



Chelmsford Policy Board

25 June 2026

Review and Revision of Chelmsford City Council's Homelessness & Rough Sleepers Strategy 2025-2030

Report by:

Director of Sustainable Communities

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Purpose

To present a review and proposed revision to the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy 2025-2030 for approval ensuring this remains relevant and consistent with the government's national strategy A National Plan to End Homelessness.

Local Authorities must publish a strategy at least every 5 years that outlines how homelessness and rough sleeping will be prevented and relieved.

Options

1. Approve as an Addendum to the current strategy the review and revision of the Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy 2025-2030 as presented,

and recommend to Cabinet to approve the Addendum as presented in Appendix 1.

2. Approve with amendments as an Addendum to the current strategy the review and revision of the Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy 2025-2030, and recommend to Cabinet to approve the amended Addendum
3. Not approve an Addendum to the current Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and replace the existing strategy with a new one to be produced in accordance with the Homelessness Code of Guidance

Recommendations

The Addendum to Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy 2025-2030 be approved as presented. and recommend to Cabinet to approve the Addendum thereby ensuring the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy 2025-2030 remains relevant and consistent with the government's national strategy A National Plan to End Homelessness.

1. Background

- 1.1 Chelmsford City Council's current [Homelessness and rough sleeper strategy 2025-2030](#) was published autumn 2025 and whilst subject to regular monitoring and annual review ensured the Council was legally compliant with its duty to consult and publish a strategy no less than once every five years.
- 1.2 Shortly afterwards, in December 2025, the government published A National Plan to End Homelessness with the requirement that all local housing authorities should either create new strategies or amend their existing ones to reflect the approach of this national plan. This includes a new framework for reporting six key priorities which will influence future funding, shifting the focus of action plans.
- 1.3 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has stated that it expects all local housing authorities to have a strategy that aligns with the national one by autumn 2026 and be reporting on key priorities later this financial year.

2. Context

- 2.1 Some Housing Authorities with older Homelessness Strategies are seeing this as an opportunity to create new strategies and following the national Code of Guidance for homelessness, this will include a full review of homelessness in their areas and formal consultation with relevant local organisations.
- 2.2 Chelmsford City Council's strategy takes into account analysis of trends in homelessness and housing that are still relevant and up to date. Repeating the process of formal consultation would therefore be duplicating what took place last year and may even create confusion with some consultees. Furthermore, the time required would make it unlikely that a final version of any update to the existing strategy would be complete within the required timescale.
- 2.3 For these reasons, it is proposed that a review and revision to the existing strategy is provided as an Addendum which highlights the progress made over the last year, any significant changes in that time and how proposed actions will contribute towards meeting the government's key priorities.
- 2.4 This Addendum has a revised action plan that clearly indicates how the Council is fully aligned with the National Plan, carrying over some uncompleted actions from last year and adding some new ones to maintain our momentum in reducing homelessness in Chelmsford.
- 2.5 Inevitably the process of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) will result in the formation of new local housing authorities within the lifetime of these strategies which usually have a lifetime of five years. As a statutory requirement under the Housing Act, advice from MHCLG advisors to housing authorities in Essex has been that in the meantime each authority must have a current and up to date strategy. Inevitably the close work with others such as neighbouring authorities and social care, which has often been part of the working environment for tackling homelessness in Essex, will continue to influence the development of a future strategy for a new unitary authority in the future.
- 2.6 In addition to LGR, local housing authorities are also now involved with the additional role of supporting the implementation of the Renters' Reform Act that came into effect on 1st May 2026 and are now also working on the implementation of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act including the development of a Supported Housing Strategy which has to be in place by the end of 2026/27.
- 2.7 These changes make it difficult to develop a detailed action plan with certainty about resources and timescales, so this is less precise than before. In some ways this also leads to being more flexible and possibly able to make better use of any opportunities that may arise from these other workstreams that cannot be planned for or anticipated at this stage.

3. Key Changes to Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy 2025-2030

3.1 The review highlights 16 achievements since the consultation and approval of the current strategy. In particular regarding rough sleeping which is a national priority and domestic abuse as a local priority.

Rough sleepers:

- Re-launch and expansion of Housing First scheme for rough sleepers with complex needs
- Completion of Turning Point by CHESS providing 24 new units for those with a history of entrenched rough sleeping
- This has reduced the rate of increase in the number of people sleeping rough in Chelmsford

Domestic abuse:

- Pilot scheme with partners to remove perpetrators instead of victims from the home
- Launch of My Home My Choice with Safer Places helping victims make informed decisions about their housing options
- This has reduced the level of homelessness by 20% compared to the previous year

Supported housing:

- Increasing by 70+ the number of units commissioned by Chelmsford City Council for single homeless people with support needs
- Commissioning additional support for vulnerable families with children in temporary accommodation
- This has reduced the increase in need for temporary accommodation and the risk of repeat homelessness

3.2 Existing and new actions have now been classified under the themes recommended in the National Plan to End Homelessness, making it easier to see how the Council is working to support the aims of government and MHCLG. We hope this will continue to enable the Council to build on its success of increasing funding to maintain existing services and work with partners to develop more.

3.3 Adhering to the National Plan will help demonstrate our commitment to the Key Priorities and we hope in some cases highlight how local conditions affect these:

3.3.1 Reducing the proportion of households with children in temporary accommodation:

Currently Chelmsford has one of the highest levels of families in temporary accommodation including many placed out of area. The main reason for this is the continuous reduction in the supply of suitable affordable homes and the high cost of private rent as an alternative.

3.3.2 Families in B&B for more than 6 weeks

So far this has been very infrequent, expanding the provision of temporary accommodation, even if it has to be outside of Chelmsford, reduces this risk.

3.3.3 Success preventing and relieving homelessness

Our performance preventing homelessness is good, relieving homelessness is improving due to the increase in supported housing mentioned above but remains difficult due to the limited options available. Very high case loads also reduce capacity at the moment hence steps, including additional staffing resources, are being taken to address this and improve performance in the future.

3.3.4 Success preventing homelessness for those with multiple disadvantages

MHCLG has yet to explain this in detail, however, we are pleased that this has been recognised as a particular challenge and are already working with partners to reduce the risk of homelessness and improve options for those with complex needs in preparation for this.

3.3.5 People sleeping rough on a single night

We have developed a good working relationship with MHCLG Advisors who recognise the growing number of people who come to Chelmsford to sleep rough, often because of the range of services provided here. This highlights a demand often from other areas that is outside our control but justifies resources being allocated to this Council to provide an immediate response.

3.3.6 People sleeping rough over the month who are long term

This is mainly a distinctively different cohort to above, much smaller in number but often with more complex needs requiring more intensive work. This is reducing gradually but requires far more than just accommodation-based services.

3.4 As this is our local response to homelessness we need our strategy to highlight issues which distinguish the situation in Chelmsford from the national one. Examples of this include:

a) Domestic abuse

For some time this cause of homelessness has been significantly higher than the national and regional averages. In 2025/26 it reduced by 20% whilst all other causes of homelessness increased, bringing Chelmsford into line with the average. Having made progress with this we want to continue to see if we can now bring this below rather than above the county-wide level.

b) Mental health

This is prevalent for many people experiencing homelessness, especially single people. For Chelmsford, this includes people being discharged from hospital for whom homelessness quickly undoes the planned recovery pathway. We therefore need to continue to create a common pathway for health, housing and social care that eventually can be used to prevent as well as respond to those at risk of crisis.

c) Older people

Recently we have seen an increase in homelessness amongst some of the older people in our community who need housing but also additional support and adaptations to meet our duty to provide accommodation that is legally suitable. In the short term we will monitor this to see if there is an emerging trend and if so what the options may be. Longer term this may have implications for future unitary authorities where housing is combined with social care responsibilities.

4 Conclusion

4.1 The proposed Addendum to the current Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy would be an effective and expedient way to maintain the Council's legal duty under the Housing Act and the momentum associated with the action plan introduced last year.

4.2 As we enter a uniquely challenging period for local housing authorities we have to be pragmatic as to our ability to be specific about the timescale and capacity to deliver some of the aims, nevertheless we cannot lose sight of these. The delivery of any strategy over a five-year period inevitably has to be an iterative process and the Addendum subject to approval, will be a relevant update that can still be shared with our partners to inform and influence joint working which is very much the aim of the National Plan to End Homelessness.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 Review and Revision of Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy 2025 – 2030

Background papers:

[Homelessness and rough sleeper strategy 2025-2030](#)

[A National Plan to End Homelessness](#)

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: All Local Housing Authorities are required by law to undertake a review of homelessness in their area and produce a strategy that is informed by this no less than once every five years in accordance with the Homelessness Code of Guidance and any relevant national strategies

Financial: No internal financial impact. Clearly stating the need and aims of a Local Housing Authority in its Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy can help inform and influence future decisions on funding from others including central government.

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: Some posts in the Council's Housing Service are funded by central government based on the need and requirements identified in the previous strategy and the new strategy highlights both the achievements and continuing need for this resource.

Risk Management: By reviewing and planning for future trends in homelessness the Council is able to assess and make best use of resources to ensure it can continue to meet its legal obligations.

Equality and Diversity: An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and informs some of the issues and actions.

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees:

Listed within the existing Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2025 – 2030

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

Chelmsford Housing Strategy 2022-2027

Chelmsford Tenancy Strategy 2024-2029

Temporary Accommodation Placement and Procurement Plan

Chelmsford City Council Review and Revision of Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy 2025 – 2030

Introduction

All local housing authorities are required to develop, publish and monitor a strategy which sets out how they will meet their legal duties to those who are homeless in their area.

These strategies are required to be for no more than five years but in practice with so many changes to the law, policy, resources and the multitude of factors which have an influence on homelessness, these strategies have to be regularly reviewed and updated if they are to remain effective.

The Review

The review of the current strategy shows what in the action plan has been achieved in the first year, what remains outstanding and possibly what needs to be reconsidered.

Our achievements in the first 12 months of the strategy include:

- ✓ Relunched our Housing First project with Delta providing intensive housing support for rough sleepers
- ✓ Worked with CHESS to provide 24 new units of supported housing for those with a more entrenched history of rough sleeping
- ✓ Established a local multi-agency Domestic Abuse Forum to tackle the high level of homelessness caused by domestic abuse
- ✓ Created additional safe and supported accommodation with direct access for those who have become homeless due to domestic abuse
- ✓ Worked with Safer Places to launch My Home My Choice, enabling victims of domestic abuse to make a more informed decision about their housing options.
- ✓ Launched a pilot scheme with SETDAB and Southend City Council to remove perpetrators of domestic abuse from the home so their partners do not become homeless
- ✓ Enabled Sanctuary Housing to provide an additional 30 units of supported accommodation for people experiencing mental health problems as a better alternative to temporary accommodation
- ✓ Pilot scheme with Delta Housing using chain-lettings to improve the use and supply of social housing for families
- ✓ Secured AFEO funding, enabling us to review and continue the scheme with Housing Dilemmas and Probation Service providing supported housing for those who are homeless as a result of leaving prison

- ✓ Worked with Probation and the Ministry of Justice to employ a Housing and Probation Navigator, improving communication and best use of resources between these agencies.
- ✓ Progressing plans with YMCA Essex for the development of Foyer scheme for young homeless people in Chelmsford
- ✓ Progressed working with Ukrainian families and their sponsors under the Homes for Ukraine scheme to move as many as possible into settled accommodation and employment.
- ✓ Improve housing and support options for those who have become homeless from Home Office accommodation in Chelmsford as a result of being granted leave to remain.
- ✓ Reduced the increase in the need and cost of temporary accommodation
- ✓ Reviewed and renewed our contracts for the commissioning of temporary accommodation with private landlords.
- ✓ Improved communication and understanding of local housing issues in Chelmsford by producing regular newsletter for local organisations.

There remains a number of actions which we want to either carry forward or review and amend. Some of these have been carried forward into our new action plan, others amended to reflect the change of format and requirements created by the new national strategy.

Homelessness in Chelmsford 2025/26

In the last year the number of cases assessed as homeless by the Council was 1,051, 40 more than the previous year.

The main causes of homelessness remained the same as before:

- Eviction by family and friends = 349 an increase of 6%
- Notice from private landlords (section 21) = 225 an increase of 8%
- Domestic abuse = 152 a reduction of 19%
- Leaving an institution (hospital or prison) = 134 an increase of 15%

The most noticeable changes are the reduction in homelessness caused by domestic abuse which now makes Chelmsford more comparable with the regional and national averages. The greatest increase was those made homeless following discharge from an institution, in looking into the background of these cases this is particularly discharge from hospital.

The Homelessness Reduction Act requires housing authorities to attempt to prevent homelessness wherever possible before considering if there is a duty to provide settled housing. In the last year we prevented or relieved 353 cases of possible homelessness, which is 25% of all approaches.

This is often only possible by helping people retain or move into privately rented homes; 62 households were helped using our Rent Deposit and Tenancy Access

schemes in 2025/26 at a cost of £243,949. This was a lower number than in the previous year when 68 households were helped at a cost of £210,417, highlighting the rising cost of private rent and possibly the reducing supply.

Over the same period, the supply of homes available to allocate through the Housing Register fell to 195, the first time this has been below 200 and far lower than the annual need of 623 homes assessed as being needed in the Council’s Strategic Housing Assessment in 2023.

Temporary Accommodation

It is this continuous reduction in the supply (lettings) of social housing which accounts for the growing number of households in temporary accommodation, rising from 523 to 587 over the last 12 months. Of these, 178 need a 1-bedroom home and will mainly be single people or adult couples, the remaining 409 households will be families with children.

The table below shows the changes in the number of households in temporary accommodation by size and the supply of affordable housing available in 2025/26.

Bedroom need	April 202	April 2025	Homes available 2025/26
1 Bed	178	172	75
2 Bed	190	162	84
3 Bed	138	124	34
4+ Bed	81	65	2
Total	587	523	195

The smaller increase in 1-bedroom cases in temporary accommodation reflects the increase in the supply of supported housing as an alternative over the last twelve months.

Currently single and smaller households face a wait of two to three years in temporary accommodation before being likely to be moving on through the Housing Register. For larger families needing a 3-bedroom home this is likely to be four to five years and for those needing the largest homes their wait will be far longer.

B&B is only used for families with children in cases where no other option exists and if used this has been for very short periods, avoiding the risk of exceeding the 6-week time limit.

Chelmsford City Council now owns or leases over 140 properties used to provide temporary accommodation in Chelmsford, 70 more homes are owned by other Registered Providers which means that around a third of all temporary accommodation used by our Council provides protection from eviction as required for those who have a legal entitlement to settled housing but are waiting for a suitable offer.

By the end of March 2026, 367 households were in temporary accommodation provided by private landlords as ‘nightly lets’. These are more costly and less secure

but have become essential, ensuring some accommodation is available at short notice.

Rough Sleeping

Homelessness Strategies must include a specific section about rough sleeping in their area.

In 2025/26 the annual snapshot of people sleeping rough in Chelmsford was 19. Although this is a robust and verified assessment, we know that Chelmsford often has higher numbers sleeping rough. The average number of people sleeping rough at anytime over a month in the past year was 27 but it inevitably will vary from one night to the next.

Over the last 10 years Chelmsford City Council has worked with partners to improve the range and quality of services to help those who are street homeless, this has led to a higher number of people coming into the city from surrounding areas which is understandable but also a reduction for many of these in the length of time they then spend sleeping rough.

We have learnt from our work with rough sleeping over the last decade in Chelmsford that this is a diverse community, some with no previous experience of homelessness spending no more than one or two nights before accessing help to move into accommodation, through to a small number who have been sleeping rough for much longer, often with complex and multiple needs for support and care. Our approach needs to reflect all aspects of this diverse range.

We therefore want to continue to develop our approach to reducing rough sleeping by having a range of services which can create a more bespoke solution to each individual case, especially those who have become entrenched.

Revising our strategy

In December 2025 the government published A National Plan to End Homelessness www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-national-plan-to-end-homelessness

This has five pillars or themes which local homelessness strategies now need to incorporate:

1. Universal prevention of homelessness – improving the supply and making best use of affordable, supported and privately rented housing to reduce the gap between need and supply.
2. Targeted prevention of homelessness – identifying and targeting resources for those who we know will be at greatest risk of becoming homeless.
3. Preventing crisis – helping people retain their homes, or if they are already homeless improving the response to provide housing and support to relieve their homelessness

4. Improving emergency responses – there will remain a need for temporary and emergency accommodation so we must ensure it is as suitable as it can possibly be and adequate support is provided to help manage the often complex issues that are associated with homelessness.
5. Recovery – preventing repeat homelessness. Around 20% of those who present as homeless to Chelmsford City Council have had previous experience of homelessness and this is particularly common amongst single homeless and those with a history of rough sleeping.

1. Universal prevention of homelessness

Our Housing Strategy 2022 – 2027 is due to be reviewed and renewed, this will set out our plans for improving the supply of homes to meet our local housing needs, especially for affordable and supported housing.

By spring 2027 we will also need to have in place a Supported Housing Strategy as a requirement of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act which will complement both our Housing and Homelessness Strategies.

In the meantime, we will supplement the action plan for this strategy by developing the following actions:

- Promote the role of our Tenancy Sustainment Officer to both social and private landlords in Chelmsford and review this in 2027 to see if there are ways it can be improved or need additional resources
- Introduce additional resources into the Strategic Housing Service to improve our partners' abilities to understand our need for affordable homes and improve the supply of both new-build and the existing stock
- Continue to work with Registered Providers to provide support to their tenants at risk of domestic abuse to find ways to avoid the risk of homelessness.
- Re-launch our Think Before You Serve scheme providing help and support to private landlords.
- Continue to develop supported housing especially in response to the most common causes of homelessness and the need for support
- Re-launch our Homeless Families' Forum to improve awareness of the risks of homelessness and improve the range of support available

2. Targeted Prevention

We see two ways of improving the way we target the prevention of homelessness.

By addressing the most common causes of homelessness – eviction by family and friends, eviction from privately rented accommodation, domestic abuse and having to leave institutions such as hospitals and prisons.

By addressing particular groups who though small in number may be especially vulnerable and at a much higher risk of homelessness than the majority of the population, such as those with a history of rough sleeping, ex-offenders, mental health and refugees.

Effective targeting requires us to provide a range of different options specific to particular causes or groups, so we shall review, develop and explore the following:

- Homelessness at Home Scheme – supporting family and friends to understand the range of housing options available, being honest and managing expectations, helping wherever possible people to make a planned move and avoid the risk of homelessness.
- Review and promote our Think Before You Serve scheme for private landlords. The introduction of the Renters' Reform Act gives more rights to tenants but does not eliminate the risk of eviction. The need to obtain court orders can create delay and costs for landlords which may be possible to be reduced or avoided.
- Work with the local domestic abuse forum to embed the projects which we have set up over the last year and explore the opportunity to extend these, further reducing this as a cause of homelessness in Chelmsford.
- Review and develop the AFEO scheme and our work with Probation and HMP Chelmsford, reducing the risk of homelessness for those involved with the criminal justice system.
- Work with Chelmsford's Single Homelessness Forum to support and expand support for those who have experienced rough sleeping, maintaining their pathway to independent living and reducing the risk of homelessness in the future.
- Delivering a programme of accommodation and support with Beam for refugees who have become homeless, improving their ability to access accommodation, training and employment.
- Review and develop with supported housing providers such as Sanctuary and Mind schemes which address the gaps locally for those suffering with mental health and homelessness.
- Review and commission Housing First scheme with Delta for entrenched rough sleepers.
- Progress plans to provide accommodation with support for those discharged from hospital at short notice

3. Preventing Crisis

Some of the actions above will help reduce the risk of people falling into homelessness and crisis. We have to be realistic as to the extent that we are able to go beyond our role as a housing authority to take on additional responsibilities that are beyond our knowledge and expertise.

The government recognises in the national strategy that: "Achieving this vision requires a culture change across homelessness services and the wider public sector."

In 2026 we shall be expanding our Homelessness Team to improve their capacity to respond to enquiries and approaches about homelessness, with the intention of also

reducing their caseloads below the current excessively high level towards of target of below 50.

We shall also work in collaboration with public, private and voluntary organisations in Chelmsford to improve their ability to recognise the risks of homelessness and direct support towards more timely ways to prevent this. This will include:

- Monitoring the use of and raising awareness of their legal Duty to Refer clients at risk of homelessness
- Balancing this with regular information about the local housing situation in Chelmsford to manage expectations, emphasising the consequences of becoming homeless and thereby the importance of prevention.
- Explore the benefits of creating a multi-disciplinary safeguarding group, informed by local Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (DARDR) and other reports to encourage earlier intervention and prevention of risks linked to homelessness.
- Review and update existing agreements for the use of some supported accommodation so that it can include those who are at risk of homelessness, thereby creating a way of preventing homelessness.
- Continue to work to re-establish a mental health navigator to assist with the diagnosis and treatment for those who are not only homeless but also at risk of becoming homeless.

Under this heading, we are also now seeing a small but growing number of older people in their 60s and 70s who are becoming homeless. This is not a group we have previously seen and is one that is rarely if ever considered amongst those usually associated with homelessness. We therefore need to gain a better understanding of this.

- Monitor and analyse cases of older people becoming homeless and work with other associated organisations to find ways to identify and prevent this from increasing in Chelmsford.
- If necessary, explore options for providing suitable accommodation to help relieve homelessness amongst older people including any essential support that may be required.

4. Improving Emergency Response

The national strategy sets an expectation that the use of temporary accommodation will be reduced. Preventing homelessness can help achieve this but this has to be complemented by an adequate supply of suitable and affordable housing, if only for those cases of homelessness that can not be avoided.

Chelmsford continues to experience a critical challenge in meeting the need for affordable homes as outline above and consequently has far more households in temporary accommodation than we would like.

Housing authorities, in complying with the national strategy, must now set out in our action plan how we shall ensure that we procure sufficient properties to meet this need and allocate them fairly. In addition “These plans must reflect their duties to

safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and the action they will take to mitigate disruption of support and essential services.”

Our Housing Service has developed and expanded a team dedicated to managing the need for temporary accommodation which currently provides for nearly 600 households, three times the number of homes we have available to allocate each year through the Housing Register. To ensure we are complying with the requirements of the national strategy and more importantly meeting our legal duties to those who need temporary accommodation we shall as part of our revised action plan carry out a full review of this aspect of the Service. This will involve:

- Review of the process used to calculate the future requirements for temporary accommodation
- The renewed procurement of nightly let providers of temporary accommodation
- A review of the framework agreement used for using additional temporary accommodation with other providers when necessary
- Review and revise agreement with Delta for management of temporary accommodation owned or leased by Delta or the Council.
- Continue to increase the supply of temporary and supported accommodation that has been or can be adapted to meet the needs of those with physical disabilities.
- Review the existing policies for providing financial assistance to help families placed out of area to access suitable accommodation in those areas, minimising further disruption and taking into account the lack of capacity in schools in Chelmsford.
- Continue to progress plans to increase the number of temporary accommodation places in Chelmsford to reduce the need to place families out of the area, including the largest of families and those with additional support needs.
- Review and seek to re-commission if necessary our scheme for providing additional support to families with children in temporary accommodation.

5. Recovery

We know that for many who experience homelessness accommodation alone is not an effective solution. In many cases the causes of homelessness begin with other issues such as domestic abuse and mental health which are particularly prevalent in the support needs identified in the Personal Housing Plans of all applicants to the Council’s Homelessness Team.

The most common support needs identified from applicants are provided below.

History of mental health problems	38%
Poor health or disability	23%

***Risk or experience of domestic abuse*17%**

Learning difficulties	12%
History of repeat homelessness	11%
History of rough sleeping	11%

Note that some people will have more than one need hence total is more than 100%.

Those in bold are proportionately higher than other districts in Essex.

Our current and previous Homelessness Strategies have strengthened our work with a number of partners who are important in helping people manage the experience of homelessness and just as important, the pathway through being housed to managing well enough so that they remain free from the risk of homelessness in the future.

Examples of our existing partnerships include:

- ✓ Rough Sleeper Navigators and Coordinator – working with local voluntary and statutory organisations
- ✓ Housing and Probation Navigator – working to support those who are homeless and under supervision of the Probation Service
- ✓ Tenancy Sustainment Officer – working with private and social landlords to help tenants sustain their tenancies
- ✓ Resettlement Officer – supporting refugees such as those arriving in Chelmsford under the Homes for Ukraine scheme to access employment and acquire their own homes.
- ✓ Social Care / DWP / Housing officer – providing support to vulnerable families and single people who have involvement with all three of these organisations in Chelmsford
- ✓ South Essex and Central Essex Mind – providing support to families in temporary accommodation and others who need low to medium level support
- ✓ Disability Working Group – Social Care, local housing associations and our Housing Allocations team involved with finding and adapting homes to meet the needs of housing applicants with disabilities
- ✓ Essex County Council Drug and Alcohol Service – supporting those with issues involving substance abuse.
- ✓ Peabody Floating Support – commissioned by Essex County Council to help those at risk of homelessness throughout Essex.

A New Framework

Linked to these key themes, there is now a new framework for evaluating the progress housing authorities are making to achieve the aims of the national strategy. Many of actions from previous strategies along with our revised action plan for this revision to our current strategy will serve to meet the government's aims and objectives. From the end of 2026 we will be required to regularly review and update our local action plan by reporting on the following:

- a). The number of households with children in temporary accommodation: this will be assessed as a comparison with other housing authorities by recording the number of households per 1,000 of the local area's population. Improving the supply of affordable homes for families will be critical in achieving a reasonable level of performance.
- b). The number of families in B&B over 6 weeks: despite the high number of families needing emergency and temporary accommodation, Chelmsford City Council rarely exceeds this but it is essential that we can maintain a supply of suitable alternative temporary accommodation alongside our plans to prevent homelessness and improve the housing supply.
- c). Percentage of duties owed where homelessness was prevented or relieved: this will be measured against the number of cases where a duty to prevent or relieve was owed each quarter. Our success in preventing homelessness has in the past been much better than our ability to relieve homelessness, a reflection of the very limited range of affordable housing options in our city, so we shall have to find new and effective ways of helping people find suitable alternative housing avoiding the need for temporary or homelessness.
- d). Percentage of duties owed where homelessness was prevented or relieved for households experiencing multiple disadvantage: this will be a sub-group of the previous category but we await more information as to how 'multiple disadvantage' will be defined and identified.
- e). Number of people sleeping rough on a single night: this will be what is currently recorded and reported as the annual 'snapshot' verified by Homelesslink.
- f). Number of people sleeping rough each month who are known to be long-term rough sleepers: long-term in this case means those known to be sleeping rough each month for three or more months each year.

The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act

Throughout 2026 we will be working with a wide range of other organisations including neighbouring housing authorities and Essex County Council to identify the need for housing related support in our area and compare that with the services that currently exist.

This information will help us identify any gaps in Chelmsford and inform an action plan aimed at addressing any shortfall.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

In April 2028 district and county councils in Essex will be re-organised into five unitary authorities. Chelmsford, Brentwood and Maldon will form a new mid-Essex housing authority. The implementation of our action plan for this revision of our

Homelessness Strategy will run concurrent with the LGR process. This will inevitably limit our capacity to achieve all that we would like to over the next year or so but it will also create new opportunities, working across a wider area both geographically and organisationally.

We have to be realistic therefore as to how this change will limit our ability to produce an action plan as SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Resourced and Timebound) as usual. We have therefore set out what our aims are and we do our best to achieve or at least progress these over this period of transition from one type of local authority to another.

Our Renewed Action Plan 2026 - 2030

Action	Date	Resources	Outcome
Universal prevention of homelessness			
Promote the role of the Tenancy Sustainment Officer to social and private landlords	From autumn 2026	Existing	Increase in cases where homelessness is prevented
New Housing Initiatives Officer post	From summer 2026	Existing	Increase in the supply of affordable and supported housing
Review and set objectives for Chelmsford's Domestic Abuse Forum	From summer 2026	Existing	Increase prevention of homelessness caused by domestic abuse
Re-launch and promotion of Think Before You Serve for private landlords	Autumn 2026	Existing	Increase in prevention homelessness in private rented homes
Ensure the need for supported housing to meet our statutory duties to those who are homeless is included in future Supported Housing Strategy	Spring 2027	New burdens funding	Continued increase in supply and options of homes for those who are st risk of homelessness with support needs
Re-launch Homeless Families' Forum to improve awareness of the risks of homelessness and	Autumn 2026	Existing	Better awareness and early identification of families at risk of homelessness

improve the range of support available			thereby improving prevention
Targeted prevention of homelessness			
Improve capacity to review and increase Homeless at Home scheme	Winter 2026	Increase in Homelessness Officers from existing resources	Reduction in homelessness and need for temporary accommodation
Re-launch Think Before You Serve with Private Landlords' Forum and consult on other ways to help them sustain tenancies	Winter 2028	Existing resources	Reduction in homelessness within the private rented sector
Review and if possible re-commission scheme to remove perpetrators of domestic abuse	Autumn 2026	SETDAB, PFCC and CCC	Prevention of homelessness caused by domestic abuse
Review and re-commission AFEO scheme increasing the number of people helped	Spring 2027	Ministry of Justice and MHCLG	Prevention of homelessness for those supervised by Probation
Expand scope of current actions for rough sleepers to reduce length of time spent on the streets and risk of repeat homelessness	Spring 2027	Single Homelessness Forum	Additional funding for partners
Provide specialist support to help refugees access accommodation and employment	Summer 2026	Home Office funding	Reduction in length of stay and number of families in temporary accommodation
Increase provision of housing and support for those who are homeless with mental health issues	Summer 2026	MHCLG Homes England	Prevention of homelessness for those leaving hospital
Review and re-commission Housing First scheme	Autumn 2026	MHCLG Rough Sleeper Funding	Prevention of homelessness for those leaving

			hospital and other health institutions
Preventing crisis			
Review Duty to Refer cases to identify other agencies who may not be meeting their duties effectively and take appropriate steps to rectify this	Spring 2027	Existing	Increase in ability to prevent homelessness
Establish regular newsletters to local organisations about housing and homelessness in Chelmsford	Ongoing	Existing	Better awareness and engagement to prevent homelessness
Establish a multi-disciplinary group to oversee joint working on complex cases and issues in Chelmsford	Autumn 2026	Existing	Better understanding and use of resources to prevent homelessness and other risks for most vulnerable people in our community
Review and expand existing terms and conditions for some supported housing schemes	Winter 2027	Existing	Expand capacity to enable those at risk of homelessness to be included and accommodated before actual homelessness
Re-establish a mental health navigator.	Spring 2027	TBC	Better diagnosis and treatment for those who at risk of homeless and in need of support and treatment
Improving Emergency Response			
Review process for assessing future need of temporary accommodation	Winter 2026	Existing	More detailed and accurate projections ensuring compliance with future reports to MHCLG

Re-commission providers of 'nightly let' temporary accommodation	Winter 2026	Existing	Assurance of future provision and best value for money of temporary accommodation
Review existing dynamic procurement system for meeting additional need of temporary accommodation	Spring 2027	Existing	Ensures quality and value of additional supply as and when needed
Review and renew arrangements for management of Council's TA properties	Autumn 2026	Existing	Ensures quality of management and support to those in TA
Review need and increase provision of TA for those with disabilities	Spring 2027	Better Care Fund	Ensures adequate and suitable provision for those who are homeless with disabilities
Review Rent Deposit and other schemes to help families move on from temporary accommodation	Autum 2026	Existing	Reduction in need for temporary accommodation and disruption to families
Increase provision of suitable temporary accommodation within Chelmsford	Ongoing	Existing (capital programme)	Reduction in number of families having to be placed out of area
Review scheme providing additional support to families with children in TA	Winter 2026	MHCLG grant	Inform decision to re-commission or amend existing scheme
Recovery			
Supported Housing Strategy	Spring 2027	New burdens funding	Strategic plan to meet need of supported housing to 2032