Key Decision Required:	Yes	In the Forward Plan:	Yes

October 2026

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING AND PLANNING

A.1 APPROVAL OF AN UPDATED ACTION PLAN FOR THE HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY 2026-31

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To present for approval an updated Action Plan for the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The updated Action Plan provides the delivery framework for making homelessness in Tendring rarer, briefer and less likely to recur. Its clearest practical difference will come from five connected interventions: earlier advice before a household reaches crisis; stronger referral and discharge pathways with health, criminal justice, care and voluntary-sector partners; better access to settled and temporary accommodation, particularly for single people; a rapid and sustained route off the street for people sleeping rough; and disciplined use of local data to target resources and track outcomes.

Headline ambitions include increasing successful homelessness prevention, eliminating the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families except for very short-term emergencies, and halving long-term rough sleeping by the end of the current Parliament. Delivery is intended to be cross-government, locally led, partnership-based and measured through national and local outcomes.

The plan builds on substantial work already completed by TDC, including community drop-ins, improved web and public information, home visits, multi-agency casework, new discharge protocols, strengthened domestic abuse arrangements, a dedicated refugee support lead and continuing rough-sleeper outreach. The next phase is therefore not a standing start: it consolidates proven activity and focuses additional effort where it can produce the greatest resident benefit and reduce avoidable use of costly crisis services.

Under the Homelessness Act 2002, each local housing authority must review homelessness in its district and publish a homelessness strategy, normally at least every five years, setting out how homelessness will be prevented, sufficient accommodation secured and appropriate support provided.

The Government's published toolkit library and homelessness grant framework additionally expect authorities to translate their strategy into a current, evidence-based and publicly accountable action plan, developed with partners and informed by local data and lived experience. The plan should include clear actions, identify responsible organisations, timescales, governance and measurable local targets aligned with the Local Outcomes Framework, together with arrangements for monitoring and review. Compliance also supports delivery against the conditions and outcomes attached to homelessness and rough sleeping funding. Action plans must be in place by 1 December 2026.
The Local Outcomes Framework, updated by Government on 14 September 2026, reinforces this approach. Its housing measures cover supply, quality and safety, homelessness and rough sleeping, including the six measures already reflected in the Action Plan. The Framework is intended to bring national and local government onto a shared outcomes basis and to publish comparable data. TDC will therefore maintain the capability to provide, assure and interpret the required data as implementation arrangements and the digital reporting tool are confirmed.

Following a period of development and consultation undertaken during 2025, the Council adopted a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-31 in January 2026 (attached as Appendix B). The strategy includes an Action Plan that has now been updated to reflect the government's national plan requirements. This report seeks the approval of the updated Action Plan in order that it is in place by the deadline of 1 December 2026.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Planning:

1. Notes the update provided on delivery of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan as approved by Cabinet in January 2026; and,

2. In accordance with the delegation provided by Cabinet in January 2026 (decision no. 107), approves the updated Action Plan attached to this report at Appendix A.

REASON(S) FOR THE RECOMMENDATION(S)

The action plan to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-31 has been revised to reflect the Government's National Plan to End Homelessness.

The updated plan gives more attention to early help, reducing rough sleeping, working with partner organisations and using local information to measure progress.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Given the requirement to have a revised action plan in place by 1 December 2026, the only alternative option is not to update the Action Plan which will bring a risk of MHCLG reducing the level of grant funding available to the Council for tacking homelessness in future years.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy along with the Action Plan, contributes to the following Corporate Plan 2024-2028 themes:

Pride in our area and services to residents – the Action Plan contributes to intervening early to prevent homeliness and improving access to homelessness advice and assistance. It also improves access to homelessness advice and assistance and where necessary, helps residents to secure settled housing.

Financial sustainability and openness – the funding of the Council's homelessness services including the provision of temporary accommodation are significant undertakings from a financial perspective. Rising costs associated with this service present a significant challenge in respect of the Council's financial sustainability.

Raising aspirations and creating opportunities – Homelessness in the district is something that our elected members and officers aspire to reduce. The priorities in the strategy are all aimed at raising aspirations and creating opportunities.

Working with partners to improve quality of life – the Action Plan commits the Council to several actions related to partnership working.

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.

There is a clear golden thread from the Corporate Plan to the Housing Strategy 2026-2030, the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-31 and this Action Plan. Corporate priorities establish the outcomes sought for residents; the Housing Strategy sets the wider direction for supply, quality, access and prevention; the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

defines the Council's strategic response; and the Action Plan converts that direction into accountable actions, milestones and measurable outcomes. This same narrative will be maintained in future reports to Cabinet and Portfolio Holders.

OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

On 30 September 2026, the Housing Manager for Housing Solutions & Allocations and the Housing Initiatives Officer from the Housing Solutions team, met with the Essex area's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Adviser at MHCLG who reviewed and approved the Action Plan for the next steps in the Council's governance process.

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 latest prior to the meeting date)	24th September 2026

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires each local authority in England to publish a homelessness strategy and the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (last updated 1st September 2026) states that authorities must make their homelessness strategy available to any member of the public. Legislation and guidance are clear on how a homelessness strategy should be developed and the Council has been compliant with this in the development of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-31.

The strategy must set out the authority's plans for the prevention of homelessness and for securing that sufficient accommodation and support for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming so.

On 1 May 2026 the Renters' Rights Act 2025 was introduced. The key implications of the Act include the abolition of "no fault" evictions along with fixed term tenancies. This gives private tenants increased security of tenure with the aim that homelessness is reduced.

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

FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The Council receives an annual grant from MHCLG for tackling homelessness. From 2026/27, the ringfenced Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant (HRDAG) consolidates the principal funding previously provided separately for homelessness prevention, relief and staffing, rough sleeping prevention and recovery, rough sleeping accommodation, domestic abuse safe accommodation and, for selected authorities, supported housing support services.

Authorities must use the funding lawfully for these purposes: to discharge homelessness duties under the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Code of Guidance; maximise early intervention and prevention; support people sleeping rough and their recovery; deliver the local homelessness strategy and make progress against the Local Outcomes Framework; and meet Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 by assessing need and commissioning support in safe accommodation for victims and their children.

Councils are expected to maintain an evidence-based action plan, work with partners, use data to target provision, monitor outcomes and provide information or returns required by MHCLG. Expenditure and commissioning must comply with the grant determination, including the conditions applying to each funding element, appropriate financial governance and UK Government branding requirements. Temporary accommodation funding previously included within the Homelessness Prevention Grant is now provided separately through the Revenue Support Grant and is not part of this ringfenced grant.

The Council's an HRDAG allocation for this year and the forthcoming two years is set out below:

2026/2027 - £1.4 million
2027/2028 - £1.4 million
2028/2029 - £1.4 million

49% of the HRDAG must be spent on homelessness prevent work.

Additionally, the Council has/will receive Renters Rights Act new burdens funding:

2026/2027 - £ 77,553.00
2027/2028 - £36,515.00
The Renters' Rights Act is expected to improve security for private tenants and may prevent some homelessness. It also places wider enforcement, investigatory, advice and implementation demands on local authorities. The new-burdens allocations shown above assist with those duties, but the ongoing

workload, market response and implications for homelessness presentations will need to be monitored closely.

Most recently announced was additional Rough Sleeper Programme funding:

2026/2027 £245,331.00

This Rough Sleeping Programme funding is ringfenced to provide rapid support and accommodation options for people sleeping rough or at immediate risk of rough sleeping, with an offer of a route off the street for everyone and as many people as possible off the streets and into accommodation before Christmas this year (2026).

It should also be used to strengthen local systems to prevent and resolve rough sleeping including staffing, accommodation, prevention and relief activity
Government grant is therefore essential but does not remove the Council's underlying exposure to rising demand, temporary accommodation costs, staffing requirements and market pressures. Full implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan is dependent on sufficient and sustained Government funding. If funding does not keep pace with statutory duties and demand, the unfunded balance will become a further pressure on the Council's budget and, ultimately, on the Tendring council taxpayer.

The Government's national plan recognises the need to increase supply, tackle poverty and improve renters' security. However, the wider structural causes of homelessness are not yet fully resolved, and current funding does not necessarily reimburse the full local cost of statutory homelessness activity and temporary accommodation. Officers will continue to maximise grant, prevention and value for money, and will identify any further resource requirement through the Council's financial planning process. Any commitment outside approved budgets or grant conditions will be subject to a separate Portfolio Holder or other decision in accordance with the Constitution.

Strengthening of local pathways into long-term accommodation, reducing repeat and persistent rough sleeping over time is also expected.

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

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

The immediate milestone is approval of the updated Action Plan so that it is in place by 1 December 2026. Thereafter, delivery will be tracked through monthly homelessness and temporary accommodation oversight, annual stakeholder review, the six homelessness and rough sleeping measures in the Local Outcomes Framework, and regular review of finance and the housing risk register. Government published the updated Framework on 14 September 2026; detailed implementation and digital reporting arrangements are still developing, so officers will confirm the commencement timetable and any additional data-return requirements as these are issued.

ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION

As already highlighted above, not having an adequate action plan in place means that future central government funding may be withheld in future years.

The Council's identified housing risks provide an important control framework for delivery. Relevant risks include homelessness demand and temporary accommodation expenditure; insufficient supply of suitable and affordable homes; failure to meet statutory or regulatory duties; workforce and service capacity; safeguarding; dependency on external funding and partners; and data quality. Delivery, finance and performance will be monitored against the corporate housing risk register, with changes in likelihood, impact or mitigation escalated through the Council's established risk-management arrangements.
Other potential risks associated with not taking a structured approach to tackling homelessness include:

- Increased rough sleeping
- Safeguarding risk for vulnerable people
- Financial pressures due to reactive rather than planned interventions i.e. homelessness prevention work
- Reputational damage to the Council due to failing statutory duties
- Increased use of temporary accommodation

Achievement of the national and local outcomes is also subject to factors outside TDC's direct control, including housing supply, affordability, welfare and income pressures, landlord behaviour, court capacity, health and support provision, migration and asylum decisions, and future Government policy and funding. TDC will use every reasonable lever available and will report transparently on progress, but cannot guarantee that all targets will be achieved. This is comparable to the review of the Local Plan: the Council is responsible for a robust evidence base, sound decisions and effective delivery, while the final outcome also depends on external markets, infrastructure providers, statutory bodies and national policy.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, within this Action Plan 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.

SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS

The work undertaken by the Housing Solutions Team contributes to creating healthier, safer and more resilient communities.

Larger scale procurement will include social value requirements where necessary.

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

The implementation of this Action Plan has a very limited bearing on the Council's target for net zero greenhouse gas emissions from its business operations by 2050.

IMPLICATIONS FOR DEVOLUTION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

On 7th September 2026, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government announced in Parliament that a review of the Local Government Reorganisation programme was commencing and that the decision made in March 2026 for Greater Essex (and other areas) had been withdrawn in light of new legal advice. Following this announcement, local authorities received correspondence from the Minister of Housing, Communities and Local Government requesting that until this review has concluded, Councils cease work on implementing the decisions that have previously been announced. The timetable for completion of the review is unknown at this time.

This proposal is not impacted by MHCLG's request, as it is an amendment to an existing strategy.

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 three priorities in the proposed strategy all have an influence on addressing health inequalities related to homelessness.

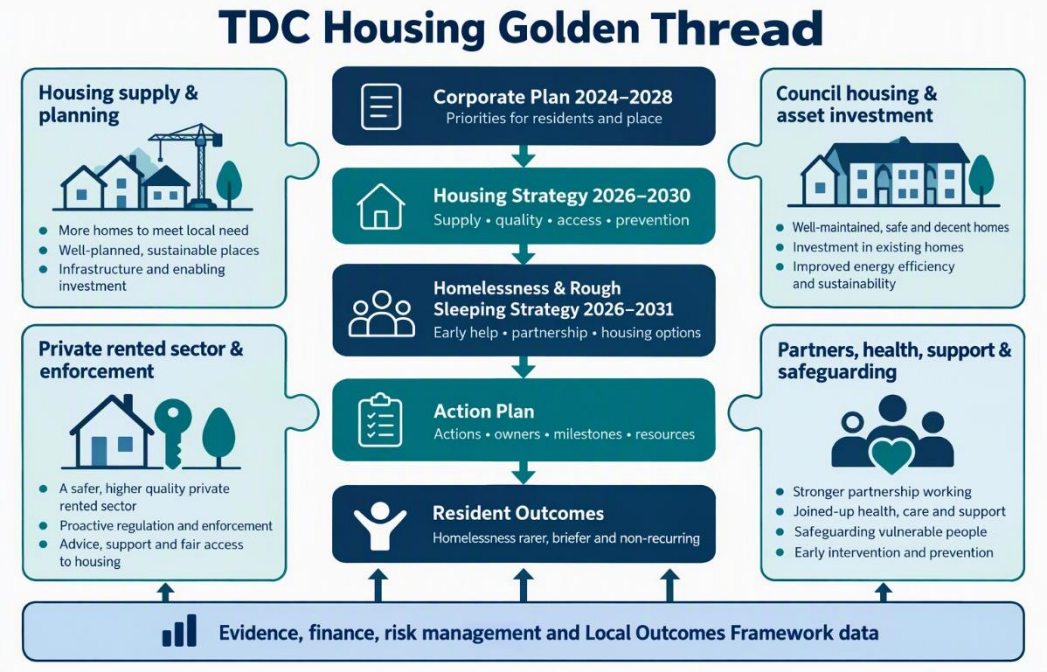
Subsidy Control (the requirements of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and the related Statutory Guidance).	The Council will follow subsidy control legislation and regulations, where applicable, in relation to the content and implementation of the strategy.
Area or Ward affected	All wards are covered by the strategy
Devolution & Local Government Reorganisation	No immediate implications. Once they are formed, it will be for the Unitary Authority to decide any implications

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

The updated **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan 2026–2031,** attached as Appendix A, to this report explains how the Council will prevent homelessness, reduce rough sleeping and improve access to suitable, settled accommodation. Delivery will be monitored through six national Local Outcomes Framework measures, annual stakeholder review and a monthly homelessness and temporary accommodation working group.

The document addresses the strategic priorities as set out in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026 – 2031.



Strategic priorities

1. **Improve early housing advice and information**
    - Provide face-to-face homelessness support through Customer Services.
    - Make homelessness application information more accessible.
    - Maintain up-to-date self-help information online.

- Promote support through social media and community outreach.
- Several measures are already operating, including community drop-ins, revised website content and public information campaigns.

2. **Strengthen partnership working to prevent and reduce homelessness**
    - Maintain the annual Homelessness Stakeholder Forum and regular multi-agency engagement.
    - Improve referrals and planned housing pathways for people leaving hospital, prison or care.
    - Continue support for young parents and develop services for refugees and people from abroad.
    - Work with landlords, health services, domestic abuse services and other partners.
    - Progress includes new discharge protocols, a refugee support lead, home visits, multi-agency meetings and a domestic abuse reporting procedure.
    - Some actions remain outstanding, including additional Housing Solutions posts, improved care-leaver pathways and consideration of a Mental Health Navigator.

3. **Increase housing options for single people**
    - Explore additional Council-owned temporary accommodation.
    - Develop shared housing for people under 35.
    - Improve move-on arrangements from supported housing.
    - Increase provision for people with multiple support needs.
    - Continue rough-sleeper outreach and investigate wraparound support.
    - Modular accommodation was considered but a decision was taken not to proceed.

Performance measures

The plan aims to:

- Reduce households with children in temporary accommodation from **1.33 per 1,000 households** to **1.25** by Year 3.
- Maintain **zero** families with children in bed-and-breakfast accommodation for more than six weeks.
- Increase successful homelessness prevention and relief from **58% to 62%**.
- Increase successful outcomes for people experiencing multiple disadvantage from **29% to 33%**.
- Reduce the single-night rough-sleeping figure from **12 to 6**.
- Reduce long-term rough sleeping from **3 people to 1**.

The national strategy establishes a clear expectation that councils move away from a reactive crisis response and towards a preventative, data-led and partnership-based model. The stated ambition is for homelessness to become rare, brief and non-recurring, with prevention embedded across local public services and support provided before households reach crisis point.

Homelessness demand nationally has reached crisis point. The strategy reports that around 900 households per day, including almost 300 families with children, were newly made homeless or threatened with homelessness last year.

Temporary accommodation pressures are also at record levels, with 132,410 households in temporary accommodation in England as at 30 June 2025, including 84,240 families and 172,420 children.

These pressures translate directly into increased local authority workload across homelessness assessments, prevention and relief duties, Personal Housing Plans, safeguarding, suitability decisions, temporary accommodation placements, move-on work, reviews, complaints and partnership coordination. Demand is also becoming more complex, with many households presenting with mental health, physical health, domestic abuse, financial, substance misuse, care leaver, prison leaver or other support needs.

Monitoring and Review

The Action Plan will be reviewed annually to reflect progress, emerging local pressures, national policy changes and feedback from partners. The updated action plan includes actions that have been achieved since the original version of the action plan was adopted in January 2026.

CURRENT POSTION

The Action Plan is attached as Appendix A to this report

BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PUBLISHED REFERENCE MATERIAL

Published Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031

January Cabinet decision no. 107

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Revised Action Plan

Appendix B – Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026 - 31

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