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CABINET

19 DECEMBER 2025

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING AND PLANNING

A.4 APPROVAL OF DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY 2026-30 FOLLOWING CONSULTATION

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To inform Cabinet of the outcome following the consultation on the draft Housing Strategy 2026-30 and to seek Cabinet's approval of the final Housing Strategy 2026-30.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- At its meeting on 26 September 2025, Cabinet approved a draft Housing Strategy 2026-30 for consultation. The consultation was launched on 6 October 2025 with a questionnaire available on the Council's website.
- 24 responses to the consultation were received via the online survey form with 92% agreeing with the proposed length of the strategy and 92% agreeing with the four strategic priorities. A number of comments were received that are summarised later in this report.
- Essex County Council submitted a detailed response attached as Appendix B that in essence says *ECC welcomes the development of this Housing Strategy and the clear articulation of Tendring's priorities. The document is well-structured and provides a strong narrative about the local context, including the challenges of deprivation, an ageing population, and housing affordability. We particularly value the emphasis on partnership working and the recognition of the role of Essex County Council in delivering shared objectives.*
- Overall, the responses to the consultation have not required the draft strategy to be substantially altered. Reflecting the feedback received, some minor additions have been made.
- The proposed final version of the strategy sets out notable achievements along with ambitions across four strategic priorities:

1. **Maintain and improve our existing housing stock.**

   This focusses on the Councill's role as a landlord and the management of its homes ensuring compliance with statutory obligations along with the Consumer Standards and Tenant Satisfaction Measures

2. **Preventing and reducing homelessness.**

   With homelessness having increased and the majority of councils facing significant cost pressures this priority is setting out what the Council is doing to reduce expenditure and increase its prevention work.

3. **Delivering, with partners, high quality homes.**

   This priority focuses on the delivery of affordable housing in the District.

4. **Supporting people in their homes and communities.**

This priority is aimed at those living in the privately rented sector and those owning their own homes and sets out what the Council is doing to ensure housing standards are maintained across all tenures.

- If approved by Cabinet for recommendation onto Full Council, the Strategy will be presented to Full Council on 27 January 2026.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Cabinet:

1) notes the responses to the consultation on the draft Housing Strategy 2026-30;

2) agrees the final Housing Strategy 2026 – 30 and recommends it for adoption by Full Council on 27 January 2026; and

3) authorises the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Planning to make amendments to the final version of the strategy prior to its approval by Full Council in response to recommendations made by the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in January 2026.

REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)

The recommendations are to ensure that the new Housing Strategy is appropriately adopted, following consultation with the public, other relevant authorities and both internal and external stakeholders, in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

The Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee have yet to review the proposed final version of the Housing Strategy although a Scrutiny Committee Working Group did discuss the draft strategy at a meeting on 3 November 2025 and was largely supportive of it. That working group has not yet had the opportunity to feed back its work to the main Committee, and this is planned for 14 January 2026. Recommendation 3 therefore reflects the fact that the Committee may wish to make recommendations.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Local authorities are not required by Government to have a formal housing strategy, but they are expected to adopt a strategic approach to housing in their local areas to deliver a thriving housing market and address local needs.

An alternative option is not to adopt a housing strategy however this leaves the Council exposed to possible challenge around its knowledge and understanding of the housing situation in the district. The adoption of a strategy and priority areas therefore sets out a basis for the Council's activities, providing reassurance that the organisation is aware of and has considered its approach to the housing challenges in the district.

A housing strategy also unpins other strategies, policies and associated decisions that are taken.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The Housing Strategy contributes to the following Corporate Plan 2024-28 themes:

Financial sustainability and openness – both the running of the Councils housing stock, through the HRA and the provision of a homelessness service, through the General Fund, are significant undertakings from a financial perspective. For different reasons, both currently present challenges that influence the financial sustainability of the two financial accounts that the Council runs.

Raising aspirations and creating opportunities – it is fair to assume that all residents in the district aspire to home ownership or a stable, secure home environment that is in good condition and meets their needs. It is this aspiration that the draft strategy seeks to support.

Working with partners to improve quality of life – the delivery of new homes in the district can only be done in partnership with others. The Council is part of the North East Essex Health Alliance along with other Essex-wide groups where housing is the key topic of discussion. The Council is also signed up to a number of joint protocols with partner agencies about how housing support is provided to those who need it.

Housing and the development of a new housing strategy has also been a highlight priority area for the Council during 2024/25 and 2025/26.

OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

A six-week consultation on the draft strategy was launched on 6 October 2025. Three responses were received outside of that period that have also been taken into consideration. One of those was submitted separately to the online form from the Housing & Garden Communities Team at Essex County Council which is attached as Appendix B. Braintree District Council also submitted a response via the online form.

Analysis of the consultation responses

Of the 22 responses made by residents of the district, 12 were from members of the Council's Tenant Panel who had been sent a copy of the survey questions directly.

There was strong support for the length of the strategy, with 92% of respondents agreeing that the period 2026-2030 is appropriate. Of those that disagreed one stated two years should be the maximum, while one highlighted that LGR makes it unclear what happens after that point (an issue addressed elsewhere in this report).

The vast majority of respondents also backed the proposed four strategic priorities, with 92% again supporting this. Of those that disagreed one indicated agreement with the first priority but not the other three. The other stated that they felt there were enough new builds in the area – this is something predominantly picked up in the Council's Local Plan, in response to mandatory government-set housing targets.

More than four-fifths (83%) of those who gave their views agreed with the Council's proposals to focus attention on maintaining its existing housing stock rather than developing new housing. Of those that disagreed comments included one about too many people not having permanent housing and hoping the Council can build more suitable affordable housing – which forms a key part of the second proposed strategic priority.

Meanwhile 79% agreed that the ambitions are achievable and realistic. Alternative views were that more homes are needed as soon as possible; that the ambitions are not SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely); that the strategy should be more ambitious; and concerns about the quality of work provided. There was also concern that action would be delayed due to Local Government Re-organisation – something addressed elsewhere in this report.

Asked if the document adequately addresses the UK Government's plans to deliver a decade of housing renewal, 79% agreed. Those who disagreed noted that the draft strategy does not talk about how to access Government funding, expressed concern about disruption from LGR, and called for more affordable homes rather than aspirational homes. One comment also suggested that major investment/development is required for the Jaywick Sands area; something addressed in the Jaywick Sands Place Plan of this council.

A number of additional comments were received, which can be themed as below:

- Seasonality of the district and impact on housing not included
- No mention of digital connectivity
- Good that good things we are doing acknowledged
- Separate 2026-28 targets from post 2028 aspirations
- Need additional provision for independent living places for disabled people
- Need to demonstrate action on the strategy, not just commitments
- Too much new housing in the area, particularly in Clacton [to note; mandatory house building targets are set by government]
- Set up a steering group (including members/Offices, and residents) to discuss the major issues and challenges to help feed into the future Housing Strategy for the Jaywick area.
- Design improvements to the document in terms of visual presentation of the strategy – this will be undertaken prior to presentation to Full Council.
- Add clear acknowledgement of the unknowns in the sector which could impact strategic delivery

The response from ECC, as set out in Appendix B, is not included in the above analysis as due to its comprehensive nature it has been considered prudent to consider it separately.

In essence ECC's response welcomes the development of this Housing Strategy and the clear articulation of Tendring's priorities. The response states that the draft strategy is well-structured and provides a strong narrative about the local context, including the challenges of deprivation, an ageing population, and housing affordability. ECC particularly value the emphasis on partnership working and the recognition of the role of ECC in delivering shared objectives.

In their response ECC provide some helpful points for consideration:

- How will Tendring ensure alignment between this strategy and the forthcoming Local Plan review, particularly given the significant increase in housing targets?

The strategy has been drafted before the conclusion of the Local Plan review although we know that the plan will include increased housing targets. These are reflected in the ambitions associated with Priority 3 – Delivering, with partners, high quality homes.

- Could the final strategy include more detail on how success will be measured for each priority (e.g., KPIs, annual review process)?

This is a valid point and once the strategy has been approved officers will develop a schedule of the ambitions and will measure progress with delivering them. This can

then form part of an annual update from the Housing & Planning Portfolio Holder to Cabinet.

- Given the scale of homelessness pressures, is there scope to include a dedicated action plan for prevention and early intervention, linked to Essex-wide initiatives?

This will be covered in detail in the forthcoming Homelessness Strategy

- The strategy rightly highlights energy efficiency and decarbonisation—could this be strengthened by referencing specific funding streams and partnership opportunities?

Additional references have now been added in the strategy document.

Conclusion

Overall, the consultation responses provided a robust and welcome challenge across the strategy, ranging from the ambition to the specific targets, including acknowledging the wider sector challenges faced.

The responses received do give overall support for the strategy; and, in light of those comments some changes have been made to the final version of the strategy. These include:

- The addition of a sentence to clarify the Council's role in respect of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023
- An ambition associated with the disposal of homes from the Council's housing stock that no longer meet requirements
- An ambition in respect of increasing the amount of temporary accommodation that is owned by the Council
- An ambition to continue promoting energy efficiency improvement schemes

A key point to emerge from the consultation is the absence of an action plan or specific targets associated with each priority. The strategy was originally drafted as a document that does not tie the Council to specific targets and as such sets out a series of ambitions under each priority area that the Council will seek to deliver during the period of time the strategy covers. This remains the case in the final version although once approved Officers will develop a document that captures each ambition and measures progress with each.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS (including legislation & constitutional powers)			
Is the recommendation a Key Decision (see the criteria stated here)	**Yes**	**If Yes, indicate which by which criteria it is a Key Decision**	**X Significant effect on two or more wards** **☐ Involves £100,000 expenditure/income** **☐ 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	27 March 2025

		latest prior to the meeting date)	

There is no legal requirement for the Council to produce a housing strategy although the strategy is influenced by various pieces of legislation which are set out in the document.

Article 4 of the Council's Constitution describes those statutory policies and plans which must be approved or adopted by the full Council as part of its Policy Framework and includes the plan and strategy which comprise the Housing Investment Programme (HRA Business Plan and Housing Strategy).

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

It is important to note that in referring the Housing Strategy onto full Council for approval and adoption, forming part of the Council's Policy Framework, future decisions in relation to housing matters will need to refer to the strategic priorities as set out, and how they are being achieved. Consequently, Cabinet should ensure that any priorities it wishes to deliver should align with the proposed strategy. Other housing strategies and policies may need to be reviewed following the Council's decision.

FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The development of the Housing Strategy has been undertaken alongside the development of both the General Fund and HRA financial plans as the breadth of the Strategy has direct implications for both of these areas of the Council's budget.

The updated forecasts and proposed budgets (2026/27) for both the GF and HRA are set out elsewhere on the agenda and reflect as necessary the strategic direction highlighted within the Strategy. This includes the work associated with homelessness and the prioritisation of resources to respond to this on-going challenge. The HRA business plan also builds on work undertaken to date in terms of continuing to prioritise resources for addressing new regulatory requirements and the investment in Tenants' homes whilst balancing this with the long-term financial sustainability of the HRA.

The Council's recently realigned highlight priorities also include:

- The consideration of properties with particular high maintenance costs within the stock and look at options, including disposal with replacement acquisitions to meet housing needs of properties with more affordable maintenance costs; and
- the identification of options for creation of additional temporary housing provision. Consider building acquisition/development to further address homelessness need.

The above continue to be recognised within the current activities associated with the development of the forecasts and will remain subject to on-going review as part of finalising budget proposals for recommending to Full Council in February 2026.

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

Although initial comments have been provided as part of the development of the strategy via the associated consultation process, it is worth highlighting that the forecasts and budgets continue to be based on prioritising resources to align with strategic objectives as far as is reasonably practical, but this will always need to be

balanced against financial sustainability and affordability, which includes the scale and speed of any associated activities and initiatives.

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 Council has an adopted Financial Strategy.
B) Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks,	The Council has a mature constitutional structure and framework of policy for decision-making. It is intended that the appended policies will augment that framework.
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 has an adopted Financial Strategy.

MILESTONES AND DELIVERY

Subject to Cabinet's approval of the final strategy it will be presented to Full Council for adoption in January 2026.

ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION

A key risk is that the ambitions set out under the four proposed priorities are not delivered. If this were to be the case it would be due to insufficient staffing resource. It should be noted that the Housing service is currently experiencing a range of pressures and in particular a shortage of staffing capacity in some key areas. This is being reviewed to ensure that adequate capacity is put in place and is the mitigation that this risk requires. This potential additional capacity will present a cost pressure to both the HRA and the general fund budgets.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, within this strategy the Council has due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The consultation process itself has not highlighted any equality issues. An equality impact assessment has been undertaken that does not identify any negative impacts on individuals and groups in respect of the nine protected characteristics. A more positive impact is expected for those living with a disability, largely due to the ambition to make best use of the Disabled Facilities Grant.

Overall, the ambitions within the strategy are anticipated to have a positive impact on factors which determine people's health and wellbeing.

SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS

The adoption of this policy does not have any direct social value implications although the work undertaken by the Housing Service contributes to creating healthier, safer and more resilient communities.

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

The implementation of this strategy assists in the Council's target for net zero greenhouse gas emissions from its business operations by 2050.

The draft strategy contains ambitions associated with improving the energy efficiency of the Council's own housing stock and promoting energy efficiency improvements in other tenures of housing in the district.

IMPLICATIONS FOR DEVOLUTION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) are highly relevant to the delivery of this strategy:

Devolution – the formation of a Mayoral Combined Authority for Essex allows for more local control over strategic housing, potentially leading to faster planning processes. Local authorities will be able to set local planning policies and deliver affordable housing programs that better suit community needs, often supported by targeted regional funding for regeneration. However, the effectiveness of the Essex devolution deal will depends on clear principles and comprehensive policies to ensure consistent delivery.

LGR – impacts local housing by consolidating or changing the boundaries of local housing authorities. This can affect planning, housing development, housing allocations and homelessness services. Unitary authorities become the single housing authority in those newly created areas. This shift can improve strategic delivery of housing functions if done correctly but also introduces challenges for existing partnerships and will requires councils to adapt to new frameworks for housing supply and support.

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.

Health Inequalities	Access to good housing lays the foundations for good health and wellbeing. The four priorities in the proposed strategy all have a positive influence on addressing health inequalities related to housing.
Subsidy Control (the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and the related Statutory Guidance).	The Council will follow subsidy control legislation and regulations, where applicable, in relation to the content and implementation of the strategy.
Area or Ward affected	All wards are covered by the strategy
Devolution & Local Government Reorganisation	No immediate implications. Once formed, it will be for the Unitary Authority to decide any implications

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

Much of the background to the strategy was set out in the report to Cabinet on 26 September 2026. That report presented the draft strategy and sought approval to undertake a consultation on that draft document.

The Housing Strategy 2026-30 has been drafted against a backdrop of change for local government. Both devolution and LGR are set to alter how local services are delivered. Potentially, these changes will reinvigorate focus on the four key priorities identified in the strategy, offering opportunities for more joined up delivery of services.

There will also be many opportunities for learning both in the run up to 2028 and beyond when many would hope that the best elements of each authority that is brought together to form a unitary authority are capitalised and woven into the culture of that organisation.

This strategy is about being pragmatic whilst setting realistic ambitions that are aligned to delivering good quality core services. The strategy document is deliberately not overly lengthy or detailed. It sets out the current position, identifies four key priority areas and then offers examples of recent achievements before setting out ambitions. It is an easy reference document against which to chart progress and to tick off the ambitions as they are realised.

In many respects these ambitions are reflective of business as usual whilst ensuring key challenges are taken care of. Nothing is revelatory or undeliverable given appropriate resourcing is in place.

CURRENT POSTION

The strategy has been updated following the consultation feedback and following further discussion amongst officers and with Members.

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL

Tendring District Council Housing Strategy 2020-25 https://legacy.tendringdc.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Housing%20Strategy%202020-2025%20-%20Final.pdf

UK Government Policy paper - Delivering a decade of renewal for social and affordable housing https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/delivering-a-decade-of-renewal-for-social-and-affordable-housing/delivering-a-decade-of-renewal-for-social-and-affordable-housing

Cabinet Highlight Priorities for 2025/26 adopted in March 2025 (minute no. 144).

Cabinet 26 September 2025, minute number 64, Approval of Draft Housing Strategy 2026-30 for Consultation.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Housing Strategy 2026-30

Appendix B – Essex County Council's response to the consultation

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Tendring District Council Draft Housing Strategy 2026–2030: Essex County Council Response

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to Tendring District Council's Draft Housing Strategy 2026–2030. This is an Essex County Council (ECC) officer response prepared by the Housing and Garden Communities Team. Our aim is to provide constructive feedback in the spirit of partnership and to support the development of the final version of the strategy. Please do get in touch if you have any follow-up questions or require further information from ECC to assist with implementation.

General Comments

ECC welcomes the development of this Housing Strategy and the clear articulation of Tendring's priorities. The document is well-structured and provides a strong narrative about the local context, including the challenges of deprivation, an ageing population, and housing affordability. We particularly value the emphasis on partnership working and the recognition of the role of Essex County Council in delivering shared objectives.

We note the forward-looking approach in light of Local Government Reorganisation and Greater Essex Devolution. While these changes introduce uncertainty, we agree that continuity of housing responsibilities and collaboration will remain essential. ECC is committed to working closely with Tendring throughout this period of transition.

Some points for consideration as you refine the strategy:

- How will Tendring ensure alignment between this strategy and the forthcoming Local Plan review, particularly given the significant increase in housing targets?
- Could the final strategy include more detail on how success will be measured for each priority (e.g., KPIs, annual review process)?
- Given the scale of homelessness pressures, is there scope to include a dedicated action plan for prevention and early intervention, linked to Essex-wide initiatives?

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- The strategy rightly highlights energy efficiency and decarbonisation—could this be strengthened by referencing specific funding streams and partnership opportunities?

Priority 1: Maintain and Improve Existing Stock

We support Tendring's ambition to maintain and improve its housing stock, including the commitment to meet regulatory standards and improve tenant satisfaction. This aligns with ECC's Housing Strategy aim to ensure homes are safe, decent, and energy efficient.

We welcome the focus on energy efficiency and tackling fuel poverty. ECC's Climate Action Plan and the Essex Climate Action Commission's recommendations provide a useful framework for achieving Net Zero in housing. We encourage Tendring to explore opportunities to access funding such as the Warm Homes Social Housing Fund and to collaborate on retrofit programmes across Essex.

The emphasis on tenant engagement and transparency is positive. We suggest highlighting how tenant feedback will inform investment priorities and how residents will be kept informed about progress.

Priority 2: Preventing and Reducing Homelessness

ECC shares Tendring's concern about rising homelessness and the associated financial pressures. We commend the steps already taken, such as repurposing redundant sheltered housing and reducing reliance on nightly paid accommodation.

We encourage Tendring to build on the learning from the Essex-wide Test and Learn pilot and to consider innovative prevention models, including tenancy sustainment and mediation services. ECC is keen to continue joint work on homelessness pathways, particularly for vulnerable groups such as care leavers and people with complex needs. Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation pressures are an issue shared across Greater Essex and it there is continued value in joint working on these issues to share learning, best practice and develop joint agreements including protocols.

Given the scale of temporary accommodation use and costs, we recommend including a clear plan for reducing expenditure through prevention and move-on strategies. ECC can support this through data sharing, joint commissioning, and exploring opportunities for modular and community-led housing solutions.

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Priority 3: Delivering High-Quality Homes with Partners

We strongly support Tendring's commitment to delivering new homes, including the 30% affordable housing requirement and the focus on accessibility standards. This aligns with ECC's strategic aim to ensure housing meets diverse needs, including specialist and supported accommodation.

The Tendring and Colchester Borders Garden Community is a significant opportunity to deliver high-quality homes and infrastructure. ECC will continue to work with Tendring and partners to ensure this development supports sustainable growth, including transport, education, and health infrastructure.

We recommend the final strategy emphasises the importance of housing with care and specialist provision for older people and those with disabilities. ECC is keen to collaborate on planning for these needs, drawing on the recent Essex-wide review of specialist housing.https://data.essex.gov.uk/dataset/supported-and-specialist-housing-and-accommodation-needs-assessm-2k6nr

Priority 4: Supporting People in Their Homes and Communities

We welcome Tendring's commitment to supporting residents to live independently and the strong focus on tenant engagement. The use of Disabled Facilities Grants, and the Jaywick Sands Healthy Homes initiative are excellent examples of integrated housing and health approaches.

We welcome the reference to the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 in the national context session as represents a major change to how standards in supported housing are set and monitored. We suggest the final strategy notes the requirements for Tendring as Local Housing Authority to prepare a supported housing strategy and implement a licensing scheme for supported housing with further details awaited from Government,

ECC is keen to work with Tendring to maximise the impact of the Better Care Fund and explore innovative models for adaptations and assistive technology. We also support efforts to improve standards in the private rented sector and suggest collaboration on preparing for new requirements under the Renters' Rights Bill and Awaab's Law.

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Partnership Opportunities

ECC values the strong partnership with Tendring and looks forward to continuing this collaboration. Areas for joint working include:

- Homelessness prevention and rough sleeping initiatives.
- Planning for specialist and supported housing.
- Energy efficiency and decarbonisation programmes.
- Infrastructure planning for major developments.
- Improving standards in the private rented sector.

We also encourage continued engagement through Essex Housing Officer Groups, the Essex Homelessness Officers Group, and forums linked to the Garden Community programme.

Next Steps

ECC is currently reviewing its own Housing Strategy and would welcome Tendring's input. We are keen to explore opportunities for shared action plans in areas of mutual priority, such as homelessness prevention and housing with care.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. We look forward to working together to deliver the ambitions set out in this strategy.