CABINET

13 NOVEMBER 2026

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING AND PLANNING

A.3 ANNUAL HOUSING IMPROVEMENT, PERFORMANCE & ASSURANCE REPORT 2025/26

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To present the first Annual Housing Improvement, Performance & Assurance Report 2025/26 for consideration and endorsement; to provide consolidated assurance on performance, improvement, risk and compliance with the Consumer Standards; and to establish a developing annual reporting approach supported by an accessible public-facing snapshot.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the first Annual Housing Improvement, Performance & Assurance Report 2025/26 (Appendix A). Cabinet has received a number of reports on housing matters during the year; this report brings that evidence and hard data together into a single, consolidated assessment of performance, improvement, risk and regulatory assurance.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures provide the golden thread through the report, connecting tenants' experience with operational performance, complaints, service improvement, governance and the evidence required by the Regulator of Social Housing. The report is therefore intended to serve three connected audiences: tenants, who require clear and accessible information with which to scrutinise their landlord; Cabinet, which requires consolidated evidence to support oversight, challenge and decision-making; and the Regulator of Social Housing, which requires robust evidence of compliance with the Consumer Standards.

Significant progress has been made during the year to strengthen governance, assurance and regulatory compliance through completion of the Consumer Standards self-assessment, implementation of the Housing Improvement and Delivery Plan, enhanced performance monitoring arrangements and increased opportunities for tenant scrutiny and influence.

The report highlights positive progress in areas including tenant engagement, governance, assurance, tenancy sustainment, workforce development and understanding diverse tenant needs.

It also identifies areas requiring continued improvement, including repairs satisfaction, complaint handling, data quality, implementation of new systems and the continued embedding of the revised Housing Service structure.

The report provides assurance to the Regulator, Cabinet and tenants that the Housing Service has strengthened the foundations required to demonstrate compliance with the Consumer

Standards. It is deliberately balanced, presenting both positive progress and areas of weakness or risk, while recognising that this first report is a work in progress and will evolve as data quality, benchmarking and reporting arrangements mature.

The priorities identified for 2026/27 focus on strengthening data quality and assurance arrangements, improving customer satisfaction, implementing key transformation programmes, embedding workforce changes and continuing delivery of the Housing Improvement and Delivery Plan. The additional capacity arising from the recently approved Housing Service restructure will support stronger performance management, service improvement and delivery of these priorities as posts are implemented.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1) **notes the contents of the Annual Housing Improvement, Performance & Assurance Report 2025/26, being the first report of this type for Tendring District Council, attached as Appendix A and recognises that the reporting framework will continue to evolve as data quality, benchmarking and assurance arrangements mature;**

2) **acknowledges the overall assurance position set out within the report; and**

3) **supports the continued delivery of the Housing Improvement and Delivery Plan and associated improvement priorities identified for 2026/27.**

REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)

The recommendations ensure that Cabinet receives evidence-based assurance regarding housing service performance, improvement activity and regulatory readiness, while supporting continued oversight of the Housing Improvement and Delivery Plan and compliance with the Consumer Standards. They also recognise that this is the first consolidated annual report and that its presentation will evolve over time.

The detailed report balances the volume of evidence required for effective governance and regulatory assurance with the need for accessible communication. The delegated public-facing snapshot will provide a proportionate account for tenants and the wider public, presenting both good performance and areas of concern without obscuring the underlying evidence.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The alternative option would be not to present an annual Housing Improvement, Performance & Assurance Report.

This option is not recommended as it would reduce transparency, limit Member oversight and remove an important mechanism for demonstrating progress against the Housing Improvement and Delivery Plan and compliance with the Consumer Standards.

An annual report provides a consolidated source of assurance regarding performance, risks, improvement activity and tenant influence and supports the Council's wider governance and accountability arrangements.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The report contributes towards delivery of several Corporate Plan 2024-28 themes:

- Pride in our area and services to residents.
- Raising aspirations and creating opportunities.
- Working with partners to improve quality of life.
- Financial sustainability and openness.

The report also reflects priorities within the Housing Strategy and Housing Improvement and Delivery Plan, including:

- Maintaining and improving council housing.
- Delivering high-quality services for residents.
- Strengthening governance and accountability.
- Supporting vulnerable residents and communities.

In addition, the report supports compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards and demonstrates progress against the Council's Housing Improvement and Delivery Plan.

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 report reflects information gathered through:

- Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs).
- Tenant Panel activity.
- Reading Group.
- Diverse Needs Group.
- Service Assessors.
- Estate walkabouts.
- Tenancy checks.
- Customer feedback and complaints.
- Internal governance and assurance activity.
- External assurance methods.

Tenant engagement and scrutiny activity has directly informed the findings, improvement priorities and assurance positions contained within the report. Management Team also considered the emerging report and emphasised the need for Tenant Satisfaction Measures to

provide a clear golden thread; for the report to provide assurance rather than reassurance; for its audiences and level of detail to be clear; and for a balanced public-facing summary to present both strengths and areas of concern. Those comments are reflected throughout the report and its recommendations.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS (including legislation & constitutional powers)

Is the recommendation a Key Decision (see the criteria stated here)	**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 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 report supports the Council's responsibilities as a Registered Provider of Social Housing and contributes to demonstrating compliance with:

- Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.
- Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards.
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures requirements.
- Equality Act 2010.

The report itself does not create new statutory obligations but provides assurance regarding delivery of existing statutory and regulatory responsibilities.

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

In addition to the social housing regulatory requirements for the Council as a housing authority, the Council has a Best Value Duty, being the statutory requirement for local authorities and other public bodies defined as best value authorities in Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1999 (“the 1999 Act”) to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness”.

Statutory Guidance on the Best Value Duty of Local Authorities in England under section 26 of the 1999 Act remains in place, which best value authorities are required to have regard to. To provide greater clarity to the sector on how to fulfil the Best Value Duty, the statutory guidance sets out seven overlapping themes of good practice for running an authority that meets and delivers best value. These seven best value themes build on the lessons learned from past interventions and reflect what most local authorities already do or are striving to achieve. A detailed description of these themes, including characteristics of a well-functioning local authority and indicators used to identify challenges that could indicate failure, is set out within

the guidance and **Continuous Improvement** is one of the best value themes relevant to this report.

Continuous improvement is described as "*making arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance and outcomes in relation to the exercise of all functions is a core requirement for achieving best value, and should be done whilst reflecting local priorities.*
…
Lessons learnt and the steps taken to address mistakes and poor performance should be clearly documented …"

A lack of 'good quality' data and insight to understand services is an indicator of potential failure.

This report brings a range of evidence and hard data together into a single, consolidated assessment of performance, improvement, risk and regulatory assurance providing an open and transparent approach to the provision of housing and understanding the service delivered and identifies where improvements are required.

In July 2026, the government (MHCLG) consulted on a revised (draft) Best Value Duty statutory guidance, which although it follows a similar format to the guidance published in May 2024 does have some differences. The outcome of the consultation is not yet known but within the draft there is a greater emphasis on the use of data to manage risk, benchmark against similar authorities and support performance improvement, help target self-improvement activity in line with local needs, and support conversations with other authorities, on best practice and learning. Further updates on the guidance will be provided as it develops.

FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The report itself has no direct financial implications.

The report summarises activity already funded through approved Housing Revenue Account budgets and existing service resources.

Future improvement activity identified within the report, including Housing Improvement and Delivery Plan actions, system implementation, workforce development and service improvement programmes, will be managed through established budget-setting, HRA business planning and governance arrangements. The recently approved Housing Service restructure will provide additional capacity to strengthen performance, assurance and improvement activity as the new arrangements are implemented.

The Council will also explore whether appropriately governed artificial intelligence tools can assist with summarising and identifying themes across the underlying data. Any use would remain subject to information governance, data protection, security, transparency and human validation requirements; accountability for the accuracy and interpretation of the report would remain with officers.

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

Although there are no significant comments over and above those set out elsewhere within this report, it is worth highlighting that the opportunity to strengthen the links between key housing

activities (such as the Housing Improvement and Delivery Plan, stock investment priorities, regulatory compliance and service improvement objectives) and the Council's wider financial governance arrangements will be explored as part of providing an overall 'corporate' assurance approach.

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;	A) The Council has an adopted 30-year Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. The report provides assurance that Housing Revenue Account resources continue to be aligned with the Housing Improvement and Delivery Plan, stock investment priorities, regulatory compliance and service improvement objectives. B) The report demonstrates strengthened governance and assurance arrangements through the Housing Improvement Board, Internal Audit, performance monitoring, Tenant Panel/tenant scrutiny and corporate oversight. C) The report demonstrates how performance information, complaints learning, tenant feedback, benchmarking, service reviews and assurance activity are being used to identify improvement opportunities and support more effective service delivery.
B) Governance: how the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks, including; and	
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.	

MILESTONES AND DELIVERY

Following consideration by Cabinet:

- The detailed report will be published as part of the Council's housing assurance framework.
- A concise public-facing snapshot will be produced for tenants and the wider public under the delegated authority agreed by Cabinet, highlighting the principal themes, risks, strengths and areas requiring improvement.
- Findings will inform Housing Improvement and Delivery Plan delivery and service planning during 2026/27.
- Progress will continue to be monitored through the Housing Improvement Board, Tenant Panel and established performance arrangements.
- The additional capacity created through the Housing Service restructure will be implemented to support performance, assurance and improvement activity.
- The annual reporting format will be reviewed after its first year and refined in light of tenant feedback, regulatory expectations, comparative practice and improved data maturity.

- The potential for appropriately governed artificial intelligence to assist with summarising data and identifying themes will be explored, with officer oversight and validation retained.

ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION

Key risks identified within the report include:

- Data quality, completeness and assurance.
- Repairs performance and customer satisfaction.
- Complaints handling and customer experience.
- Workforce capacity, recruitment and timely implementation of the revised structure.
- Delivery of the Housing Improvement and Delivery Plan.
- Implementation of new systems.
- Regulatory compliance and inspection readiness.
- The volume and complexity of information obscuring the principal assurance messages for different audiences.
- Any future use of artificial intelligence producing incomplete or inaccurate summaries if not subject to appropriate governance and human validation.

Mitigation measures include strengthened governance, performance monitoring, risk management, tenant scrutiny, workforce development and continued delivery of the Housing Improvement and Delivery Plan. A layered reporting approach will retain the detailed evidence required for Cabinet and the Regulator while providing tenants and the wider public with a concise, balanced summary. Any use of artificial intelligence will be subject to information governance, data protection, security, transparency and officer validation requirements.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Council will have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

The report highlights progress made in improving understanding of tenants' diverse needs and strengthening equality information.

Implementation of the Understanding Diverse Needs Framework, improved tenant profiling, accessibility improvements and targeted engagement activity support compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty.

The report identifies further opportunities to strengthen equality analysis and understanding of outcomes across tenant groups during 2026/27.

SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS

The report demonstrates social value through:

- Increased tenant influence and engagement.
- Improved support for vulnerable tenants.
- Homelessness prevention activity.

- Community safety and neighbourhood management initiatives.
- Workforce development.
- Improved accessibility and inclusion.

IMPLICATIONS RELATED TO DEVOLUTION AND/OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

On 29 October 2026, a ministerial statement was made about the LGR review confirming the Government has concluded that the LGR policy, including the decision criteria, is robust. Ministers will then confirm final decisions late in 2026 or very early 2027 for the county areas where previous decisions have been withdrawn. They may make decisions for some of these areas before others. All areas will have an opportunity to make representations following those minded to decisions and prior to legislation being laid. The implementation timetable will be the same for all 20 areas: shadow elections in May 2028 and vesting day on 1 April 2029.

This proposal is not impacted by MHCLG's latest announcement, as whilst local government reorganisation continues to evolve, the Council remains responsible for fulfilling its regulatory responsibilities as a Registered Provider of Social Housing and its Best Value Duty.

The governance, assurance and improvement arrangements described within this report support continued improvement, compliance and service resilience throughout any future period of organisational change.

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

The report itself has no direct carbon reduction implications.

However, improved stock condition information and future asset investment planning support the Council's longer-term objectives relating to energy efficiency, sustainability and housing asset management.

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	The report highlights activity relating to neighbourhood management, anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, safeguarding and partnership working, all of which contribute to safer and more resilient communities.
Health Inequalities	The report identifies work undertaken to support vulnerable tenants, improve accessibility and strengthen understanding of diverse needs, which contributes positively to reducing inequalities.
Subsidy Control (the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and the related Statutory Guidance)	The recommendations contained within this report relate to performance, assurance and governance arrangements and do not involve

	the provision of financial assistance or subsidy. Therefore, no subsidy control implications have been identified.
Area or Ward affected	All

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

Following completion of the Consumer Standards self-assessment and development of the Housing Improvement and Delivery Plan, the Council committed to strengthening its annual assurance arrangements and reporting framework.

The Annual Housing Improvement, Performance & Assurance Report provides the Council's first consolidated annual assessment of performance, assurance, governance and improvement activity. Tenant Satisfaction Measures form the golden thread, linking tenants' experience to management information, complaints learning, audit activity, tenant scrutiny, service reviews and Housing Improvement and Delivery Plan monitoring. This reflects the dual purpose of the national TSM framework: enabling tenants to scrutinise landlord performance and providing regulatory intelligence on delivery of the Consumer Standards.

There is no single prescribed model for presenting this wider assurance information. Sector practice includes detailed committee reports showing trends, targets and national benchmarking alongside shorter, themed public summaries. The Council will adopt that layered approach: retaining a detailed evidence base for Cabinet and the Regulator while producing an accessible tenant-facing snapshot. The balance and presentation will be reviewed after this first year and refined as comparative data and organisational experience develop.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT DECISIONS

- Approval of the Housing Improvement and Delivery Plan.
- Approval of the Housing Strategy.
- Annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures reporting arrangements.
- Annual Housing Complaints and Service Improvement reporting arrangements.

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL

- Housing Improvement and Delivery Plan.
- Annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures Report 2025/26.
- Annual Complaints and Service Improvement Report 2025/26.
- Housing Strategy.
- Relevant Internal Audit reports.
- Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards.

APPENDICES
• **Appendix A – Annual Housing Improvement, Performance & Assurance Report 2025/26**

REPORT CONTACT OFFICER(S)	
Name	**Damian Williams**
Job Title	**Corporate Director (Operations & Delivery)**
Email/Telephone	**dwilliams@tendringdc.gov.uk** **(01255) 686 319**