

Local Plan Review – Regulation 18 Consultation 2026

I am submitting this as a response to the Tendring District Council (TDC) Local Plan Review, Regulation 18 consultation in my capacity as the Member of Parliament for Harwich and North Essex. Tendring district makes for a large part of my constituency, and this local plan will directly impact many of my constituents.

Housing target increases have been set by Central Government, who in 2025 set out to achieve 1.5 million new homes by 2030. This means that Tendring District Council needs to build 1,063 annually, an additional 7,000-8,000 homes by 2042, excluding the 10,700 already planned.

The following sites are the proposed within the boundary of my constituency of Harwich and North Essex.

Geographical Cluster	Housing Sites / Projects	Number of Dwellings to 2042
North East	Harwich, Ramsey	1,650-1,900
North West	Lawford, Manningtree, Mistley, Bradfield	300
West	Brightlingsea, Alresford, Thorrington	500
South	Hare Green (Tendring Central) Garden Village	1,700 in initial phase - 4,500 by 2042
South	Horsley Cross Garden Village	1,700 in initial phase - 6,000 by 2042

Over 18,000 new homes are to be built between 2025 and 2042¹. Major growth to accommodate targets will be seen in the Harwich area and through the establishment of 2 Garden Communities in my Constituency. The proposed Hare Green (Tendring Garden Village) and Horsely Cross Garden Communities are separate to the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community (TCBGC) which is also in my constituency, which will serve as one of the developments expected to accommodate a large proportion of the districts increase in housing stock over the plan period to 2042. Some developments will be extending beyond 2042 to contribute to longer-term requirements².

Tendring's population is due to increase by 12,000 people over the next 10 years, closely following the expected 15,000 increase in Colchester. These forecasts are based on previous trend growth and therefore reflect already high levels of housing growth. A higher proportion of the population in Tendring is aged over 65³, however, and this demographic will become more acute as the population expands. The Regulation 18 TDC Local Plan 2025-2042, based on the proposed housing numbers and typical household size, implies a population increase of around 27% over the plan period. Tendring District Council plans to accommodate the existing residential needs whilst household growth increases demand on services.

¹ [Tendring District Local Plan Review 2025-2042](#) 3.43 page 31

² [Tendring District Local Plan Review 2025-2042](#) 3.48 Page 32, 3.52 Page 32

³ [Tendring District Local Plan Review 2025-2042](#) 3.3 Page 23

Healthcare provision

In North East Essex, which covers both Harwich and North Essex and Clacton constituencies, there are currently 1,994 patients per 1 Full-Time-equivalent (FTE) General Practitioner (GP). This is very close to the average number of patients FTE GP of 2,214 (as of January 2026), higher than the surrounding Integrated Care Board (ICB) areas, and far above the GPC England's Patient First Vision for General Practice of a 1 FTE GP per 1,000 patients⁴.

There is a disparity between healthcare funding between Clacton and Harwich. With Clacton receiving specific capital projects and clearly identifies funding sources, Harwich has no new dedicated health centres and with housing expansion, will be reliant on developers adding existing facilities. There are 16,833 patients in my constituency registered at the Mayflower Medical Centre and 4,802 registered at Fronks Road Family surgery⁵. This is 21,635 patients that have health services of limited capacity, no urgent-care, and minimal out-of-hours service. Residents must travel out of area to Clacton or Colchester for treatment, for which they may not have means. This is due to the lack of no available public transport directly to Clacton from Harwich and people being unable to afford private taxis.

With the proposed plans to expand Ramsey and parts of Harwich. Health services must also be expanded to match the demands. Harwich and Clacton face similar demographic measures, including ageing population and high healthcare demands. I am working closely with the Mayflower Medical Centre and the ICB to expand healthcare services in the area. The Council must insist that developers fund this so that health services in Harwich are bought up to the same standards in Clacton.

Transport

With the planned expansion of housing and population in Tendring, car ownership is set to rise, placing further pressure on the already constrained road network, as acknowledged by the Local Plan.

Public transport in the area, particularly for my constituents, remains limited with unreliable or non-existent bus services in areas. Improved walking and cycling routes are positive in principle but inaccessible to the vast majority, the aged who make much of our population, or those in remote areas. Connecting the Garden Villages to the Rapid Transport System (RTS) in the TCBGC as set out in the Local Plan Review is encouraging and if not completed, people will be left reliant on private methods of transport, or the existing local transport.

The cancellation of the A12 widening scheme by Central Government further exacerbates congestion across the entire region. With A120/A133 congested frequently and the heavy reliance freight to Harwich International Port and Freeport East already has on these vital roads, with the expansion of housing and the expansion of the Freeport, the road capacity without improvement is insufficient. If bids for funding are made to the Department for Transport, I will support the councils as much as possible.

⁴ [Pressures in general practice data analysis](#)

⁵ [Constituency data: GPs and GP practices](#)

As the closest rail link to London for the two proposed Garden Communities, Manningtree Station will inevitably come under increased pressure. This train station and the surrounding infrastructure are already operating at capacity. Peak time congestion is significant, with queuing up Cox's hill and along Station Road, which is exacerbated by the constrained underpass, specifically the priority system giving preference to traffic from Brantham. The frequent strikes to the underpass cause regular and prolonged disruptions⁶. Therefore, there is clear evidence that existing infrastructure already operating beyond capacity. It would be unsustainable to accommodate further housing and population growth without first securing a long-term solution to the underpass.

Recent correspondence with the Department for Transport, which has been shared with Tendring District Council, makes it clear that the responsibility for progressing such a scheme rest with the Local Highway Authority. No contribution will be made from Department for Transport or transport companies. Delivery will require a combination of Council funding and Developer Section 106 money. I am very keen to work with Tendring District Council as closely as possible to make appropriate representations to the developers of the proposed Garden Communities in my constituency, before new housing developments are built so that money is allocated towards the necessary upgrades to the Manningtree underpass, in line with the governments infrastructure first policy.

Education

With increased population a higher number of children will be expected. There are already over 19,000 total pupils in the system in Tendring, and it has been indicated that the demands for mainstream places across the district to continue to rise. Primary pupil numbers will reach 10,284 by 2034/35⁷.

It is encouraging that the position of Tendring District Council is that 'Planning Permission will not be granted for new residential developments unless the individual or cumulative impacts of development on education provision can be addressed, at the developers cost'⁸ and that the proposed Garden Communities include planned new schools. This strategy must be implemented while consulting with ECC about expanding existing provision so that pupils continue being educated well and individual school resources are not stretched further.

An area for concern is the expected growth in Harwich. Hundreds of additional school age children, which will exceed the current capacity. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that Harwich no longer has a Sixth Form College. Post 16 education engagement in this area of Tendring is limited and with children having to travel to Clacton, Frinton, or Colchester. Distance is a contributing barrier, increasing pressure on transport links.

It is essential that Tendring District Council work closely with Essex County Council and developers to ensure all educational needs; primary, secondary, and post 16 pathways are met in a way that maintains accessibility and standards across Tendring.

⁶ [Network Rail reveals its most bashed bridges | RailBusinessDaily](#)

⁷ [Tendring District Local Plan Review 2025-2042](#) – 3.17 Page 25

⁸ [Tendring District Local Plan Review 2025-2042](#) - Page 115 Strategic Policy PP12

Garden Communities

The Local plan anticipates that Garden villages to deliver infrastructure alongside housing, ranging shops, schools, and healthcare to mitigate the impact on surrounding communities. These facilities are often funded through developer Section 106 contributions. Often developers fail to deliver the promised infrastructure, leaving communities without essential services. In particular, healthcare provision for Hare Green and Horsely Cross Garden Villages is unclear, as it remains in TCBGC. With uncertainty over whether reliance will be placed on facilities at the TCBGC, on site, or on surrounding villages such as Manningtree⁹. If pre-existing facilities are to be relied upon, developers must provide adequate financial contributions.

Developers should be required to contribute to necessary transport infrastructure to relieve the already constrained roads. This includes improvements to existing bottlenecks like the Manningtree underpass, and the timely delivery of roads such as the A1331 at the TCBGC, before housing is built. I will object to any large-scale development where critical infrastructure is not delivered before housing. The Department for Transport have made clear that there will be not contribution from central government or from transport companies.

The proposed new standalone garden community settlements are reasonably small, but they are unlikely to be as financially viable as urban extensions. This is because the infrastructure for these developments will have to be built from scratch. Labour's eco towns failed, and the garden communities struggle in practice as we both know too well.

Furthermore, East Anglia is the breadbasket of UK farming, producing high levels of arable crops. Over 3,200 hectares of high-quality farmland has been lost to development in the East of England alone¹⁰, land that could produce around 20,000 tonnes of wheat and other cereals per annum. The Horsley Cross Garden Village will be removing highly productive agricultural land from production, undermining the Uks food security.

This development is planned over several years, creating prolonged disruption to surrounding farmland and local wildlife. Proposed mitigation measures to protect wintering birds and functional habitats must be rigorously implemented. Consultation with local farmers and wildlife protection groups is essential to ensure agricultural productivity and biodiversity are safeguarded.

Villages

Small villages and towns with constrained access, such as Brightlingsea, will be disproportionately affected by the scale of proposed development. The proposed allocation of over 300 homes to Brightlingsea represents a 10% increase of housing, placing additional pressure on an already limited road network. Brightlingsea is served by a single road, the

⁹ [Tendring District Local Plan Review 2025-2042](#) Pages 212, 222

¹⁰ [Food security: East of England has lost the most farmland to development - CPRE Hertfordshire](#)

B1029, which is regularly subject to disruption from maintenance works or accidents. The Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation Document¹¹ does acknowledge the need for capacity/ safety enhancements ‘where necessary’ but does not set out any strategic road upgrades to support this level of housing growth.

Further to this, Brightlingsea has a limited sewerage network capacity with sensitivities to storm overflows into the river. Anglian Water have disclosed that while Brightlingsea’s water recycling centre currently has some spare capacity, the local sewer network is under pressure and could be adversely affected by new developments, stressing that developers must engage to ensure careful management and infrastructure upgrades to accommodate growth to not exceed sewer capacity¹².

The Local Plan (chapter 7 of the Preferred Options) does identify flood risk as a key environmental constraint and includes policies that require development to be directed to areas of lowest risk through the sequential approach. However, specific site settlements in Ramsey, Harwich and Great Oakley are areas where coastal and tidal flood risks are significant. There has been flooding in Ramsey earlier this year. If planning is to be granted to sites within the floodplain, the council must justify and demonstrate how the sequential test has been applied at allocation stage, ensuring that the chosen locations for development are the most appropriate in terms of flood management.

Closing

The Local Plan must be driven by infrastructure deliverability. Communities across Tendring recognise the need for growth but the current infrastructure deficit cannot accommodate the Government targets of 1,063 homes per year without significant upfront investment. Highways and healthcare improvements must be delivered alongside development. Critical improvements like the Manningtree underpass must be made to serve the expanding community in advance of housing development.

¹¹ [Tendring District Local Plan Review 2025-2042](#) – Focuses on SAH4, Page 237

¹² [peir192-information-request.pdf](#)