

**ASSETS & COMMUNITY SAFETY PORTFOLIO HOLDER AND PARTNERSHIPS
PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

AUGUST 2026

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR (OPERATIONS & DELIVERY)

A. WOMEN'S SAFETY CHARTER

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report updates Council Officers and Members on the rollout of the Tendring District Women's Safety Charter.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What is a Safety Charter?

The Tendring District Women's Safety Charter is a preventative, community safety initiative designed to improve how safe women and girls feel in public spaces.

Safety Charters have been introduced in several areas of the UK since 2021, many with an initial focus on the night-time economy. Tendring's Charter takes a broader approach by recognising the needs of women and girls living, working and travelling in more rural communities.

The Charter is based on the principle that all women and girls should be able to feel safe in their local area, regardless of their background or where they live.

What is the concern?

Everyone should be able to feel safe in their local area. However, research shows that feelings of safety in public spaces have declined, and gender remains a significant factor in how safe people feel.

Fear of violence can restrict women's participation in social, employment and educational opportunities, as well as their freedom to move safely through public spaces.

YouGov surveys on perceptions of safety indicate that public confidence in safety is declining, with women reporting different and often more significant concerns than men.

Latest statistics show that women experience harassment at almost twice the rate of men, with 27% of women reporting harassment in the last year.

Low feelings of safety can affect women's everyday lives, leading many to adapt their behaviour to reduce the risk of harassment, assault or other harm.

- Changing routes or avoiding certain locations;
- Avoiding walking alone;

- Using public transport instead of walking;
- Changing how or where they exercise; and
- Staying in groups to feel safer.

This ongoing “safety work” places an additional burden on women and can limit their freedom of movement and participation in community life. Improving feelings of safety for women and girls can help reduce these barriers and widen access to opportunities.

In 2024, the National Police Chiefs’ Council identified violence against women and girls (VAWG) as a national threat to public safety, reflecting the scale and seriousness of the issue.

The Charter therefore takes a public health approach, seeking to remove barriers that women and girls experience in public spaces because of their gender.

Why does Tendring need a Women’s Safety Charter?

Nationally, women and girls are at risk of violence both at home and in public spaces. They experience disproportionately high levels of sexual violence, harassment and domestic abuse, and communities across Tendring District are not exempt from these issues.

For the year ending December 2025, 3,529 VAWG offences were recorded by police in Tendring District. Of these, 328 occurred in public spaces. Police data shows a reduction in these offences over the previous 12 months; however, recorded crime only reflects incidents reported to the police.

In 2024/25, Tendring District recorded 4,931 VAWG offences, including domestic abuse. It is also recognised that police-recorded data does not capture the full prevalence of violence against women and girls, as these offences are significantly underreported across the UK.

A Women’s Safety Charter depends on collaboration and commitment from a wide range of partners. Its aims must be shared across the District and delivered in partnership with local community groups, policing teams, education providers, leisure facilities, retail settings and other relevant organisations.

Organisations that pledge support for the Women’s Safety Charter will help improve safety across the district. By creating safer environments for women and girls, promoting positive cultures, putting appropriate policies and processes in place, and signposting people to support when incidents occur, the Charter will help increase engagement among those who may currently feel excluded because of concerns about personal safety.

Those pledging to the Charter will take proactive steps to make their spaces, and the wider community, feel safer for women and girls. This shared commitment from a strong network of partners will help build confidence and encourage women and girls to participate more fully in public life.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that:

The Assets and Community Safety Portfolio Holder and the Partnerships Portfolio Holders formally approve Tendring District Council’s sign-up to the Charter.

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REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)
Formal approval from the Portfolio Holders is required to enable Tendring District Council to sign up to the Charter and begin its internal rollout to Officers and Members. Following approval, Officers from the Community Safety Team will provide training to internal teams to support delivery. Once the Council has signed up, the Charter can then be promoted to wider partners, including local businesses and Community Safety Partnership colleagues.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED
• Taking no action to roll out the Women’s Safety Charter would mean that the Council and the Community Safety Partnership do not support the Government’s plan to tackle violence against women and girls, or the priorities of both the Council and the Community Safety Partnership. • Not supporting this work would therefore be inconsistent with the current priorities of both the Council and the Community Safety Partnership.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The Corporate Plan Priority Themes the proposed decision will contribute to:

Pride in our area and services to residents

We want to put residents' first, by promoting clean and tidy communities, providing decent housing that everyone deserves, and tackling the things that make a big difference to you. This means getting the basics right on our services. The Council will look to harness the power of digital delivery of services while ensuring that no resident is left behind. We also want to promote pride in our communities by encouraging everyone to take responsibility for keeping their area a pleasant place in which to live and work.

Championing our local environment

We believe our environment is special, it is the space where we live and work, and therefore deserves protection. We will be tough on those who do not respect our environment. We want to create and maintain spaces for leisure, wellbeing and healthy lifestyles, and deliver access to open spaces and community resources.

Working with partners to improve quality of life

We want to promote safer, healthier, well connected and inclusive communities by working with our partners across government, public, private and third sectors. We will strive to build on the firm foundations, developed over time, with those partners to meet the identified needs of our communities. We recognise the vital role volunteers play in caring for others and our environment, and we will support, encourage and facilitate those opportunities.

This is also aligned with the adopted Crime and Disorder Strategy 2025–2028 and the Community Safety Partnership Delivery Plan 2026–2027.

OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT (including with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee and other stakeholders where the item concerns proposals relating to the Budget and Policy Framework)

Community Leadership Overview & Scrutiny Committee will act as the Council's designated "crime and disorder committee" for the purposes of Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006.

The Women's Safety Charter will be on the agenda for the Community Leadership Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting in June 2027.

The report links to the Clacton Town Board Pride in Place work and its ongoing workstream to improve public safety in Clacton Town Centre.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS (including legislation & constitutional powers)

Is the recommendation a Key Decision (see the criteria stated here)	YES/NO	If Yes, indicate which by which criteria it is a Key Decision	☐ Significant effect on two or more wards ☐ Involves £100,000 expenditure/income ☐ Is otherwise significant for the
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		And when was the proposed decision published in the Notice of forthcoming decisions for the Council (must be 28 days at the latest prior to the meeting date)	service budget
☐	The Monitoring Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:		
N/A			
FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS			
There are no direct financial implications for the Council. However, there will be resource implications for Officers within the Community Safety Team to support training and the rollout of the programme.			
☐	The Section 151 Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:		
N/A			
USE OF RESOURCES AND VALUE FOR MONEY			
The following are submitted in respect of the indicated use of resources and value for money indicators:			
A) Financial sustainability: how the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;		The proposed Charter will require Officer time to support training, engagement and rollout, primarily from the Community Safety Team and relevant partners. Any associated costs are expected to be minimal.	
B) Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks, including; and		The Charter will be informed by feedback from businesses and residents, including those affected by concerns about safety in the district. This evidence base will support informed decision-making and help guide action to reduce violence against women and girls across the District.	
C) Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness: how the body uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.		The Council uses data and performance information to improve how services are managed and delivered. The Women's Safety Charter supports this approach by helping to promote safer working environments and strengthen community confidence in both the	

	Council and the Community Safety Partnership.
MILESTONES AND DELIVERY	
The adoption and implementation of the Women's Safety Charter will follow the timeline below: • Community Safety & Health and Wellbeing Board – ratified 12th May 2026 • Management Team – agreed 11th August 2026 • Portfolio Holders Formal Decision – 1st September 2026 Following formal approval, the guidance will be shared with Safeguarding Champions across the organisation to support a consistent Council-wide approach to delivering the Women's Safety Charter within service areas.	
ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION	
Sign-up to the Charter will be reviewed quarterly, with an annual report submitted to the Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2027.	
EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS	
The Council's obligations under the public sector equality duty are set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. Under that duty, public authorities are required to have due regard to the following when carrying out their functions: - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010. - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.	
SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS	
The Charter aims to ensure that everyone can use and enjoy public spaces free from anti-social behaviour. Organisations that pledge support for the Women's Safety Charter will contribute to improving safety across the District. By creating safer environments for women and girls, promoting positive cultures, putting appropriate policies and processes in place, and signposting people to support when incidents occur, the Charter will help improve engagement with those who may currently feel excluded because of concerns about personal safety. Those signing up to the Charter will take proactive steps to make their spaces, and the wider community, feel safer for women and girls. This shared commitment from a strong network of	

partners will help build confidence and encourage women and girls to participate more fully in public life.

IMPLICATIONS RELATED TO DEVOLUTION AND/OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

The adoption of the Women's Safety Charter has no direct impact on the Council's implementation of devolution or the ongoing local government reorganisation in Greater Essex.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S AIM TO BE NET ZERO BY 2050

Consideration has been given to the Council's aim to be net zero by 2050. The content of this report has no direct implications for that aim.

OTHER RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS OR IMPLICATIONS

Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below.

Crime and Disorder	Adopting the Women's Safety Charter will support the Council and the Community Safety Partnership in meeting their duties and aligning delivery with the priorities set out in the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy and the Community Safety Delivery Plan.
Health Inequalities	The Charter supports the reduction of health inequalities by promoting inclusive, supportive workplaces and public spaces that prioritise wellbeing and safeguarding for employees, residents and visitors, regardless of background.
Subsidy Control (the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and the related Statutory Guidance)	This proposal does not involve the provision of financial assistance or confer any economic advantage to external organisations; therefore, subsidy control considerations are not applicable in this instance.
Area or Ward affected	Initial implementation in Clacton-on-Sea before wider rollout across the district.

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

The Charter was driven by gender equality consultant and local businesswoman Karen Whybro, who began campaigning for women's safety in the city following the kidnap, rape and murder of Sarah Everard in 2021. Her campaign was also informed by other cases of

fatal violence against women.

These women's deaths are a stark reminder of the consequences when systems intended to protect women fail, and when preventable violence and abuse are allowed to become fatal. Their stories are not isolated tragedies; they point to a wider pattern of missed opportunities, insufficient protection and institutional inaction that has continued for too long.

- The 'Freedom from Violence and Abuse: a cross-government strategy to build a safer society for women and girls'
- The government published its long-awaited [violence against women and girls \(VAWG\) strategy](#), following its ambitious manifesto commitment to halve this abuse within a decade. (18th December 2025)

The human cost of this societal failure is devastating. In the year ending March 2025, one in eight women experienced domestic abuse, sexual assault or stalking.

Ending violence against women and girls is a shared moral responsibility and requires action across the whole of society.

The Government's strategy focuses on three objectives: preventing abuse and intervening early to address its root causes; pursuing perpetrators relentlessly; and supporting everyone affected by violence and abuse.

- The Tendring District Women's Safety Charter is a preventative, community safety initiative designed to improve how safe women and girls feel in public spaces.
- The Charter is based on key principles of violence prevention and reduction, supporting a network of local environments where women and girls feel welcome, safe and supported.

Research shows that men are generally less likely to change their behaviour or worry about their safety when out in public. By contrast, many women report feeling unsafe during both the day and night, and often feel compelled to adapt their own behaviour in response to the actions of others.

Responsibility for addressing this issue should not rest with women. The focus must be on tackling the source of the problem and encouraging a cultural shift in which those who make women feel unsafe, or enable unsafe behaviour, are expected to change.

This highlighted the need for a Safety Charter and wider awareness campaign covering all aspects of life in the district, rather than focusing only on the night-time economy. Women may feel unsafe in many everyday settings, including while exercising, at work, or walking through a car park after work. The aim is for women to be safe, and to feel safe, at all times.

Everyone should be able to feel safe in their local area and community. However, research shows that public perceptions of safety have declined, with gender continuing to have a significant impact on how safe people feel.

National data shows that feelings of safety in parks and open spaces have declined. The proportion of people feeling unsafe in these settings increased from 7% to 11% during the day and from 60% to 63% after dark. Overall, people felt less safe walking alone after dark than during the day, with women reporting lower feelings of safety than men across all settings after dark.

To year ending December 2025, there were 3,529 violence against women and girls (VAWG) police recorded crimes in the Tendring District. Of these, 328 took place in public spaces. Police data shows that these types of offences have decreased over the last 12 months. However, it must always be noted that recorded police data only represents incidents reported to police.

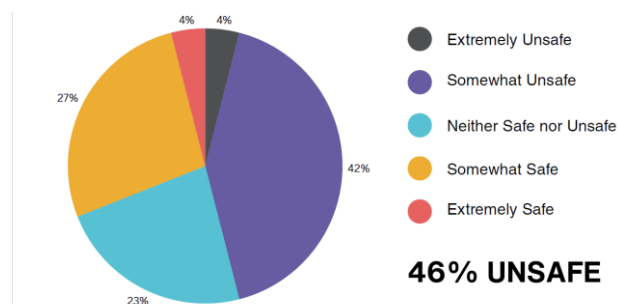
For the Tendring area, in 2024/2025, this District saw 4931 violence against women and girls offences (including domestic abuse). It is also recognised that police recorded data does not capture the true extent of the prevalence of violence against women as these types of offences are significantly underreported by women and girls across the UK.

The Women's Safety Charter for the Tendring District has been developed from the feedback from people in our local area and through partnership with Essex Police to respond to their needs. We believe that it is imperative for the lived experience of our residents to shape projects and that community involvement is a solution to increase perceptions of safety for all.

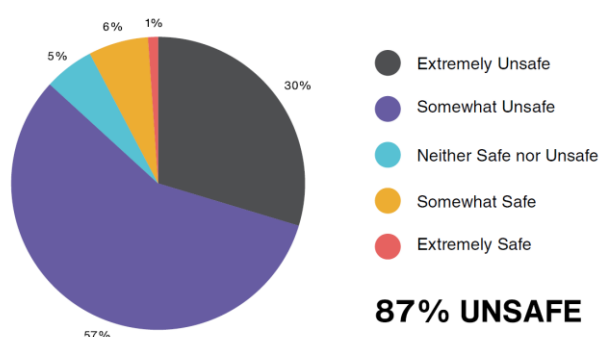
Perceptions of safety were first gathered through an anonymous public survey for people who live, work in or visit Tendring District. The survey asked respondents how safe or unsafe they felt during the day and after dark, and which behaviours affected their feelings of safety. The survey promotion also generated further qualitative insight into local views and attitudes about the safety of women and girls.

How safe do women feel in the Tendring District ?

DAYTIME

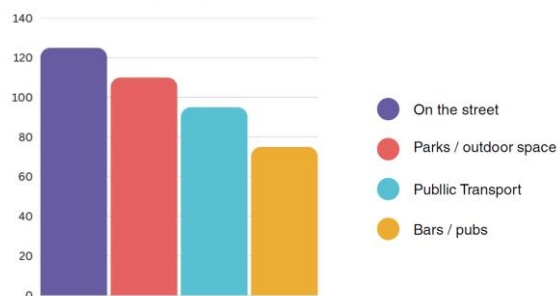


AFTER DARK

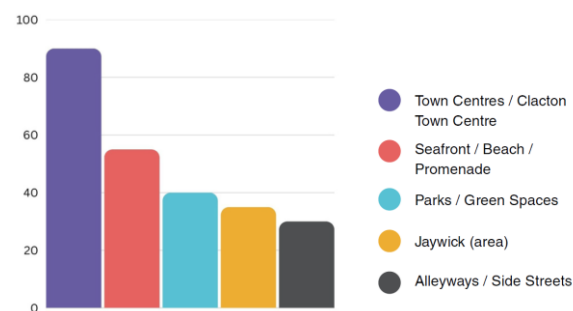


Where do women feel unsafe in the Tendring District ?

PLACES



SPACES



A Women's Safety Charter relies on collaboration and the commitment of a wide range of partners. Its aims must be shared across the District and delivered in partnership with local community groups, policing teams, education providers, leisure facilities, retail spaces and

other relevant organisations.

Each organisation that pledges its commitment to a Women's Safety Charter will further the safety of all in our District. Enabling safer environments for women and girls within communities, establishing positive cultures, policies and processes for if, and when, incidents arise and signposting those who require support, will improve engagement and activity with those who are currently marginalised through their concerns around personal safety.

Those pledging to the Charter will take proactive steps to improve their environments in order that women and girls feel safer, not only in their spaces, but in their wider communities too. This ongoing commitment, from a strong network of partners, will result in greater confidence in women and girls to engage and participate to take a more active role in public space.

The next phase of the project will focus on engaging partners across Tendring District to support safer, more welcoming and inclusive environments through their pledge to the Charter.



By pledging to the Women's Safety Charter, venues, businesses and organisations can be part of the solution through identifying their space as safe for women and girls.”

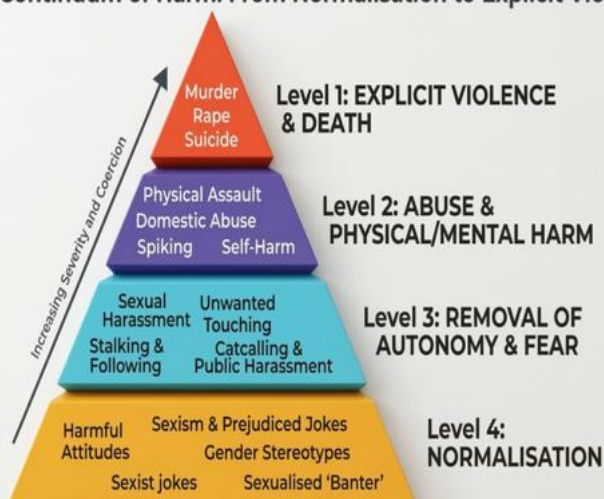
This will require organisations to take a series of actions, including signing the pledge, reviewing their spaces using the ‘culture, policy and design’ model, and embedding a positive culture that challenges harmful attitudes and behaviours. Members of the wider community will also be invited to be part of the solution.

Research shows that tolerated attitudes and beliefs underpin harmful behaviours and create negative social norms. Low-level behaviours which may not reach a criminal threshold still have the potential to impact people's feelings of safety in the long-term, leading to the marginalisation of them through restricting their own behaviours and engagement in communities.

By interrupting and reducing ‘low level’ behaviours such as catcalling, inappropriate comments, sexist jokes, and so-called ‘locker room banter’ individuals can help reduce sexual harassment and more serious incidents of harm which disproportionately affect women and girls.

We all have a role to play to make everybody feel safer by defending the general decency of the Tendring District and ensuring unwanted and harmful behaviour is challenged safely.

The Continuum of Harm: From Normalisation to Explicit Violence



The Tendring District's story is written by its people. From parents and carers to local charities, schools, and health workers, everyone plays a part. Community engagement is central: residents' voices shape services, and the council is committed to transparency, fairness, and reducing inequalities.

"Drawing on women and girls' voices and experiences, this charter will empower individuals to be part of the solution, enabling everyone to connect and engage without the fear of unsafety."

Feelings of unsafety, concerns about others' behaviour and the mental, emotional and physical load associated with those results in women and girls being excluded from areas of life that should be accessible for all.

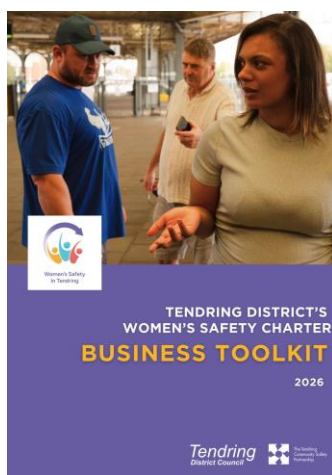
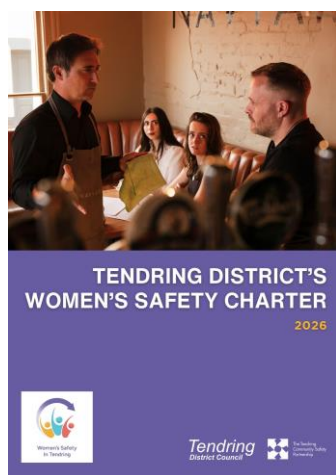
Removing barriers which currently exclude or reduce women and girls participation from public spaces, such as the feeling of unsafety, encourage increased activity with communities, enables access to exercise, work and education and, therefore, improving health and career outcomes for our community members.

The survey responses reinforced that women's experiences and perceptions of safety are not uniform. Feelings of safety are highly subjective and can vary significantly between individuals, particularly among women from marginalised groups, including those affected by ethnicity, disability or age.

Several focus groups were held with women from a range of demographic backgrounds to better understand their individual perceptions of safety. A thematic analysis of these discussions identified common concerns, locations and suggested ideas, were collated

RANK	PLACE	NOTES
1	ON THE STREETS	Most frequently mentioned
2	PARKS / OURDOOR SPACES	Including beaches, promenades etc.
3	PUBLIC TRANSPORT	Buses, trains, stations
4	BARS / PUBS	Public, but more social / night settings
5	TOWN CENTRE / SHOPPING AREAS	Including car parks
6	RESTAURANTS	Public, sometimes tied to nightlife
7	GYMS	Public venues with limited access
8	EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES	Schools, colleges, universities

Signing up to the Charter will ensure that participants have access to a range of resources, including:



PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS

N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL

[TENDRING Women's Safety Charter Aug26.pdf](#)

[TENDRING Business Toolkit Aug26.pdf](#)

[Video - Tendring Women's Safety Charter](#)

APPENDICES

N/A

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