the most generous funding programme for affordable housing in a generation. We will also see the introduction of new laws designed to uphold higher standards in rented housing, including those owned and managed by the Council.

As a Council we welcome the renewed national focus on delivering new homes and improving the quality of existing homes, and we wish to play our part in delivering on these ambitions locally. We recognise the Council cannot do this alone. Rather, it will involve successfully working with our local and regional partners to ensure we can access the funding, skills and capacity required to achieve our vision. Such collaboration will be especially important as we work with our neighbours to transition into new arrangements through local government reorganisation across Staffordshire.

We will need to be smart about where we invest our resources as we continue to operate within a financial context shaped by over a decade of spending cuts to local government and ongoing inflationary pressures. By working with partners, making evidence-based decisions and seeking to leverage external funding sources, we will safeguard the council's financial future and continue to provide the most vulnerable members of our communities with the support they need.

Our new strategy has been developed in partnership and is based on a thorough review of evidence about Tamworth's current housing market and local needs, as well as targeted engagement with our local partners and residents. A strong theme throughout such engagement has been of our partners' ongoing commitment to Tamworth as a place. We will seek to build upon this commitment and our partnerships in how we deliver and monitor this strategy going forwards.

3. Introduction

Purpose & Background

3.1 The **Tamworth Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030** sets out how we aim to deliver safe, affordable, and sustainable homes that support the health and well-being of our residents and communities.

3.2 The strategy is framed around five strategic priorities, each of which is underpinned by a set of specific actions which we will seek to undertake with our partners over the next five years to achieve our vision. These actions will be subject to regular monitoring and review throughout the course of this strategy to assess our progress and to ensure their continued relevance to our operating environment.

3.3 It is an intelligence-led strategy, based upon a thorough review of Tamworth's current housing offer, which explored how the availability and quality of homes corresponds' to local housing needs. Targeted public consultation was also undertaken with stakeholders, launching at the Home Summit in summer 2025, as well as with residents, including those with lived experience of homelessness. Further details of the evidence underpinning this strategy are published alongside this strategy, providing a comprehensive view of the current state of housing in Tamworth.

3.4 We have a legal duty under the Homlessness Act 2002 to produce a strategy based on a review of housing needs in the local area, which outlines how we will prevent and relieve homelessness. We have made the decision to combine what were previously separate strategies on Homelessness & Rough Sleeping and Housing into a single strategy. This is in recognition of the inseparable nature of these issues locally, whereby efforts to increase the supply of new homes, improve the quality of existing homes and tackle fuel poverty, will all make a directly positive impact on the extent of homelessness and rough sleeping in Tamworth.

3.5 The housing landscape nationally is at a critical juncture, following a change in Government and plans for devolution and local government reorganisation. As we develop and implement our new strategy, it is vital to consider the legislative and policy frameworks that shape how local authorities, developers, registered providers, and stakeholders plan, deliver, and improve housing.

3.6 We know that issues of housing, homelessness and rough sleeping affect Tamworth's residents and communities differently, and that certain people are more likely to be at risk of homelessness or to live in poor quality housing. This strategy has been subject to an in-depth Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment to understand its potential impact on specific groups. Our intention is for this strategy to make a positive difference to the housing circumstances of those who face the greatest disadvantages in accessing safe, affordable and sustainable homes.

Vision & Strategic Links

3.7 Our vision is to ensure that **every resident has access to a safe, affordable, and sustainable home that supports their health and well-being.**

3.8 This strategy sets out how we will achieve our key priorities to:

- **Increase the supply of homes**, including social and affordable homes, to meet the needs and aspirations of our residents.
- **Raise the quality and accessibility of homes** across all tenures, ensuring decent homes which support vulnerable residents, reduce health inequalities, and enhance well-being.
- **Improve support for those experiencing and at-risk of homelessness** through a focus on early-intervention and prevention, and pathways to suitable accommodation.
- **End rough sleeping** by effective outreach and support for those who are at risk.
- **Boost energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty** to address the climate emergency, increase climate resilience, and reduce energy costs for households.

3.9 These priorities and vision align with those of our new Council Corporate Plan 2025 - 2030 by contributing to the prosperity of Tamworth, protecting the environment, and promoting community wellbeing.

BUILDING A BETTER TAMWORTH
Prosperity & Place: Increasing the supply of housing and improving existing homes will create and support jobs and training opportunities for residents.
Environment: New homes will be low carbon by design, and we will encourage retrofit to improve the energy efficiency of existing homes to reduce emissions.
Community Wellbeing: Meeting housing needs and raising housing quality will help to regenerate our neighbourhoods and improve community relations.
Council: We will improve the management and maintenance of our own homes, whilst ensuring our resources are effectively used to prevent homelessness.

Understanding the housing context in Tamworth

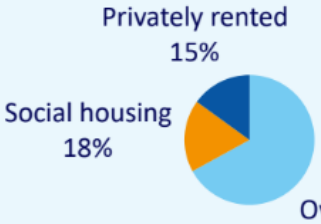
Private renting increased

11-14% over the past decade

Housing Quality

8% Category 1 Hazards, **21%** Damp

Housing Stock



Housing Register

circa **500** households waiting for social housing

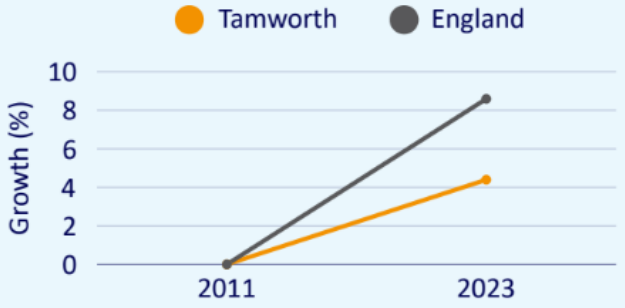
House prices

grew by **75%** over the past decade. Highest rate in the region.

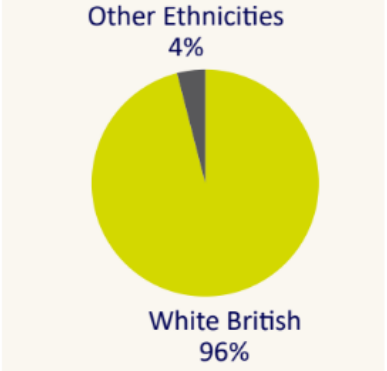
1/5 of the population live in the top **30%** most deprived areas nationally

House prices are **8 times** average income

Population



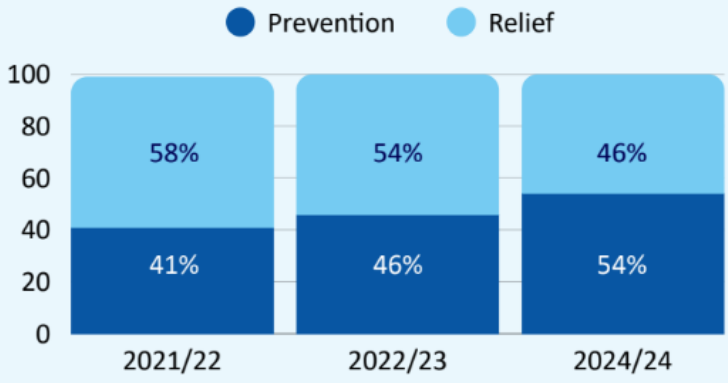
Ethnicity



Population 65+

Over the next decade, the older person population is projected to increase to **20%** in Tamworth

Homelessness duties owed in Tamworth



4. Priorities & Actions

4.1 This strategy outlines **five strategic priorities,** each underpinned by a series of sub-priorities and clearly defined actions to help guide our focus and resources.

Strategic Priority	Sub-Priorities
1. Increase the supply of homes to meet a range of needs	• Expand local housing supply • Unlock land for development • Support infrastructure and sustainability
2. Raise the quality and accessibility of all homes	• Improve our services to council tenants & leaseholders • More strategic work with registered provider partners • Raise standards across the private sector
3. Boost energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty	• Retrofit existing housing stock • Set high standards for new developments • Support residents to reduce energy use • Leverage funding and innovation
4. Improve support for those experiencing and at-risk of homelessness	• Focus on early-intervention and preventing homelessness • Continually seek opportunities to increase the supply of suitable accommodation • Provide a customer-centric approach and continue to strengthen local partnerships. • Increase access to support for vulnerable groups in housing need
5. End rough sleeping	• Invest in outreach services to identify and support those experiencing or at risk of rough sleeping • Ensure effective wrap around support for rough sleepers • Increase access to services during Winter and other extreme weather events

4.2 These priorities and sub-priorities were identified following a review of the available evidence, consultation with residents and stakeholders, and reflections on best practice. They are intended to be ambitious and stretching, to address the most immediate housing pressures which Tamworth currently faces and to contribute to the sustainable growth of the borough. We recognise that we operate under significant financial constraints and must demonstrate value for money to our residents. Through the delivery of this strategy, we will seek to be a caring, accessible and effective council that is financially resilient.

5. Priority: Increase the supply of homes to meet a range of needs

By the end of 2030, we aim to:

- Adopt a new Local Plan to guide future housing development
- Unlock more underused and brownfield land for new homes
- Expand the provision of affordable homes
- Provide a wider range of housing types to meet local housing needs
- Deliver more housing options in collaboration with neighbouring districts
- Secure more external investment in local infrastructure to support housing growth
- Encourage new homes to be more environmentally sustainable

How we will work with our partners to achieve this:

Expanding local housing supply	<u>Affordable and social housing:</u> - Continue to work with registered providers and developers to deliver new social and affordable housing - Review opportunities to acquire existing homes to be turned into quality social and affordable housing - Explore opportunities for the council to contribute towards new social and affordable housing, either directly or in partnership
	<u>A range of housing types:</u> - Ensure new developments include an appropriate mix of property sizes and tenure types to meet identified local housing needs - Encourage the construction of more age-friendly homes, specialist, accessible and adaptable housing - Support schemes to encourage first-time buyers, including affordable homeownership initiatives such as shared ownership
	<u>Infill and small-scale developments:</u> - Explore opportunities for smaller infill projects which integrate effectively into existing Neighbourhoods and infrastructure - Consider proposals for the effective and well-designed conversion of underused assets into affordable housing where appropriate - Work with private owners of small sites to bring them forward for development

	Cross-boundary collaboration: - Continue to work with neighbouring authorities, the Combined Authority and wider Housing Market Area to increase supply - Support housing development in neighbouring areas with good local amenities and sustainable transport links to Tamworth
	Rural, Green and Grey Belt: - Explore options for sensitive development of the Green or 'Grey' Belt where appropriate and supported by evidence - Ensure any such development factors in environmental considerations and contribute to housing need and infrastructure
Supporting infrastructure and sustainability	Infrastructure investment: - Collaborate with developers to provide new homes in strategic locations close to transport links and local amenities - Support new housing developments by working with regional partners and government to secure investment in infrastructure

Why do we need to increase the supply of homes to meet a range of needs?

5.1 Tamworth requires an increased supply of homes across all tenures to respond to population changes, affordability pressures, and unmet need for more accessible, adaptable and specialist housing options. Without coordinated action to increase the supply of homes, the borough risks a further increase in households at risk of homelessness, greater use of temporary accommodation, more overcrowding within existing homes, and the potential loss of working age households to other areas.

5.2 We will seek to implement a comprehensive approach to ensure that new homes support families, first-time buyers, older residents, and those with specific needs. This will involve a combination of local development, regeneration, and collaboration with neighbouring authorities to provide housing options for Tamworth's residents where appropriate.

5.3 The new Government method of assessing housing need has resulted in a new target for Tamworth of 445 additional homes per year. This was calculated according to a standard method based on our existing housing supply and then adjusted upwards based on affordability (i.e. average house prices versus average local earnings). This target is not further broken down by size and tenure, but we have recently commissioned our own more detailed assessment of local housing needs which provide a guide on the size and tenure of home required locally.

Suggested size mix of housing by tenure

Market Affordable Home Ownership			Affordable housing (rented)	
			General Needs	Older persons
1-bedroom	5%	10%	20%	50%
2-bedrooms	35%	45%	30%	50%
3-bedrooms	45%	40%	35%	
4+ bedrooms	15%	5%	15%	

Source: Housing & Economic Development Needs Assessment 2025

5.4 Through our actions to increase housing supply, we will seek to ensure that new homes meet the needs of our residents, helping to create more prosperous, sustainable, and cohesive communities. By expanding the supply of homes across a range of tenures and collaborating with neighbouring areas, we will provide housing solutions that accommodate all parts of our population while maintaining the character of Tamworth.

Population changes and housing demand

5.5 Tamworth faces significant population changes that are shaping local housing needs. The area's population is ageing, with projections showing a 21% increase in residents aged 65+, who are set to account for 97% of future population growth. This ageing population entails specific needs to be met, including a projected 52% increase in older people with dementia and a 40% increase in those with mobility problems. This will create demand for more accessible and adaptable housing, as well as more specialist provision such as Extra Care.

5.6 The evidence reveals significant need for specific housing types for those with additional needs. In particular, there is demand for more supported housing, housing with care, residential care, and wheelchair-accessible homes. High levels of under-occupancy (74% of households) suggest the potential for more effective use of existing homes, particularly among the older population, but this requires suitable alternative accommodation options, incentives and practical support for those who may wish to 'downsize'.

Affordability and market pressures

5.7 Housing affordability has become a critical issue across all tenures locally. Median house prices have risen by 75% over the past decade—surpassing both the West Midlands and national rates (63% and 57% respectively). Despite Tamworth's average house price being below regional and national averages, an affordability ratio of eight times income indicates that homes are becoming increasingly unaffordable relative to local earnings, potentially suggesting the need for more intermediate housing options.

5.8 The private rental sector faces pressures, with the size of the sector increasing by 184% over the past two decades. It now accounts for 14% of households in Tamworth, many of whom rely on housing benefit to help cover their rental costs. This is a challenging situation given the Local Housing Allowance rates available do not fully cover market rents, creating an estimated shortfall of up to £219 for larger rental properties, plus a very large gap between social rents and lower quartile private rents.

5.9 Homelessness pressures are also intensifying, as outlined in detail under priority 3 of this strategy ('Improve support for those experiencing and at-risk of homelessness'). The number of households on the local housing register has remained relatively static in recent years, alongside a fall in the turnover of affordable housing as people remain in social housing for longer, with a particularly acute need for more affordable 3+ bedroom homes – this must be reflected in our approach to new housing supply.

Market constraints and development challenges

5.10 Several factors constrain efforts to increase the supply of homes locally. These include a relative shortage of available land suitable for development, high construction costs which challenge the financial viability of new developments, and the need to balance affordable housing with other infrastructure requirements through planning policy.

5.11 The Council's current Local Plan specifies an objectively assessed need for 6,250 homes—equating to 250 a year—over the plan period (2006 – 2031). However, there are only enough developable sites identified to accommodate 4,425 homes, which necessitates the delivery of 1,825 homes outside of Tamworth's boundaries.

5.12 In contrast, the new government method for setting housing targets has identified a requirement for 445 additional homes per year in Tamworth—considerably higher than in the current Local Plan. This will be incorporated into the new Local Plan which is currently in development. We have a strong recent track record of facilitating new homes, including through large urban extensions, but achieving this revised target will be stretching and will require significant additional investment in homes and supporting infrastructure.

What opportunities are there to increase the supply of homes?

5.13 The Government has committed to delivering 1.5 million new homes over the next five years, translating to 370,000 homes per year across England. This represents a

significant increase from recent delivery rates and is accompanied by significant new investment and reforms to the planning system.

Planning reforms and accelerating development

5.14 The Government has introduced comprehensive planning reforms to accelerate the development of new homes. Central to this is the introduction of mandatory housing targets for local authorities, as previously referred to. Local authorities will also face greater expectations to have an up-to-date Local Plan and five-year land supply.

5.15 The Planning and Infrastructure Bill introduces measures to accelerate planning approvals. The reforms aim to limit the scope of consultees, whilst local authorities will gain new powers and responsibilities including over the setting of planning fees and charges, and for additional fees to be ring fenced for planning services. Additionally, mandatory training of planning committee members will be introduced to improve decision-making and consistency across different areas.

Investment and funding commitments

5.16 The Government announced a major expansion of investment in affordable housing at the Spending Review 2025. This included confirmation of £39 billion in grant funding via the Social and Affordable Homes Programme over the next decade, with a target of 60% of the programme being to deliver homes at social rent levels. A new National Housing Bank will also be created within Homes England backed with £16 billion of debt and equity funding with which to attract additional private investment in increasing housing supply nationally.

5.17 Councils are being specifically encouraged to contribute directly to housebuilding with the creation of a new Housebuilding Skills and Capacity Programme, backed by £12 million of funding for 2025-26 to restore their capacity to deliver homes at scale.

5.18 Such funding commitments are underpinned by the increased certainty granted to social housing providers over rents, with confirmation of a 10-year rent settlement at CPI + 1%. Proposed reforms to the Right to Buy will also exempt newly built affordable homes for a 35-year period and local authorities are to be granted greater flexibility over the use of existing receipts, including the ability to match these with grant funding from Homes England and for the purposes of acquisition as well as new build.

5.19 We will seek to explore how best to take advantage of such investment and funding commitments, working with our regional and local partners to ensure Tamworth is able to benefit through an increase in the supply of homes to meet needs.

6. Priority: Raise the quality and accessibility of all homes

By the end of 2030, we aim to:

- Deliver tenant-led improvements in how we manage council homes
- Improve access to housing-related services across the council
- Invest in the maintenance and improvement of council homes
- Ensure all homes comply with new health and safety requirements
- Provide more aids and adaptations to support people to live independently
- Bring more long-term empty homes back into use
- Increase the availability of housing options for older and vulnerable residents

How we will work with our partners to achieve this:

Improving our services to council tenants and leaseholders	<u>Tenant involvement and influence:</u> - Create a transparent, inclusive, and responsive engagement framework that places tenants at the heart of our operations - Use Tenant Satisfaction Measures and other data to understand the diverse needs of our tenants and continuously improve our services - Ensure compliance with the new consumer standards and prepare for inspection by the Regulator of Social Housing - Improve access to housing related services through the Council's front door arrangements
	<u>Safety, quality and repairs:</u> - Invest in the ongoing maintenance and improvement of council homes in line with changing regulatory requirements - Maintain a responsive, resident-focused repairs service that ensures all tenants can quickly report issues and have them resolved in a timely and professional manner - Ensure all housing stock fully complies with decency and health and safety standards, including new requirements
	<u>Contributing to local areas and housing needs:</u> - Ensure our homes continue to meet identified local housing needs, Including through the prevention and relief of homelessness - Continue to co-operate with local partners to promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing
	<u>Financial sustainability</u> - Seek additional external investment to help improve the quality and decency of council homes - Ensure the Housing Revenue Account is on a sustainable footing for the future

Strategic partnership working with registered providers	<u>Strategic partnerships:</u> - Seek to form more strategic partnership arrangements with registered providers operating in the borough - Share best practice and facilitate more joint working on issues such as ASB, domestic abuse and tackling damp, mould and condensation
Raising standards across the private sector	<u>Bringing empty homes back into use</u>: - Continue to target empty homes, working with owners to bring them back into use, including to meet housing needs - Introduce a Council Tax premium to discourage empty homes - Consider enforcement action or compulsory purchase orders where necessary for long-term vacant homes
	<u>Improving housing quality:</u> - Ensure all landlords comply with the Housing Health & Safety Rating System and other forthcoming regulations, most notably the Renters Rights Bill - Take enforcement action where landlords fail to meet these standards - Explore the case for introducing additional licensing of Home in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) to ensure standards are maintained - Establish a Damp and Mould taskforce to explore how this can be best tackled across homes of all tenures
	<u>Addressing the needs of older and vulnerable residents</u>: - Continue to provide aids and adaptations to ensure people can remain independent and safe in their homes for as long as possible - Offer advice for low-income and vulnerable homeowners on how to improve the condition and safety of their home - Review the needs of older people and vulnerable residents in maintaining their homes and seek to create solutions with local partners - Provide incentives and support for underoccupying households to ‘rightsize’

Why do we need to raise the quality and accessibility of all homes?

6.1 We will ensure all the borough's homes are well-maintained, effectively managed, and aligned with the housing needs of our residents and communities. By focusing on the quality, management, and maintenance of existing homes, we can improve living standards, enhance community wellbeing, and make better use of the current housing stock to meet the diverse needs of the population.

6.2 To do this, we must work with our partners, residents and communities to raise the quality and accessibility of homes across all tenures. This is crucial for improving the wellbeing of the local population, tackling health inequalities, ensuring our ageing population remain independent and able to enjoy a decent quality of life, increasing local economic productivity, and improving community cohesion.

Current housing quality challenges

6.3 We know that a significant number of homes across Tamworth have issues which need remedying. More than 10% of homes across all tenures are estimated to fail to comply with the Decent Homes Standard, affecting approximately 3,500 households. While this proportion is lower than the national average of 15%, it still represents an unacceptable number of households living in substandard conditions. Damp and mould are a particular concern, affecting over 10% of homes across all tenures, and we know this can cause and exacerbate health problems including respiratory issues, which particularly affect more vulnerable residents such as children and older people.

Tenure-specific quality issues

6.4 The specific challenges of housing quality vary significantly between tenures, requiring targeted interventions. In relative terms, issues with quality are most prevalent in private rented homes, followed by owner-occupied properties, with social housing showing the least problems. However, due to Tamworth's high homeownership rates, owner-occupied properties account for most homes of sub-standard quality.

6.5 While social housing providers have invested in long-term stock improvement programs, private sector properties—both rented and owner-occupied—require more attention. We know that many owner-occupiers lack the financial resources needed to make home improvements, while private landlords may be reluctant to invest in improvements without regulatory requirements or clearer guidance.

6.6 As a council we are responsible for the management and maintenance of around 4,300 homes. We have strived to ensure all our homes meet the required standards across the so-called 'big six' health and safety compliance areas of gas, electrical, fire, asbestos, legionella, and lifts. Over £51 million of investment has been set aside over the next five years to make further improvements to council homes which will improve the wellbeing of our tenants.

6.7 There are also over twenty registered providers in Tamworth of varying sizes, who are responsible for around 2,300 homes. We will work with them to promote compliance with regulatory standards and share best practice on issues such as anti-social behaviour, community cohesion, domestic abuse, fuel poverty, food insecurity, and public health through closer and more strategic partnership working.

Accessibility and support needs

6.8 Tamworth's ageing population calls for more work to be done to increase the accessibility of existing homes. With a projected 21% increase in residents aged 65+, the need for accessible and adaptable housing is critical. The data projects a 52% increase in people aged 65+ with dementia and a 40% increase in those with mobility problems, creating substantial demand for aids and adaptations to be delivered to support people to live independently where possible.

6.9 We recently made the decision to bring our aids and adaptations service back in-house and will continue to explore how this can best meet the needs of an ageing population and those with disabilities through the installation of good quality and cost-effective measures such as stairlifts, accessible bathrooms, and ramps. We know there is significant unmet need for aids and adaptations, as well as rising costs of installation, so we will continue to make the case to government for more funding in recognition of the savings this can yield for the NHS and other public services.

6.10 Data on current housing stock also shows high levels of under-occupancy (74% of homes), particularly among older single-person households. This suggests potential for the more effective distribution of homes to meet needs, including through ‘downsizing’ where appropriate and ensuring suitable alternative accommodation is available to better meet people’s needs including necessary support infrastructure.

Neighbourhood renewal

6.11 We know that poor quality housing has a negative impact on communities and can contribute to feelings of neighbourhood decline and tension between households. Our work on community cohesion following the riots in summer 2024 will seek to further understand some of the causal factors of this event and the role which housing can play in future in resolving such tensions.

6.12 Long-term empty homes are often the most potent symbol of neighbourhood decline, and we will continue to work pro-actively to address this where they occur. As of December 2024, Tamworth had 317 empty homes recorded. We will work with homeowners to encourage them to bring such empty homes back into use, including consideration of how they might be repurposed into social or affordable housing. Our approach will also see introduction of a council tax premium on hew homes and the use of legal powers such as Empty Dwelling Management Orders as appropriate where our efforts at proactive engagement have not worked.

6.13 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) can play an important role in providing flexible housing options for seasonal or temporary workers, such as those involved in the construction of High Speed 2. They can, however, be linked to issues with community safety, such as noise nuisance, fly tipping and illegal parking. We will seek to introduce Additional Licensing for HMOs for properties below the mandatory licensing threshold of five occupants, subject to consultation, to ensure standards are maintained and communities are not adversely affected by the presence of HMOs.

6.14 Going forwards we will review how we resource our engagement with the private rented sector, in response to the recent growth of this tenure of housing. This will include more regular landlord forums through which to share council and regulatory updates and best practice. We will also consider our use of legal powers such as civil penalties for those properties which feature persistent issues with quality and/or fail to comply with regulations.

What are the drivers for improving housing quality and accessibility?

6.15 The regulatory and policy landscape governing housing quality and accessibility is undergoing major transformation, creating significant implications and opportunities for the council's role in raising standards locally

Social housing regulation

6.16 The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 has established a new enhanced regulatory framework for social housing which entails increased oversight of local authority-owned housing. This includes a regular programme of inspections to assess compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing's revised consumer standards. We are in regular communication with the regulator in our role as a landlord and are actively preparing for inspection.

6.17 Social housing providers will be expected to comply with Awaab's Law from October 2025. This emerged following the tragic death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak in social housing in Rochdale due to prolonged exposure to damp and mould. It will require the council and other registered providers of social housing to adhere to strict time limits to assess and remedy dangerous hazards which pose a risk to the health and safety of occupants. This will initially apply only to damp and mould before being extended to cover a wider range of hazards such as excess cold or heat, risk of falls, fire and electrical hazards among others.

6.18 The government has also recently consulted on the introduction of a reformed Decent Homes Standard (DHS). This aims to update the existing DHS to include additional requirements around damp and mould, energy efficiency, flooring and window fittings. When introduced this will entail significant additional investment and monitoring by social housing providers to ensure compliance.

Renters' Rights Bill

6.19 Both Awaab's Law and Decent Homes are to be extended to the private rented sector via the Renters' Rights Bill, which is currently going through Parliament. This new legislation seeks to deliver upon the government's manifesto commitment to transform private renting, including ending Section 21 'no fault' evictions and abolishing fixed-term assured shorthold tenancies, which will be replaced by periodic tenancies, fundamentally changing landlord-tenant relationships.

6.20 The Bill will outlaw blanket bans on tenants with children or those on benefits, ensuring fairer access to housing. The legislation also provides for an ombudsman service to offer mediation, enabling disputes to be resolved before they escalate to court. Privately and socially rented properties will also be expected to comply with higher Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards to meet EPC C. This is covered in further detail under Priority 5 of this strategy ('Boost energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty').

6.21 As a council this legislation will entail new regulatory powers of enforcement over the private rented sector locally that will require additional resource to effectively discharge. All landlords will also be required to register on a property database – marketing or letting without registration will be illegal.

Building Safety

6.22 In response to the Grenfell Tower tragedy, the Building Safety Act 2022 introduced stricter safety regulations for multi-occupancy buildings. Ensuring that our housing stock, especially social housing and high-rise developments, meet this enhanced safety standards will be a top priority for us as a council.

6.23 The Act also established a new Building Safety Regulator (BSR). This serves to regulate the design, construction and occupation of higher-risk buildings, providing oversight for safety and standards of all buildings while promoting competence across the industry. The regulator has extensive powers of regulation, inspection and enforcement, including the authority to require developers to fix non-compliant work and pursue prosecutions for building regulation violations.

6.24 The Council is the only landlord with responsibility for high-rise buildings in the borough and we take our responsibilities towards their occupants with the upmost seriousness.

7. Priority: Boost energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty

By the end of 2030, we aim to:

- Improve the energy efficiency of our council homes
- Work with private landlords to ensure all rented homes meet new requirements
- Assist more homeowners to access finance and practical support
- Ensure new developments meet or exceed the Future Homes Standard
- Reduce fuel poverty through targeted initiatives and support
- Bring in more external funding to support retrofit activity

How we will work with our partners to achieve this:

Retrofitting existing housing stock	Targeted retrofits for social housing: - Improve the energy efficiency of social housing, ensuring that council-owned homes meet higher energy performance standards - Seek external funding through the Warm Homes Fund and other sources in collaboration with local RPs and regional partners
	Private sector retrofit support: - Work with landlords to improve the energy efficiency of privately rented homes, ensuring that all rental properties meet the minimum Energy Performance Certificate rating of "C" by 2030 - Contribute towards public campaigns about available incentives and funding schemes for eligible homeowners and landlords
	Listed and historic buildings: - Work closely with heritage experts to retrofit homes in conservation areas in a way that respects their character - Specialist guidance will be available to homeowners looking to upgrade historic properties.
Setting high standards for new developments	Encourage more sustainable building standards: - Seek to ensure that new residential developments meet or exceed the incoming Future Homes Standard - Encourage developers to integrate low-carbon technologies and passive design principles into new housing projects - Promote the use of smart home technologies, such as energy-efficient lighting, thermostats, energy management systems, and water saving measures.

	Mitigating climate risks - Explore how best to mitigate extreme weather conditions and events, such as flooding and extreme heat, through the new Local Plan - Introducing clear policies on biodiversity and nutrient neutrality via the new Local Plan
Supporting residents to reduce energy use	Energy efficiency advice services: - Establish a dedicated advice service offering practical guidance to homeowners, tenants, and landlords on energy-saving measures
	Fuel poverty initiatives: - Expand initiatives to tackle fuel poverty in Tamworth in collaboration with local partners - Provide targeted support to vulnerable households, such as winter fuel grants, emergency heating repairs, and referrals to local retrofitting schemes
	Partnerships with energy providers: - Work closely with energy providers to facilitate the rollout of energy efficient technologies, such as smart meters, across all tenures.
Leveraging funding and innovation	Access government and external funding: - Actively pursue funding from national and regional schemes, such as the Warm Homes Fund and Staffordshire Warmer Homes Scheme to support retrofitting projects across the borough - Explore the potential role of heat networks in providing affordable and low-carbon energy to households
	Partnerships with registered providers and private developers: - Collaborate with registered providers, private developers, and utility companies to deliver energy efficiency improvements - Work to secure investment and innovative solutions that make energy efficient homes more affordable for all
	Monitoring and reporting: - Introduce mechanisms to monitor and report on the progress of energy efficiency improvements across all tenures

Why do we need to improve energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty?

7.1 In 2019 the Council declared a 'climate emergency' and made a commitment to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Our Council Corporate Plan sets out our ambition to achieve this goal, protect the environment and enhance local biodiversity. These are all aspirations of which housing will play a major role.

7.2 We know that reducing carbon emissions brings a range of benefits, not least for households themselves in terms of potential savings to energy costs and increased comfort of their homes. The risks of climate change can be incredibly disruptive, as we witnessed in recent localised flooding which effected homes across Tamworth. We have also seen more extreme heat conditions which can adversely affect people without access to adequate shading or ventilation at home in the summer.

7.3 Tamworth faces an urgent imperative to improve energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty across all housing tenures, driven by both regulatory requirements and the lived experience of residents struggling with rising energy costs. We are committed to enhancing the energy efficiency of homes across all tenures as part of our broader environmental and housing objectives.

7.4 Improving energy efficiency will reduce household costs, improve living conditions, and contribute to our goal of reducing carbon emissions in line with national climate targets. Our strategy focuses on retrofitting existing homes, setting higher standards for new developments, and supporting residents in adopting energy-efficient practices.

Current energy performance and stock condition challenges

7.5 While Tamworth shows slightly higher average Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings compared to regional and national averages, significant improvement opportunities remain. The social rent sector mirrors the national average Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating of 70, while owner-occupied and private rent sectors score 67-68. However, these current performance levels will soon be inadequate as regulatory standards tighten to a minimum of 69.

7.6 The data reveals systemic issues directly impacting energy efficiency as Tamworth experiences a disproportionately high prevalence of damp, affecting almost 11% of home across all tenures. This represents over 3,500 homes experiencing damp, which significantly compromises thermal performance and increases heating costs. Moreover, an estimated 15% of households experience fuel poverty due to a combination of the poor energy efficiency of their home combined with a low income.

7.7 Such issues poverty are most prevalent in terraced homes and detached houses, indicating widespread issues with building fabric performance across different property types. These are problems that more effective insulation and ventilation improvements could address while simultaneously reducing energy consumption.

Tenure-specific energy efficiency challenges

7.8 Energy efficiency challenges vary significantly between tenures, requiring targeted interventions. While social housing providers have generally invested in stock improvement programs, achieving the highest EPC ratings locally, substantial numbers of private sector properties require attention. With homeownership rates of almost 68%, the majority of energy inefficient homes are owner-occupied, where residents may lack financial resources to undertake improvements.

7.9 The private rented sector, comprising over 14% of households, presents particular challenges as landlords may be reluctant to invest in energy efficiency improvements if they do not themselves benefit financially or through their occupation of the home. However, emerging regulations will require minimum energy efficiency standards across all rented properties, creating compliance obligations for private landlords.

7.10 Owner-occupiers face the greatest barriers to improvement, often lacking access to finance for major works like insulation upgrades, heating system replacements, or window improvements. This is particularly challenging for older households on fixed incomes, who represent a growing proportion of Tamworth's population.

7.11 For our own homes, the council has set aside £5.4 million over the next five years specifically for energy efficiency improvements, which we hope to use to leverage additional external investment in such works.

Demographic pressures and vulnerability

7.12 Tamworth's ageing demographic profile creates a particular vulnerability to fuel poverty. With a projected 21% increase in residents aged 65+ over the next decade, the number of households at risk of fuel poverty will increase substantially. Older people typically spend more time at home, require higher indoor temperatures for health and comfort, and often live on fixed incomes so can struggle to absorb rising energy costs.

7.13 The data shows over a third (34%) of households in Tamworth contain someone with a disability, broadly in line with regional and national figures. However, the ageing population means this proportion will increase significantly. Disabled residents and those with health conditions often have higher energy needs due to medical equipment, extended heating requirements, and reduced mobility limiting their ability to manage energy use actively.

Affordability crisis and rising energy costs

7.14 Housing affordability pressures compound energy efficiency challenges. With median house prices and rents rising significantly over the past decade, households have more limited resources available for energy efficiency improvements or even fuel costs.

7.15 The interplay between poor housing quality and rising energy costs creates a vicious cycle. Residents in energy-inefficient homes face higher bills, reducing their income for other necessities and limiting their ability to invest in improvements. This particularly affects groups such as families, older people, and those with health conditions.

Health and wellbeing implications

7.16 Poor energy efficiency directly impacts on public health. Cold, damp homes contribute to respiratory problems, cardiovascular disease, and mental health issues. Children in cold homes experience higher rates of asthma and respiratory infections, while older people face increased risks of hypothermia and falls.

7.17 Effective intervention must address both buildings and behaviours, ensuring residents can afford to heat improved homes adequately while maximising the benefits of efficiency investments across Tamworth's diverse housing stock. Through our efforts to tackle climate change we will also seek to encourage more active and healthier lifestyles through the provision of more accessible open spaces, sustainable transport options, and the protection/enhancement of ecological and biological assets.

What are the opportunities to boost energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty?

7.18 The regulatory landscape governing energy efficiency is rapidly evolving, creating both new compliance requirements and funding opportunities that the Council must respond to.

Future Homes Standard and Building Regulations

7.19 The Future Homes Standard is set to come into force in 2025 and will mandate that new homes must produce 75-80% less carbon emissions compared to those built under current regulations. The Standard will require new build homes to be future proofed with low carbon heating and higher levels of energy efficiency.

7.20 It focuses specifically on improving heating and hot water systems and reducing heat waste. Measures proposed include enhanced building materials and glazing standards and low-carbon heating technologies such as Air Source Heat Pumps. This can help to reduce running costs, and, coupled with improvements already made to ventilation and energy efficiency standards, can prevent damp and mould, excess cold and heat, and improve air quality.

Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards

7.21 The Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) require rented properties to have a certain Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating. Currently, the MEES regulations

make it unlawful to let a private rented property with an EPC rating below E, subject to various exemptions which must be registered.

7.22 However, significant changes are coming. The MEES for rented homes will be raised to a D rating by 2025 and a C rating by 2030, with the government currently consulting on bringing these dates forward. These regulations aim to improve energy efficiency across the rental sector, reducing carbon emissions and energy costs, and are likely to require significant investment in upgrading non-compliant homes.

Environment Act 2021

7.23 A major provision of the Environment Act 2021 is Biodiversity Net Gain, requiring new developments to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity. This means new housing developments must result in more or better-quality natural habitat than existed before, with biodiversity measured in standardised units and habitat management secured by legal agreement for minimum periods. It also establishes new frameworks for air quality, water management, and waste reduction, marking a significant shift toward nature-positive development and accountability.

Warm Homes Fund

7.24 The regulatory framework is supported by substantial government funding commitments, including the Warm Homes Fund. This comprises multiple government schemes designed to tackle fuel poverty and boost energy efficiency. The Warm Homes: Local Grant launched in April 2025 as a Government-funded fuel poverty scheme delivered by local authorities, improving energy efficiency and increasing low carbon heating installations for low-income households. This replaced previous schemes, creating a more streamlined approach.

7.25 The Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund Wave 3 specifically supports social housing providers to insulate homes, improve energy efficiency and upgrade heating systems. The broader Warm Homes Plan accelerates delivery of energy-saving upgrades to up to 170,000 homes, helping families save hundreds off their bills through measures such as insulation, double glazing, solar panels and heat pumps.

7.26 The scheme aims to reduce carbon emissions by upgrading homes with low-carbon heating solutions like air-source heat pumps, supporting the UK's mission to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Together, these programmes form a comprehensive approach to decarbonising housing while addressing fuel poverty and improving living standards for vulnerable households.

Existing funding schemes

7.27 Several established funding streams are already operational. The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is a UK government energy efficiency scheme designed to address fuel poverty and help lower carbon emissions. Under ECO, medium and larger energy

providers fund the implementation of energy efficiency measures for low-income households living in inefficient homes.

7.28 Under the government's Boiler Upgrade Scheme, households can get grants of up to £7,500 to cover part of the cost of replacing fossil fuel heating systems (including oil, gas and electric) with a heat pump or biomass boiler.

7.29 For Tamworth, these regulatory and funding frameworks create opportunities to address the documented energy efficiency challenges affecting thousands of homes. With notable issues concerning low incomes, fuel poverty, non-decency and damp and mould, the borough represents exactly the type of area these programmes will seek to target.

7.30 The convergence of regulatory requirements and funding availability creates an opportunity for the council and its partners to drive comprehensive improvements in energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty throughout the borough, as outlined in this strategy.

8. Priority: Improve support for those experiencing and at-risk of homelessness

By the end of 2030, we aim to:

- Increase the number of priority households who receive secure accommodation in a timely manner, reducing waiting times for single people and large families
- Reduce the number of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness due to family breakdown by intervening early with family mediation and/or Family Conference Groups
- Improve access to support services for people with complex needs such as those with mental health or addiction challenges.
- Improve relations with private landlords to increase the number of properties the Council can offer to those at risk of or experiencing homelessness, and work collaboratively with partners to deliver effective support services.
- Improve communication and data sharing between Tamworth Borough Council, local service providers and Staffordshire County Council.

How we will work with our partners to achieve this:

Focus on early-intervention and preventing homelessness	- Ensure that people experiencing or at risk of homelessness have access to timely, trusted advice and support in relation to their housing options and rights, navigating the housing system, benefits entitlements, budgeting, paying rent, preventing evictions and other similar activities

	- Collaborate with other statutory and non-statutory organisations to ensure people at-risk are identified early (including local VCSE, health services, schools and landlords), that referral routes are clear and understood, and people are provided with the support they need - Continue to invest in family mediation and related tenancy sustainment initiatives - Continue to review the timeliness of our assessments, our capacity to deliver and ensure our processes are person-centred
Continue to seek opportunities to increase the supply of suitable accommodation	- Explore options for increasing the number and types of accommodation and support options available for families, single people and our supported housing provision in Tamworth (placing people out of borough only when an alternative cannot be found), using data to segment those owed a duty (e.g. the age profile of single people and/or those with support needs). - Endeavour to reduce the length of time spent in temporary accommodation through working with Registered Providers and others to increase the supply of long-term, affordable housing options. This includes the availability of social housing, improving access to the private rental market, and expanding our portfolio of affordable homes. - Ensure that when people are living in temporary accommodation, these are safe, well-connected, suitable properties (e.g. family friendly, accessible, etc). - Work with local landlords to explore options that would increase the number willing to house people experiencing or at risk of homelessness - Work with private landlords to ensure they understand the new legislative expectations. Where compliance is not reached, ensure that timely action is taken where necessary - Collaborate with other statutory bodies to prevent competition that leads to an increase in the price of rents - Explore ways to speed up void turnarounds in social housing
Provide a customer-centric approach and continue to strengthen local partnerships	- Work with local partners to implement a Housing First model, and other holistic solutions, to support people with complex needs. We note that in the case of drug, alcohol and mental health issues, this approach is only successful when coupled with sufficient addition and/or health-related support, and we will seek buy-in from local partners - Continue to facilitate and participate in forums that bring together local providers and commissioners. Ensure that

	decisions across the Council are data-led and based on accurate information - Prepare for the implementation of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act, working across teams within the council, Staffordshire County Council and other partners to ensure compliance with the new standards and a process for evaluating new and existing schemes is put in place
Increase access to support for vulnerable groups in housing need	- Review our housing and support pathways to ensure that vulnerable groups are identified early and provided with the right support and accommodation at the right time, including for those with complex needs - Review our existing local authority stock in Tamworth and consider repurposing any underused housing - Domestic abuse survivors: ensure access to safe accommodation through our partnership with local refuges and registered providers. Continue to work towards Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation - Young people and care leavers: work with children's services and local housing providers to create appropriate pathways, ensuring access to support when needed and building on the Joint Homelessness Protocol with Staffordshire County Council - People with disabilities and health needs: continue to provide appropriate housing and adaptations, ensuring access to grants, where eligible, across tenures. This provision will also cover people with mental health challenges and alcohol and drug addictions, and ensure suitable, wrap-around care and support is provided - Ex-offenders: collaborate with probation services and local housing providers to secure risk-assessed, stable accommodation. Provision of support to enable financial management and employment support - Armed forces: continue to give out additional priority to in the allocation policy and additional support with finding accommodation - Gypsy and Traveller communities: develop aspirations to ensure the provision of safe, suitable and culturally respectful accommodation in partnership with other statutory and non-statutory agencies. - Aylum seekers: monitor the impact of asylum dispersal schemes on the availability of private rented housing

Homelessness in Tamworth

8.1 Tamworth has a well-established network of organisations, initiatives and processes for managing homelessness in the area. Across many of the performance indicators reviewed in preparing this strategy, Tamworth performs better than the national average and some neighbouring councils. However, England-wide pressures as a result of the cost-of-living crisis, increasing rent and house prices have resulted in increasing pressure on our residents and we are seeing a rise in debt levels and the use of foodbanks, and more people who are, or are at risk of becoming, homeless.

8.2 We have been in a fortunate position so far in that we have been able to use our local authority-owned housing to move people quickly through the system and into secure housing. However, the rising number of people approaching the council for support means that this resource is becoming increasingly saturated. Other options – such as using private landlords or not-for-profit housing – have also become more constrained due to increased competition for a limited number of properties (from neighbouring boroughs, the Home Office, national schemes such as HS2, etc) and a withdrawal of some providers.

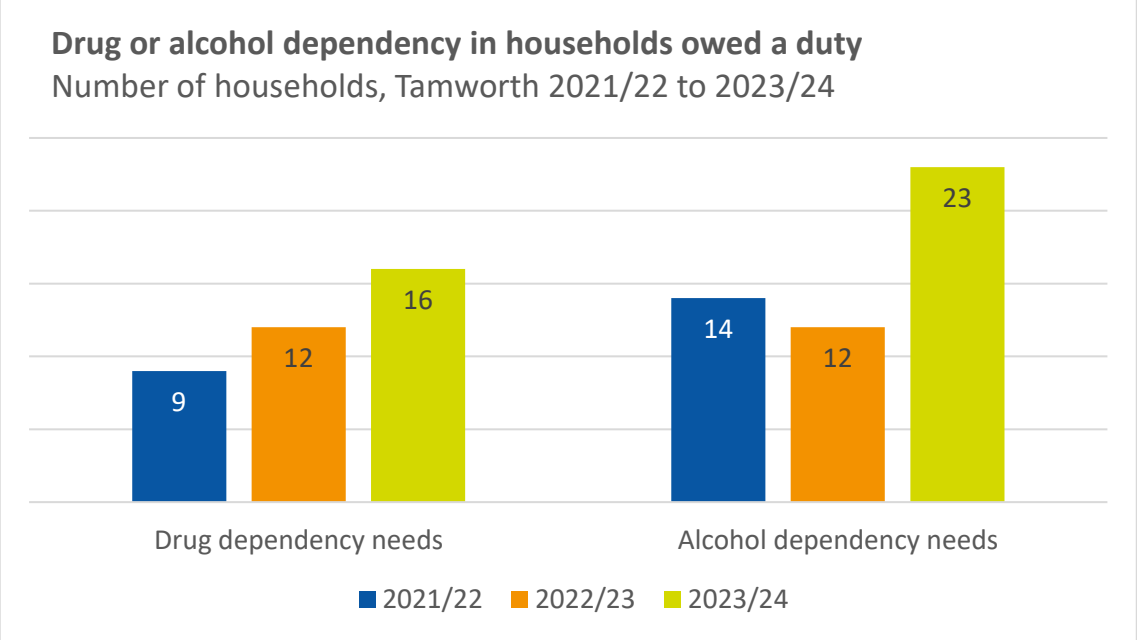
8.3 A recent review identified a significant gap in our current supported housing offer (see Section 5.5). We have seen a change in the profile of people looking for help and their support needs, with increasing levels of mental health and addiction challenges. Support for victims of domestic abuse remains a priority.

8.4 This strategy means we will be a good position to respond to these challenges.

Key facts about homelessness in Tamworth

- In 2023/24, 320 households were assessed and given a prevention (172) or relief (148) duty.
- Across both prevention and relief duties:
  - There was a higher proportion of single adults than the national average
  - The majority were younger people - 33% aged 25-34 years old and 25% aged 35-44 years old
  - The majority were White (91%), with an overrepresentation of mixed / multiple ethnic groups (4%) and Black / African / Caribbean / Black British (2%) compared to Census data.
  - 41% were registered unemployed, 12% were not working due to long-term illness / disability and just over one quarter were in part-time or full-time work (27%).
  - Nearly two-thirds had support needs (63%) due to: a history of mental health problems (35%), physical ill-health and disability (16% - a 60% increase in the last two years), domestic abuse (12%) and drug or alcohol dependency (12% - a 50% increase in the last two years) – *see graph below*
- Of the households owed a prevention duty, the leading cause of homelessness risk was friends or family no longer willing or able to accommodate (39%), followed by the end of private tenancy (30%).

- Of the households owed a relief duty, the leading cause was also that family or friends were no longer willing to accommodate (32%), followed domestic abuse (18%) and the end of private tenancy (14%).
- With respect to outcomes, 71% of those with a prevention duty secures accommodation for at least six months. Of those with a relief duty, 47% of households had the 56 days elapse and 42% were moved into secure accommodation.
- Since 2021/22, there has been an increase in the number of main duty cases, from 57 to 74. The proportion with dependent children was 70%, mental health problems (11%) and physical disability / ill-health (7%).
- The number of placements in temporary accommodation has increased from 87 in 2022 to 144 in 2024. Proportionally, placements in B&Bs represent a growing share of temporary accommodation placements (70%) compared to council-owned stock (30%). Households with children are more likely to be placed in council-owed stock.



Progress since the last strategy

8.5 We have made significant progress towards all commitments made in the 2020-2025 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. Highlights include:

- Commissioning of the HOME hub which provides early intervention and prevention services to those at risk of homelessness.
- Commissioning a Winter relief project that supports rough sleepers and those experiencing homelessness.
- Training mediators to work with people at risk of homelessness currently living with friends or family, or in the private rented sector.

- Use of a flexible Housing Solutions fund to provide short-term support for issues such as paying for tenancy deposits or clearing rent arrears.
- Piloting of the House Project which provides care leavers with housing and wrap around support before they turn 18 years old.
- Improving data sharing with local partners through a shared use of Council software.
- Contributed to regional initiatives to support people with mental health issues, such as the South Staffordshire Network for Mental Health.

What are the opportunities and regulatory drivers to reduce homelessness?

8.6 The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 aims to improve the quality of supported exempt accommodation, regulation and oversight of supported housing. Although the Act is now law, the government has consulted on how it should be implemented, and we await further instruction. The intention of the new legislation is that it will require local authorities to review supported housing in line with a set of National Standards and to set up licensing schemes for supported housing providers. The Act also proposes that only schemes licenced by councils will be able to claim the higher rates of Housing Benefit available to claimants living in supported housing.

8.7 Since the last strategy, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 has created a statutory definition of domestic abuse, which includes emotional and economic, as well as physical abuse. It places a duty on local authorities in England to provide accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation. It states that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse should have an automatic priority need for homelessness assistance. It also strengthens requirements for social housing tenants who have experienced domestic abuse to receive secure tenancies.

8.8 The Government's early release prison scheme has increased the number of prisoners who require housing and support. A recently concluded review of sentencing policy may lead to reduced use of shorter sentences in favour of community orders. This could potentially further increase demand for housing and community support.

8.9 The closure of Home Office-funded accommodation for former asylum seekers in 2024 has also increased the number of people seeking support from local authorities with their housing needs. Additionally, the Government has nominated all council areas as asylum dispersal areas which may risk creating additional demand.

8.10 The Government has created a multi-departmental homelessness task force and plans to launch a new homelessness approach that is focused much more clearly on homelessness prevention. A recent consultation indicated a realignment of the

Homelessness Prevention Grant more towards homelessness prevention activities from 2026/27 onwards. The new strategy is expected to be published before the end of 2025 and any relevant implications which will be incorporated when this strategy is reviewed.

9. Priority: End rough sleeping

By the end of 2030, we aim to:

- Ensure that rough sleeping in Tamworth is brief and non-recurring
- Prevent rough sleeping during the Winter and other extreme weather events
- Work with local VCSE organisations to build a consensus on the number of rough sleepers in Tamworth and ensure there is sufficient service provision to support rough sleepers

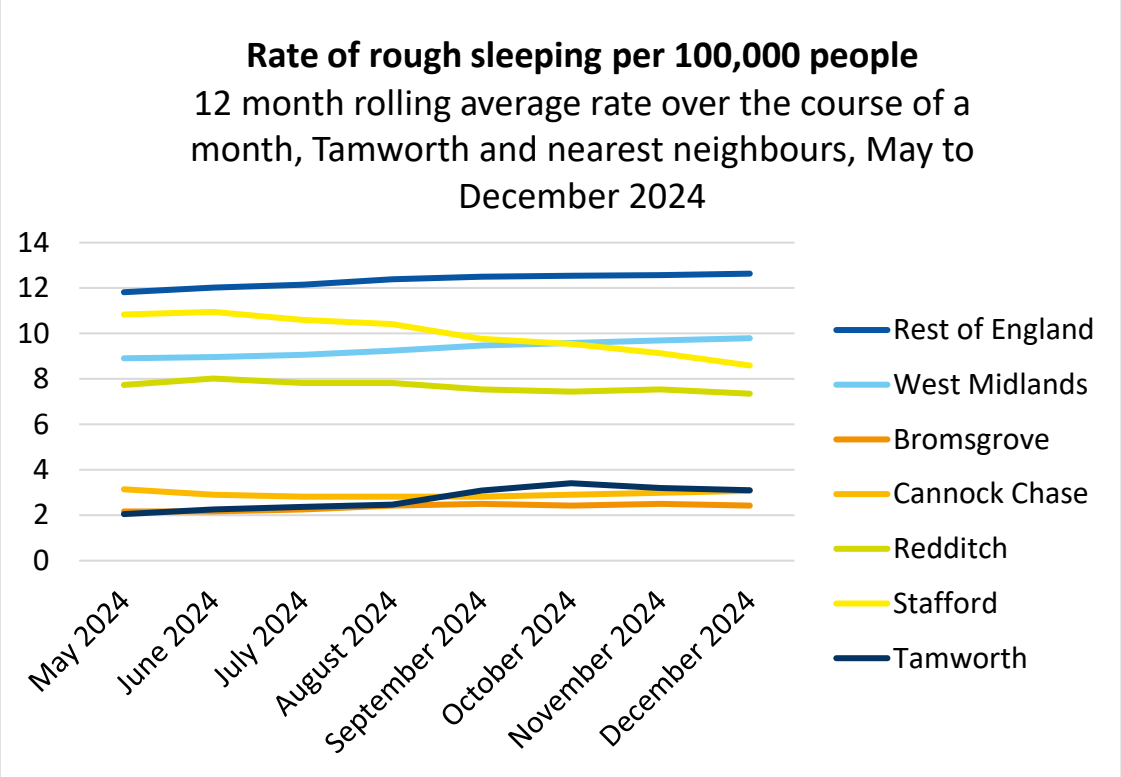
How we will work with our partners to achieve this:

Invest in outreach services to identify and support those experiencing or at risk of rough sleeping	- Continue to fund an outreach officer and commission local services to ensure people at risk of rough sleeping are identified early and supported to remain in their accommodation or, for those discharged from institutions, moved into suitable housing, and connected with other support services where needed - Continue to conduct regular visits to identify individuals sleeping rough, offer crisis intervention, and connect them with emergency accommodation, healthcare services, and support for substance abuse or mental health issues - Work with the VCSE to better understand hidden homelessness - Provide a compassionate approach to supporting rough sleepers, building confidence with at risk individuals and empower them to be part of decisions made about their lives - Explore the methodology around the annual rough sleeping count
Ensure effective wrap around support for rough sleepers	- Continue to leverage funding from national programmes to fund local outreach and support for vulnerable groups - Ensure timely access to temporary housing for people who are rough sleeping, followed by move-on support - Provide effective wrap around support to enable rough sleepers to gain and sustain tenancies

	- Collaborate with local health providers to ensure coordinated access to appropriate services, e.g. addiction support and mental health services, as well as access to General Practice
Increase access to services during Winter and other extreme weather events	- Continue to commission relief programmes to ensure that no one is sleeping rough during Winter and work with partners to ensure the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol is working effectively

Rough sleeping in Tamworth

9.1 Rough sleeping is rare in Tamworth. We have the lowest rates compared to local neighbours – 3 people per month for every 100,000 people in the population – which is significantly lower than the West Midlands and England averages. The average number of new rough sleepers in Tamworth is just one per year with no reported cases of long-term rough sleepers.



9.2 We acknowledge, however, limitations with this data. First, the way the data is collected – as a direct count and estimates – means that some groups, such as women, are often excluded. It is also bound by strict definitions of what counts as rough sleeping. Secondly, many people in Tamworth who are at risk of rough sleeping are 'hidden homeless', sofa-surfing with friends or family.

Progress since the last strategy

- We commissioned a HOME Hub to provide advice and support to people at risk of becoming homeless. The service provides support with debt, meeting rent or mortgage payments, drug or alcohol misuse, and other services.
- Funding was secured to hire an outreach officer.
- Last winter, 33 people were provided with accommodation or support to remain within their existing home as part of the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol programme 2024/25.
- We are piloting an approach to ensuring care leavers are prevented from rough sleeping and homelessness, using the principles of a Housing First model.

What are the opportunities and regulatory drivers to reduce rough sleeping?

9.3 'Ending Rough Sleeping for Good' (2022) set out a vision and cross-Governmental strategy for tackling rough sleeping. It aimed to prevent rough sleeping wherever possible and ensure that where it does occur, that it is rare, brief and non-recurring. The strategy outlined a £2 billion investment between 2022 – 2025, including spending for the Rough Sleeping Initiative programme, Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme, Housing First, additional support for prison leavers, young people and people with substance misuse issues. The strategy also focused on joining up systems to support people sleeping rough, strengthen partnerships between statutory, commissioned and non-commissioned services, ensure the use of a new data-led framework to measure rough sleeping and a Test and Learn programme to trial innovative approaches to reduce homelessness.

9.4 Pending the publication of a new homelessness and rough sleeping by the government, expected by the end of 2025, the funding for the activities listed above has been extended onto 2025/26.

10. Governance & Delivery

10.1 This strategy spans a five-year period during which much will be subject to change. New legislation, regulatory updates, devolution, and broader social and economic changes will inevitably influence the resources and plans of the Council and those of our partners. At the time of writing, work is still ongoing to determine the future configuration of councils in Staffordshire, including Tamworth, as part of nationwide Local Government Reorganisation proposals.

10.2 While the operational environment will evolve and present new challenges and opportunities, we believe the fundamental vision and strategic priorities outlined here provide the longevity and adaptability necessary to endure throughout such changes. These core elements are designed with sufficient flexibility to accommodate shifting circumstances while maintaining our unwavering commitment throughout the period.

10.3 To address evolving contexts, emerging challenges, and new opportunities, we will conduct regular reviews and updates of the strategy's action plan. This approach will ensure our strategy remains dynamic, contextually relevant, and continues to guide housing, homelessness, and rough sleeping initiatives across the borough, including how we work with our partners.

10.4 Evidence-based decision-making forms the foundation of both our strategic approach and action planning, a principle we will maintain consistently. We will continuously monitor essential datasets throughout the implementation period as part of our approach to reviewing and updating the strategy, as well as carry out regular 'horizon scanning' to identify potential changes which could impact on the successful delivery of this strategy.

10.5 To ensure effective oversight of strategy delivery and maintain progress accountability, we are establishing comprehensive governance and monitoring frameworks that will provide regular scrutiny and evaluation processes. This will involve quarterly progress updates reported against the action plan presented to the Homelessness & Housing Advisory Board.

11. Glossary

- **Affordable Home Ownership:** Government schemes such as shared ownership that help people buy homes at below market prices.
- **Affordable Housing:** Housing provided at below market rates for rent or sale, aimed at people whose income is below the local area average.
- **Air Source Heat Pump:** Low-carbon heating system extracting heat from outside air sources.
- **Awaab's Law:** Legislation requiring landlords to address dangerous hazards such as damp and mould within strict time limits.
- **Bedroom Standard:** Measure of overcrowding/under-occupancy based on household size and composition.
- **Biodiversity Net Gain:** Requirement for developments to deliver at least 10% increase in biodiversity value.
- **Brownfield Site:** Previously developed land that may be available for redevelopment, usually in urban areas.
- **Building Safety Act 2022:** Legislation introducing new safety regulations for residential buildings, especially high-rise buildings.
- **Building Safety Regulator:** Body regulating design, construction and occupation of higher-risk buildings.
- **Category 1 Hazard:** The most serious type of housing hazard under HHSRS, posing immediate risk to health or safety.
- **Consumer Standards:** Regulatory standards that social housing providers must meet, covering safety, quality, neighbourhoods, tenancy, and tenant engagement.
- **Decent Homes Standard (DHS):** Minimum standard for social housing ensuring homes are warm, weatherproof, and have modern facilities**.**
- **Development Viability:** The financial feasibility of a housing development project, considering costs, revenues, and profit margins.
- **Disabled Facilities Grant:** Government funding to help disabled people adapt their homes for independent living.

- **Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance**: Accreditation scheme for housing providers supporting abuse survivors.
- **Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)**: Certificate rating building energy efficiency from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient).
- **Environment Act 2021**: Legislation establishing environmental governance framework including biodiversity net gain.
- **Extra Care Housing**: Specialist housing for older people with care services available on-site.
- **Fuel Poverty**: A household is considered fuel poor if it has a low energy efficiency rating (EPC D or below) and a low income.
- **Future Homes Standard (FHS)**: Upcoming regulation requiring new homes to produce 75-80% less carbon emissions than current standards.
- **Green Belt**: Open land around urban areas where building development is restricted to prevent urban sprawl.
- **Grey Belt**: Areas within Green Belt that may be suitable for development due to existing infrastructure or lower environmental value.
- **Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)**: Properties shared by multiple unrelated households with shared facilities.
- **Housing First**: Approach providing immediate permanent housing to homeless people without preconditions.
- **Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS)**: Risk-based evaluation tool to identify and assess hazards in residential properties.
- **Housing Register**: List maintained by local authorities of people seeking social housing**.**
- **Housing Revenue Account (HRA)**: Ring-fenced account for council housing income and expenditure.
- **Infill Development**: Building new homes on small vacant or underused plots within existing urban areas.
- **Local Housing Allowance (LHA)**: Housing benefit rates for private rental sector tenants, based on the bottom 30% of local market rents.

- **Local Plan**: Planning document setting out local authority's planning policies and site allocations.
- **Main Duty**: Legal obligation to secure accommodation for eligible homeless households in priority need.
- **Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES)**: Regulations requiring rented properties to meet minimum EPC ratings.
- **Net Zero**: Balance between greenhouse gases emitted and removed from atmosphere.
- **Objectively Assessed Need (OAN)**: A technical assessment of the number of homes needed in an area, considering demographic and economic factors.
- **Permitted Development Rights**: Planning permissions granted automatically for certain types of development.
- **Planning and Infrastructure Bill**: Proposed legislation to reform planning system and accelerate development.
- **Prevention Duty**: Legal duty to help prevent homelessness for households at risk within 56 days.
- **Registered Provider (RP)**: Government-regulated organisation providing and managing social housing.
- **Regulator of Social Housing**: Government body regulating social housing providers' performance and standards.
- **Relief Duty**: Legal duty to help secure accommodation for homeless households for 56 days.
- **Retrofit**: Adding new technology or features to existing buildings to improve efficiency or safety.
- **Right to Buy**: Government scheme allowing social housing tenants to purchase their homes at a discount.
- **SAP Rating**: Standard Assessment Procedure - method for assessing and comparing energy performance of dwellings.
- **Section 106**: Legal agreements requiring developers to provide affordable housing or contribute to community infrastructure.

- **Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)**: Emergency shelter provision for rough sleepers during extreme weather.

- **Shared Ownership**: Government-backed scheme allowing purchase of a share of a property while paying rent on the remainder.

- **Statutory Homelessness**: Homelessness cases where local authorities have legal duties under homelessness legislation.
- **Supported Housing**: Accommodation providing housing with additional support services for vulnerable people.

- **Temporary Accommodation**: Short-term housing provided while seeking permanent accommodation solutions.

- **Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM)**: Performance indicators measuring tenant satisfaction with social housing services.

- **Tenure**: Legal conditions under which someone occupies housing (e.g., owned, rented, leasehold).

- **Thermal Performance**: How effectively a building retains or regulates internal temperature.

- **Under-occupancy**: When households have more bedrooms than needed according to official standards