

CABINET

14 NOVEMBER 2025

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

A.3 (1) HIGHLIGHT PRIORITY ACTIONS 2025/26 – MONITORING REPORT AT THE HALF YEAR POINT AND PROPOSED PRIORITIES TO 31 MARCH 2028 AND (2) PRIDE IN PLACE PROGRAMME

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide the Cabinet with the positive progress over the first six months with the Highlight Priority Actions adopted for 2025/26 towards the Council's Corporate Plan Themes 2024/28. In view of the need to refocus the Council's priorities for the remaining 28 months, until a new unitary council takes on delivery of functions and services currently delivered by Essex County Council and this Council, this report invites the Cabinet to establish those new priorities.

One of the proposed priorities concerns the Clacton Town Board's emerging 10-Year Vision and 4-Year Investment Plan. Further text on these is set out in the Executive Summary and Recommendations in respect of the Council's 'in principle' approach to those emerging Vision and Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Corporate Plan 2024/28, adopted by Council, sets out the strategic direction and policy objectives for the Council over that period. Taking the Corporate Plan Themes, Cabinet on 17 March 2025 adopted a series of highlight priority actions for 2025/26. This meeting of Cabinet provides the opportunity to report on the six-month position on each of those highlight priority actions.

The progress made against those priorities in this first six months, including the transfer of Careline Services to the Colchester Helpline Service, the publication of a draft new Housing Strategy, approval of the Community Safety Strategy for the Council has led to a point of reflection on the priorities going forward. This, in turn has provided an opportunity to consider the focus of the Council in a number of areas across a range of functions and services for the period to 31 March 2028 and to leave Tendring in the best possible position upon unitarisation in Greater Essex.

As referenced elsewhere, this work fits with the intended development of a fully funded financial 'work programme' for the Council for the period until 31 March 2028 when the delivery of local government functions and services in the area are expected to be transferred to a new Unitary Council across Tendring and other existing District Council areas in north Essex.

One of the proposed priorities relates to the UK Government's Pride in Place Programme for which the Clacton Town Board will submit its 10-year Vision and 4-year Investment Plan to Government to secure the release of the £2M funding per year under that Programme for the Clacton-on-Sea designated area. The Board is on track to submit these Plans by the 28 November 2025 deadline set by the UK Government. The Board's emerging Vision and Investment Plan include measures that complement and build on the other UK Government

Community Regeneration Programmes which the Council has committed to delivering. The Clacton Town Board is not a body corporate with the infrastructure to directly deliver its Vision and Plan. As such, MHCLG through their guidance on Plan for Neighbourhoods, as referred to later in the report, requires the local authority as the accountable body to provide assurances on delivery. There are a number of the measures in the emerging Plans are likely to be referred to the Council to enable them to be delivered. Following submission of the Vision and Plan by the Board, the UK Government will consider and, hopefully, confirm that it is satisfied with them in order to release the funding referred to from 1 April 2026. Any and all matters to be delivered by Council will be separately subject to individual governance processes of the Council. However, it is helpful to the process for a high level 'in principle' decision to be taken by the Council once the Board's Vision and Investment Plans have been finalised, to set out its position in respect of the projects that may be directed to the Council for delivery. Should MHCLG approve the Plans further governance will be required capturing delivery requirements and more generally as referenced in the MHCLG guidance for the Pride in Place Programme.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (a) receives the six-month progress report on the current adopted highlight priorities as set out at Appendix A;**
- (b) approves a re-alignment of the highlight priorities for the Council for the period until new Unitaries take on local government services in Greater Essex as set out in Appendix B;**
- (c) subject to approval of (b) above, directs Officers to undertake the necessary work to develop those items set out in (b) above for consideration as part of the proposed two year 'work programme'; and**
- (d) endorses that the Leader, in consultation with the Council's statutory officers, will determine the Council's 'in principle' support for those measures to be included in the Clacton Town Board's 10-year Vision and 4-year Investment Plan with the UK Government's Pride in Place Programme that may, in turn, be submitted to the Council as specific projects for delivery (subject to the Council's own governance arrangements at the time they are submitted and subsequently).**

REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)

Through this report, the progress with the approved specific highlight priorities for 2025/26 to deliver against the Corporate Plan 2024-28 Themes are set out for the public record. Accordingly, the report provides the opportunity to review those priorities and provide a focus for the Council over the 2 ¼ years envisaged for this Council ahead of new Unitaries in the area. This will enable funds to be allocated to these projects/activities as part of the stated two year financial 'work programme' to secure front line services and key actions across the Council within its available resources.

The recommendation concerning the UK Government's Pride in Place Programme for Clacton-on-Sea has been included to ensure that there is a clear collaborative understanding between the Council and the Clacton Town Board on the principle of the Council delivering a number of the projects to be set out in the Board's 10-Year Vision and 4-Year Investment Plan for the Town.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Consideration was given to not submitting this report. However, that would be contrary to the approach adopted by the Council for monitoring and reporting on performance against the highlight priorities for the year. This information rightly should be in the public domain. As we have now passed the point of submission of proposals for local government reorganisation from 1 April 2028 it is also appropriate to establish the focus of the Council to that point. Not doing so was considered and discounted in view of pressing need to define that focus, irrespective of what unitary structure is implemented by the UK Government.

Consideration was given to whether to include the recommendation in respect of the UK Government's Pride in Place Programme. Not including it would be contrary to the Council's commitment to openness and as such it was included in order to support that commitment.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The Council approved a Corporate Plan for 2024/28 and this established its strategic direction for those four years. That strategic direction itself seeks to reflect the issues that matter most to the local people, the national requirements from Government and the challenges that face the District over that time period. The Corporate Plan was adopted unanimously at the Council meeting on 28 November 2023 (Minute 76 refers).

The themes of the 2024/28 Corporate Plan are:

- Championing Our Local Environment
- Pride in Our Area and Services to Residents
- Working with Partners to Improve Quality of Life
- Raising Aspirations and Creating Opportunities
- Promoting Our Heritage Offer, Attracting Visitors and Encouraging Them to Stay Longer
- Financial Sustainability and Openness

The Corporate Plan shapes and directs the Council's work and an extensive range of actions have been, are being and will be undertaken across the 2024-28 life of the Plan to deliver against its themes and priorities.

The Highlight Priority Actions adopted by Cabinet on 17 March 2025 sought to take forward the Corporate Plan. This meeting of Cabinet provides the opportunity to review progress with the Highlight Priority Actions adopted.

In view of the timeline between this point and the implementation of local government reorganisation, this opportunity has been taken to refocus the Council's priorities for the remaining period until the new Unitaries taken on responsibilities for delivery of local government services and functions. To make the best progress, within the capacity of the Council, towards its Corporate Plan 2024-28 a new set of highlight priorities is proposed that will be delivered over that remaining envisaged timespan of this Council. If approved, the recommendations then set out that these priorities will then be used to develop a two-year financial 'work programme' for the Council to secure front line services and enable progress with key actions set out in those recast priorities.

In view of the importance of many of the work areas identified ahead of this financial year for the highlight priorities for 2025/26, there is a significant overlap with the refocussed priorities

proposed for the period to 31 March 2028. The importance of leaving Tending in the best possible place requires a long-term focus if the next 28 months are going to deliver against that aspiration. The proposed new highlight priorities seek to address this challenge.

Now that the Waste and Street Cleaning Contract position has been determined the parameters for the Council to deliver improvements has become clearer. This clarity will in turn improve when the UK Government's Fair Funding Review and multi-year financial settlement are known. Likewise Treasury Management performance will further frame the resources available for the Council to deliver against new highlight priorities. In view of this Cabinet is requested to consider those resources as it identifies its provisional budget for 2026/27 at its December meeting.

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)

The Portfolio Holders concerned have been consulted by the relevant lead officers in respect of the relevant highlight priorities before finalisation of the detail set out in this report and its Appendices.

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	<input type="checkbox"/> Significant effect on two or more wards <input type="checkbox"/> Involves £100,000 expenditure/income <input type="checkbox"/> Is otherwise significant for the service budget
		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)	The highlight priorities are not themselves considered a key decision as each individual highlight priority will be the subject of individual decisions and these may be key decisions by virtue of one or more of the above criteria.

Reporting on the progress of the Cabinet's Highlight Priorities throughout the year accords with the requirements of the Council's Best Value Duty.

YES The Monitoring Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:

MHCLG updated its governance and boundary guidance for Plan for Neighbourhoods in March 2025, which requires the relevant local authority in each place to act as the accountable body for the funds with responsibility for ensuring that public funds are distributed fairly and effectively, and that funds have been managed in line with the Nolan Principles and Managing Public Money principles.

The Accountable Body will also be responsible for compliance with legal responsibilities in relation to subsidy control, state aid and procurement.

MHCLG published its Plan for Neighbourhoods: 10-year vision content checklist in June 2025,

which requires an Assurance Section to be included providing a high-level description of how the local authority will assure that the programme is delivered in line with Best Value standards and Managing Public Money (regularity, propriety, value for money and feasibility).

MHCLG will require a MoU agreement between them and the Council (as accountable body) on acceptance of the place's Regeneration Plan. The MOU allows release of programme delivery funding therefore, the Council should also agree a protocol with the Board on how the plan will be delivered, in line with the guidance.

FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

This report sets out key areas for the Council to focus upon over the coming 2¼ years without specifically attributing resource allocation to each. However, crucially, it will also set in train a process by which Portfolio Holders and Officers will undertake the necessary actions with the aim of presenting a fully funded two-year financial work programme to Cabinet in December 2025.

YES | **The Section 151 Officer confirms they have been made aware of the above and any additional comments from them are below:**

Although subject to approval elsewhere on the agenda, the proposals set out within this report align with the proposed development of a funded two year financial plan where the consideration of the investment priorities can be considered alongside a number of key financial issues such as cost pressures and savings / efficiencies that aim to provide a financially stable and sustainable position over the next two years whilst balancing the need to meet any emerging statutory obligations relating to the incoming new Unitary Council from April 2028.

It is also important to highlight the governance arrangements associated with the Council's accountable body role within the Pride in Place of Place Programme being led by the Clacton Town Board. Via guidance and grant agreements, a number of duties are placed on the Council such as maintaining direct oversight of financial decisions and undertaking its own governance arrangements for not only the projects that it may be asked to deliver directly but on the overall plan itself. Such issues will need to be considered as the plan emerges / evolves, which is reflected within the recommendations above.

USE OF RESOURCES AND VALUE FOR MONEY

The following are submitted in respect of the indicated use of resources and value for money indicators:

<p>A) Financial sustainability: how the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;</p>	<p>The highlight priorities themselves support financial sustainability arrangements by keeping major projects under review. The intended actions to establish a fully funded 'work programme' for the next 2 ¼ year period of the Council seeks to support this intention of financial sustainability.</p>
<p>B) Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks, including; and</p>	<p>The adoption of highlight priorities itself supports good decision making by alerting decision makers and other Councillors of crucial steps in delivering the Corporate Plan Objectives. The creation of the intended two year financial 'work programme' further builds on this approach.</p>

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 placement of performance data in these reports to Cabinet seek to support good use of data across all the highlight priorities.
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MILESTONES AND DELIVERY

This report is programmed for the first meeting of Cabinet following the end of Q2. As such, by collating and presenting this report, Cabinet is supported to receive timely information on all of the highlight priorities for 2025/26. As set out earlier, with the submission of various proposals for local government reorganisation across Greater Essex and the outcome of the procurement of the waste and street cleaning contract known, it is now timely to look at the work programme for the Council for the next 2¼ years to secure the best position possible for the District as unitarisation then comes about here.

ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION

Through this report Cabinet is able to review performance and project management of key highlight priorities across the various Portfolio Holder responsibilities. As such, it can consider risk associated with those highlight priorities and determine appropriate action. The process of adopting a two-year financial work programme utilising the highlight priorities for the remaining period of this Council seeks to de-risk (as far as possible) delivery of front-line services in the coming years while addressing improvement within the resource capacity of the Council.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Due consideration has been given to the public sector equalities duty in the preparation of this report. Decisions on individual priorities will be subject to equalities assessment.

SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS

The Council's Social Value Policy sets out that it will seek social value through all its procurements over £100,000 where it is relevant, proportionate and non-discriminatory to do so. As such, once the intended financial 'work programme' for the Council for the following 2 years is finalised, relevant, commissioners in service areas will need to consider the value of commercial outcomes delivered to the authority in accordance with the Local Government Act 1988 and the wider impact that the activities have on the economic, environmental and societal objectives of the partner authority. These will be undertaken as services look at procurement options for activities generally, and specifically, in respect of the recast priorities/financial 'work programme'.

IMPLICATIONS RELATED TO DEVOLUTION AND/OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

The Highlight Priorities for 2025/26 approved "Participating positively in the Greater Essex Devolution and local government reorganisation programme as it progresses"

- "To continue to address the needs and otherwise speak up for Tendring as part of:
- (1) The development of plans for devolution of Whitehall powers to a Greater Essex Combined Authority/Mayor; and
 - (2) the proposals for local government reorganisation in Greater Essex to deliver the best structures for delivery of high-quality and sustainable public services across the area, effective governance and decision-making arrangements and thereby securing the best outcome for the communities of Tendring."

The progress towards this priority and activity is provided within Appendix A of this report. It is important to draw attention to the next steps and preparation required for the government's announcement in March 2026 (MHCLG current timetable).

Irrespective of the number of unitary councils in Greater Essex, immediate focus will be on governance matters and further information on the detail will be provided in later reports. Although the capacity of senior officers to support various workstreams for LGR and its transitional period will impact of the Council's ability to deliver against its own priorities and continue with business as usual maintaining its duties of a Best Value Authority.

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

The report has also had regard to the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan as adopted by the Council.

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	In preparing this report, due regard has been given to the likely effect of the exercise of the Council's functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area.
Health Inequalities	The specific highlight priorities around this are testament to the ambition to positively contribute to addressing health inequalities.
Subsidy Control (the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and the related Statutory Guidance)	Not specifically applicable to this report. Such considerations may well need to be addressed as individual projects and activities are to be put into place.
Area or Ward affected	All Wards

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

The Highlight Priority Actions for 2025/26 were proposed in draft form by Cabinet at its 20 December 2024 meeting and, with the agreement of the Chairmen on the Resources & Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it considered the proposals at its meeting on 13 January 2025 and submitted comments on them. The outcome of the consultation was then submitted to the 17 March 2025 meeting of Cabinet when the finalised Highlight Priority Actions were approved for 2025/26.

The half year position on the delivery of the Highlight Priority Actions for 2024/25 is set out at Appendix A to this report.

In considering this report, Cabinet is also reminded that this first half year of 2025/26 has seen the following significant matters:

Consultation launched for women's safety charter – A consultation has been launched by Tendring District Council (TDC) to support the development of a Women's Safety Charter for the district. The aim is to gather the views of all genders to identify what makes them feel

unsafe when out and about in Tendring.

Tendring to host groundbreaking Sports and Activity Conference later this month –

Sport clubs, coaches and health and wellness champions are being invited to join a groundbreaking Sports and Activity Conference in Tendring later this month. Tendring District Council (TDC) will be hosting the first Tendring Sports and Activity Conference 2025 at the Princes Theatre in Clacton on Monday, 19 May, from 12 noon to 5pm.

Seven beaches on the Essex Sunshine Coast to proudly fly Blue Flags and Seaside Awards this summer –

Seven beaches on the Essex Sunshine Coast will proudly fly Blue Flags or Seaside Awards this summer. Environmental Charity Keep Britain Tidy has today (Thursday, 15 May) announced the winners of the prestigious awards for 2025. This year the beaches in Tendring that have met the high standard required to be awarded the Blue Flag are Brightlingsea, Dovercourt Bay, Frinton and Walton-on-the-Naze's Albion Beach.

Four of Tendring's green spaces once again among the best in the country –

Four of Tendring's most cherished parks and gardens have once again been recognised as some of the finest in the UK, proudly retaining their prestigious Green Flag Awards for 2025. Clacton Seafront Gardens, Weeley Crematorium and Gardens, Cliff Park in Dovercourt and Crescent Gardens in Frinton have all been awarded the internationally recognised Green Flag – a symbol of excellence in green space management and community involvement.

Eleven car parks across Tendring scoop National Safety Award –

Car parks across Tendring have again been recognised for their high standards, receiving the prestigious Park Mark award from the British Parking Association (BPA). The awards, part of the Safer Parking Scheme, are given to facilities that demonstrate excellent management, effective surveillance, appropriate lighting, and a clean, safe environment for users. This year's award winners include Kiln Lane in Manningtree and Ardleigh Carp Park for the first time, both having impressed assessors with their conditions and upkeep. The full list of car parks awarded in this round includes Jaywick Beach, Ipswich Road, Holland-on-Sea, The Quay, Harwich, Wellington Road, Harwich, Tower Street, Brightlingsea, Agate Road, Clacton, Elm Grove, Clacton-on-Sea, High Street, Walton-on-the-Naze, Church Road, Walton-on-the-Naze.

New joined-up complaints policy shows 'we're open to getting things right' –

Tendring District Council has this week launched its new complaints procedure with the aim of making it easier for residents to raise concerns and for the Council to respond consistently and fairly. The new Corporate and Housing Complaints Policy replaces the two separate policies previously in place. It follows a thorough review of how complaints are handled across the organisation and reflects national best practice, including the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and the Housing Ombudsman's Code.

Tendring District Council proves it's a top dog with double RSPCA PawPrints win –

Tendring District Council (TDC) is celebrating a tail-wagging triumph after scooping two prestigious honours in the RSPCA's PawPrints Awards 2025. The awards shine a spotlight on councils and public bodies that go the extra mile to protect and promote animal welfare. This year, TDC has proudly picked up a Gold PawPrint for Animal Activity Licensing – awarded for the first time, recognising the Council's leadership in raising standards across animal-related businesses through robust regulation and collaboration. It was also handed a Silver PawPrint for Housing – celebrating its work to promote responsible pet ownership through tenant guidance and welfare partnerships.

Free safety event in Clacton helps older residents to stay safe and well - Older residents from across Tendring attended a free event aimed at helping them stay safe and well in their daily lives. The Older Persons Crucial Crew, organised by Tendring Community Safety Partnership and Tendring District Council (TDC), took place at the Princes Theatre in Clacton on Wednesday, 1 October. It brought together a wide range of organisations to share practical advice on crime prevention, fire safety, emergency preparedness and winter wellbeing. Attendees also received Winter Warmer packs from Community Voluntary Services Tendring, subject to eligibility.

The proposed Highlight Priorities (Appendix B) in many cases take forward the ‘next steps’ identified in respect of the current Priorities at the six-month review point (Appendix A). As such, they are seeking to build on the work to this point and provide clarity on the priorities for the remaining time of this Council (and to the end of the current Corporate Plan). It providing that clarity, it is imperative to reassure all Councillors, the public and our partners that the Council is committed to maintaining front line services over that period. We will also work with those who will come together, with Tendring, to constitute the new Unitary for the area to achieve the best for the District.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS

Minute 144 of Cabinet’s meeting on 17 March 2025 refers.

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL

None.

APPENDICES

- A – Six-month position against the current highlight priorities and next steps
- B – Proposed Highlight priorities for the period to 31 March 2028 to be incorporated in a 2-year financial ‘work programme’ to then be considered by Cabinet in December 2025

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