



CABINET – 4 DECEMBER 2002

REVIEW OF THE CORPORATE PLAN – HEART OF THE FOREST

1. The Council's Corporate Plan – The Heart of the Forest – was approved by Council in April 2001 as a consultation draft, replacing the previous corporate plan.
2. Since then, the document has been published and the consultation process involving the Council's Members, employees and partners has been completed.
3. This report sets out the initial thoughts of the Administration of what should be included in the final version of the Corporate Plan – Vision, Broad Ethos and Key Strategic Priorities (Appendix 1) and the feedback received from the consultation process on the original draft (Appendix 2).
4. The Corporate Plan is the most important Council Strategy as it needs to shape the way this Council works. To do this, it needs to work at both a strategic and service level to help bring all members and services together to work towards the same goals.
5. It is an essential element of the Council's Performance Management System which will be the way to achieve this focus on what is important to this Council.
6. With the production of the Community Strategy in 2003, the Corporate Plan will need to respond through both the setting of future strategic priorities and the annual process of setting portfolio key targets in the light of the issues coming forward from the communities themselves.
7. Future timescales for setting portfolio key targets will need to be brought forward in subsequent years to fit better with the expenditure planning process.
8. A programme needs to be agreed to take the matter forward by involving all Members in the process to develop the Council's vision and input into the identification of the key strategic priorities for the next three years and portfolio priorities for 2003/04.
9. That programme for this year is suggested as:

December	Cabinet to agree programme and receive consultation feedback to be used to develop final plan
December - January	All Review Panels to consider the feedback and the key strategic priorities (2003/06) and portfolio key targets (2003/04)
February	Cabinet to consider final draft Corporate Plan including priorities and targets.

10. RECOMMENDATION

That the programme for finalising the review of the Corporate Plan, as set out, be approved.

Cllr Mel Kendal
Leader of the Council

Dave Yates
Chief Executive

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

STRATEGY 2003/04 TO 2006/07

Vision

To be an outward looking Council working closely with the Community and in Partnership with others to:

1. Preserve the New Forest District and its environment for the peaceful enjoyment of residents and visitors present and future.
2. Encourage businesses to provide jobs and economic benefit for the area.
3. Determine and provide economically, efficiently and effectively a range of services to fulfil local needs and maintain social well-being.

Broad Ethos

1. Strive to improve service to the customer.
2. Strive to provide value for money.
3. Strive to improve the management of the Council's resources and assets.
4. Strive to display innovation and deliver excellence.
5. Strive to develop effective partnerships with other local organisations.

KEY PRIORITIES

1. Local Plan – amend to reflect current and future needs of the community.
2. Dibden Bay – continue opposition to the Project providing from mitigation of adverse factors in the event the decision is adverse.
3. National Park – press for it to be tailored to local needs and clarify NFDC's role in planning development control.
4. Modernise the provision of services by using information and communication technologies (Electronic Governance).
5. Recreation Centres – decide long-term management policy.
6. Ensure fuller utilisation of assets.
7. Develop the partnership with Test Valley.
8. Introduce traffic management measures in response to consultation.
9. Increase number of affordable homes.
10. Develop an effective Performance Management Framework and secure a high grade in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment.
11. Develop a Community Plan in conjunction with members of the New Forest Local Strategic Partnership.
12. Work with partners to develop an integrated approach to health and social inclusion issues in the New Forest.
13. Work with the New Forest Business Forum to enhance economic and employment opportunities for the area.
14. Work with Hampshire County Council and other partners to tackle key transportation issues.

Consultation Response Pro Forma

HEART OF THE FOREST

In May 2002 a written survey was sent to all 58 New Forest District Members, and also all Business Units within the Council who were invited to respond either individually or as part of a team. This analysis only considers the quantitative elements of the consultation.

In January 2002 'The Heart of the Forest' was published as a consultation draft to enable members, employees and partners to input into its future development. The aim of this questionnaire was to gain members and employees views and opinions on the consultation draft in a way that was both effective and efficient.

Results Published: June 2002

Analysis for:
Heart of the Forest Consultation Response Pro Forma

Summary

Question 2

This line graph shows that the majority of respondents were happy with the way the plan was presented. The following percent of respondents scored each of the statements highly with either a 4 or a 5: the overall layout and design of the plan (55.8%); the balance between the picture and the text (67.2%); the structure of the plan (67.2%), the use of colours (60.6%) and that it was easy to understand (68.8%).

Question 4

Most of the respondents felt that from the plan they could easily identify - the overall direction the Council wishes to move (88.5%), and how they and their service/portfolio fits in (73.8%).

Question 5

The respondents agreed that the balance in the plan between the following five sections is just right:

- ☺ An organisation of excellence (70.5%)
- ☺ Working with public and partners (82%)
- ☺ Economic well-being (77%)
- ☺ Social well-being (77%)
- ☺ Environmental well-being (75.4%)

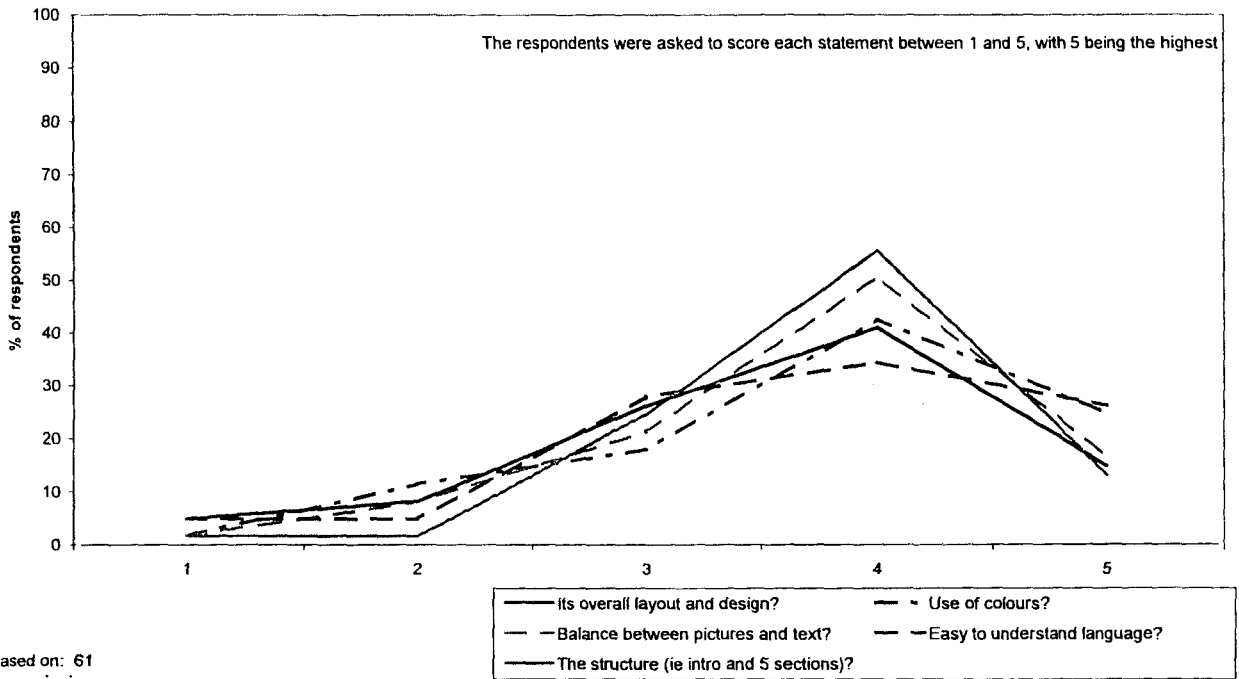
Question 7

78% of the respondents agreed that the existence of a Corporate Plan does make a difference to the running of the organisation.

The 78% were then asked how they think the plan helps. Of all of the options that the respondents were given to agree or disagree with, the two most popular options were: The plan helps ... the Council review policies (89.6%) and, the Council promote itself as an organisation of excellence? (89.6%). The least selected option was: The plan helps ... partnership work generally? (68.8%)

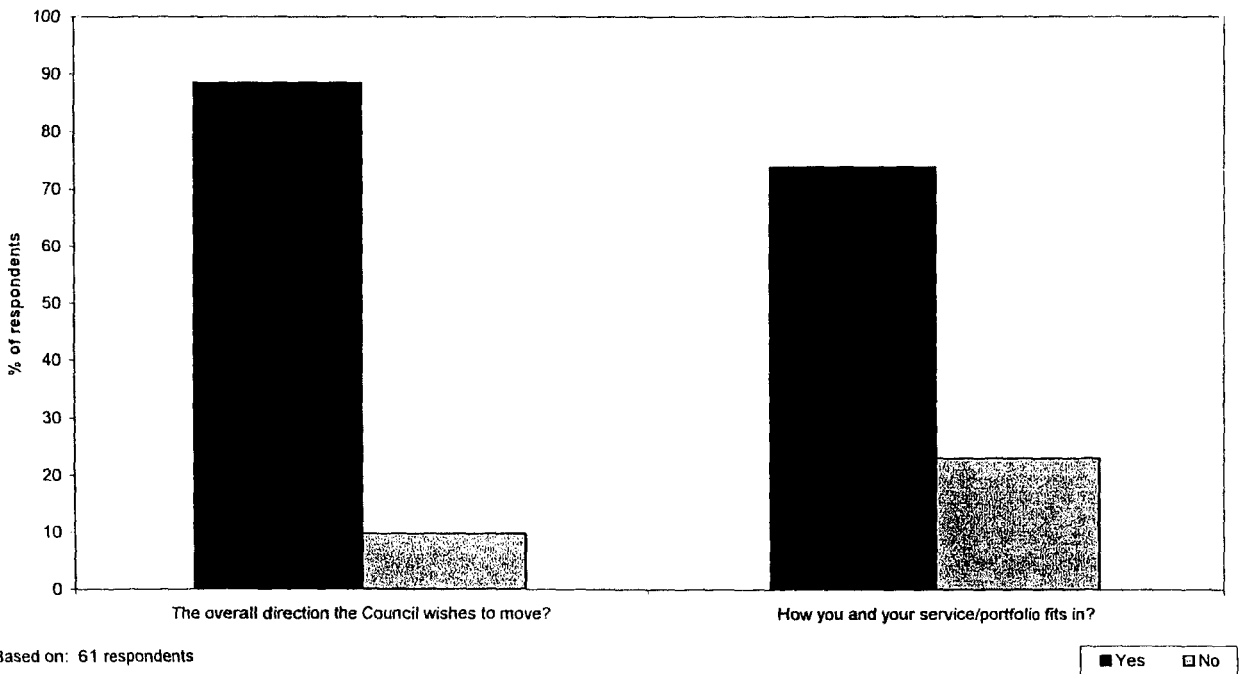
Question 2

How do you rate the way it was presented in so far as...



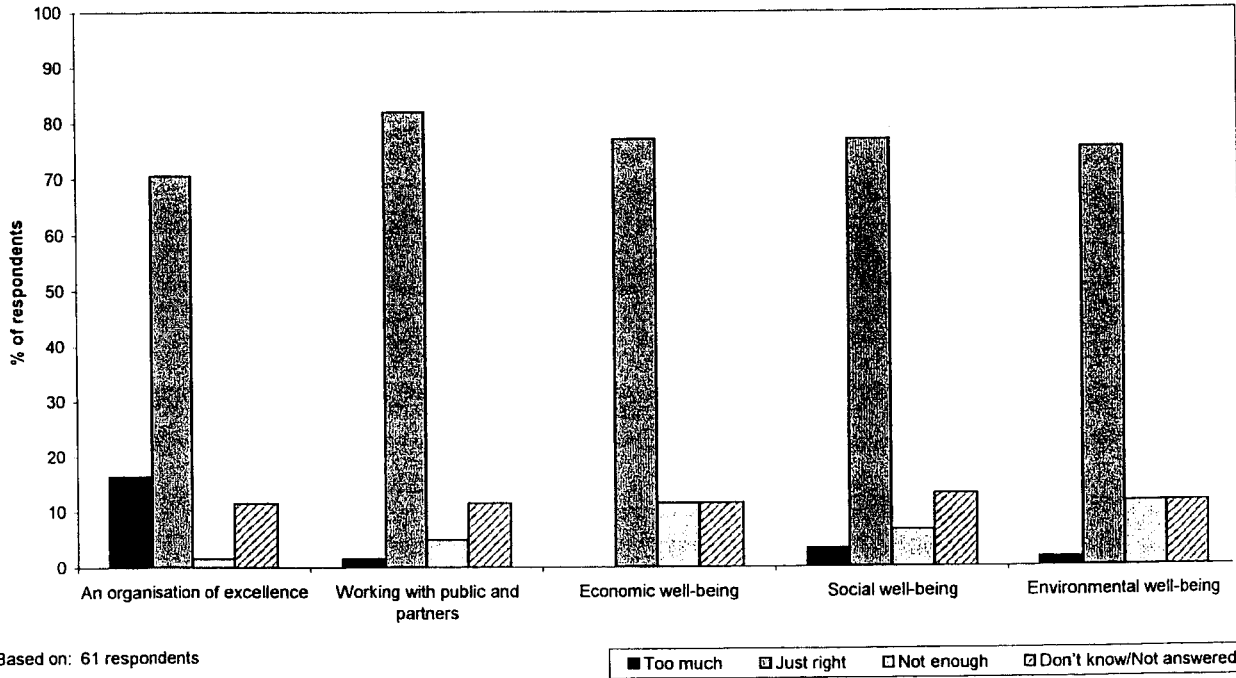
Question 4

So far as the contents of the plan are concerned could you easily identify...



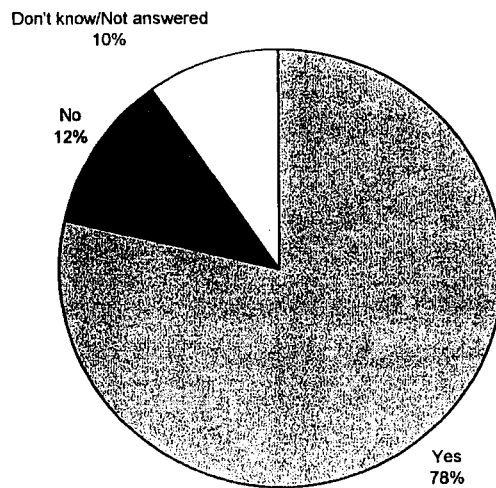
Question 5

What do you think about the balance between the five main sections of the plan?



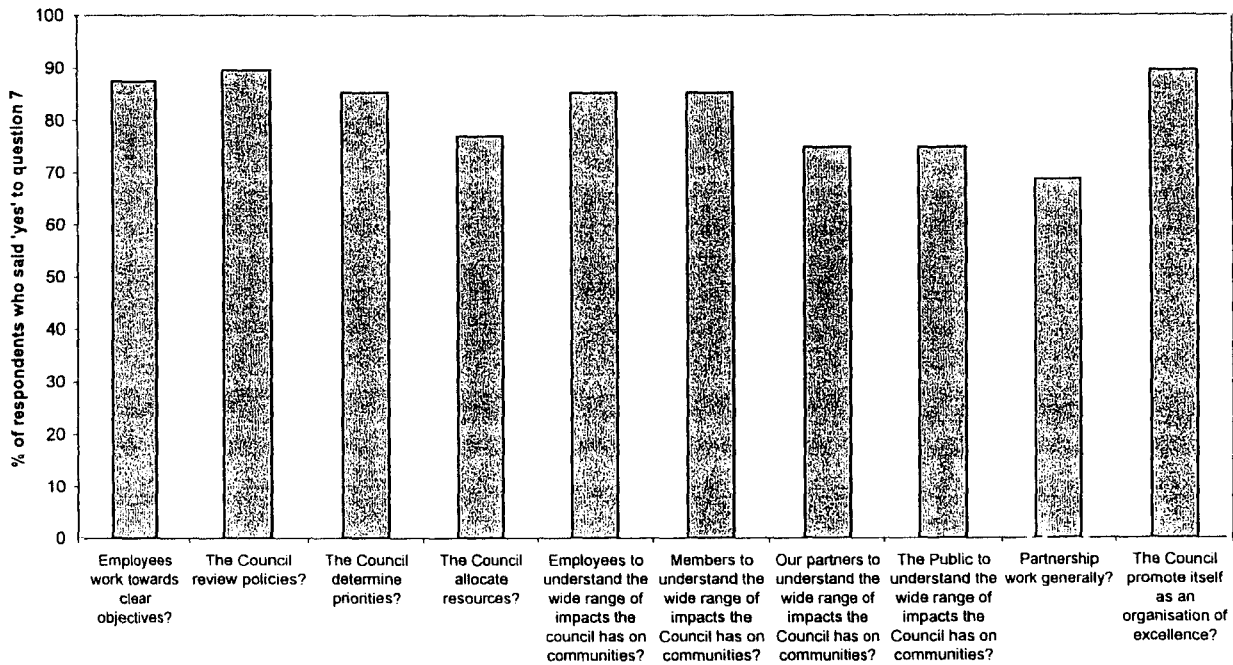
Question 7

Do you think the existence of a Corporate Plan makes any difference to the running of the organisation?



Based on: 61 respondents

If you answered YES, does it help...



Based on: 48 respondents

CONSULTATION RESPONSE PRO FORMA

THE HEART OF THE FOREST

Please complete and return to Keith Smith, Corporate Planning Co-ordinator, Chief Executives Department, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst or email to: keith.smith@nfdc.gov.uk by 20 March 2002.

PLAN PRESENTATION

1. Have you viewed 'The Heart of the Forest'...

Tick one box for each statement

	Yes	No
In leaflet form?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
As a poster?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electronically on ForestNet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. How do you rate the way it was presented in so far as...

Please score each one 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest

Its overall layout and design?	_____
Use of colours?	_____
Balance between pictures and text?	_____
Easy to understand language?	_____
The structure (ie intro and 5 sections)?	_____

3. How do you think the presentation of the plan could be improved?

PLAN CONTENTS

4. So far as the contents of the plan are concerned could you easily identify...

Tick one box for each statement

	Yes	No
The overall direction the Council wishes to move?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How you and your service fits in?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered NO to either part, please give a little more detail.

The overall direction the Council wishes to move?

How you and your service fits in?

5. What do you think about the balance between the five main sections of the plan?

Tick one box for each statement

	Too much	Just right	Not enough	Don't know
An organisation of excellence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working the public and partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economic well-being	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social well-being	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental well-being	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Is there anything not included in the plan that should be?

Yes No Don't know

If YES, please give details

USE OF THE PLAN

7. Do you think the existence of a Corporate Plan makes any difference to the running of the organisation?

Yes No Don't know

If you answered YES, does it help...

	Tick one box for each statement		
	Yes	No	Don't know
Employees work towards clear objectives?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Council review policies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Council determine priorities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Council allocate resources?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employees to understand the wide range of impacts the council has on communities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Members to understand the wide range of impacts the Council has on communities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our partners to understand the wide range of impacts the Council has on communities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Public to understand the wide range of impacts the Council has on communities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Partnership work generally?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Council promote itself as an organisation of excellence?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered NO to any of the statements, what would need to be done for the plan to add value to the Council?

GENERAL COMMENTS

8. Please give any general comments not covered in any of the previous specific questions.

Completed by _____ (please print)

Section _____

Directorate/Department _____

Responding *as an individual/on behalf of the business unit

* please delete as appropriate

SUMMARY OF SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT ARISING FROM CONSULTATION RESPONSES

EMPLOYEES

- Should include reference to more detailed documents including Action Plans for Services.
- Little indication of how the plans are to be financed.
- No mention of historic environment.
- List specific initiatives and functions.
- Less use of jargon.
- The aims and how we go about achieving them should be clearer.
- More clearly laid out benefits to residents eg Health – what do we envisage the ‘tangible health gains’ to be? Young people – what ‘opportunities’?
- No mention of ethnic minorities.
- Include web site address and email contact.
- I wouldn’t start Council’s aims with “we cannot...”.
- Be more definitive on when we aim to complete these tasks/aims.
- The main priority at the moment seems to be reducing expenditure – this is not reflected in the plan.
- Set out financial targets.
- Question the relevance of such a document to the ordinary council tax payer.
- Simpler – fewer words.
- Identify key action points.
- Overall direction is too vague.
- Links between aims and service provision are not made.
- More specific identification of actions and priorities. What is the Council actually doing and intending to do? Most of the statements would apply to any Council.
- Ref Housing. ‘We will continue to ... provide new homes for people ...’. Would seem to indicate the council were going to build (or possible buy) them, which I understand is not the case.
- No mention of the Community Safety aspect of the (Dog Warden) service or its contribution towards educating residents towards responsible dog ownership.
- Could be perceived that the way matters are dealt with are bureaucratic and involve a lot of red tape.
- Some specific examples of how these targets are met might grab attention.
- Difficult to see how small unit (Land Charges) fits in to bigger picture.
- Each employee needs to be included in the planning and decision making process. It is no good having a plan if we do not clearly understand what part we play. There needs to be much clearer draft aim so that we can understand how we fit in and what part we play.
- Directors should consult with each business unit to agree what part they play in the overall running of the Council. This strategy should then be clearly stated so that for example I know that by doing my job I am contributing to the final goal. Otherwise it is just words an paper to pay lip service to the politicians.
- More about the protection of flora and fauna would be welcomed by the people who live in and around the areas of outstanding natural beauty.
- Set out clearer priorities.
- Numbering? – to facilitate linkages.

- Doesn't help make difficult decisions.
- Mention of National Park debate.
- Reference to where policies and objectives are found.
- It is not strategic – what we are doing now not what we want for future.
- Nothing about support services generally.
- Needs a vision/mission statement.
- There is no distinction between the importance given to each of the sections and issues contained in it. So that while we can understand that the 5 areas mentioned will have priority over other areas of work, it is not possible to use the Plan as a mechanism for choosing priorities or allocating resources within the plan.
- More focus on priorities and showing how services have a direct impact in order to prioritise work programmes and resources within business units.
- Introduction could lead into the sections better, by explaining how it's structured.
- It would be more useful to include targets/objectives against each of the aims (see waste). Very short term aims eg flooding. Cleanliness is too focused on clean streets. As our LA21 strategy it is short on pollution type issues. What about life long learning/education and other issues that are relevant to sustainable communities?
- Suggest the protecting the forest element should be included in the environment section rather than the partnership section.
- Develop real clear objectives – more medium to long term approach.
- Not useful in policy review.
- Having the list helps the discussion but no clear priorities identified.
- Lack of targets/objectives/priorities make it impossible.
- Depends on how its used. Need to think about how it links to the BVPP, Performance Management and the Community Strategy.
- Annual achievements and key targets need to link with the heading of the aims as well as portfolio.
- The 3 aims are okay but the rest is more like projects than policy.
- We can link to themes but it's the same as above – it's not really as well developed as a strategy as it could be.
- Plan does not deliver the benefits it could due to its focus on projects rather than policy.
- It needs to be comprehensive and create a platform whereby priorities and decisions can be drawn up.
- There must be a vision and direction – or we will not make out best impact on LSP and community plan. What do 'we' believe in?
- It is the most important part of a full planning and performance system. We need both a high level plan and a system to support it.
- Less use of words like 'dogmatic, 'procurement', 'rigorous', 'tangible' – are these plain english?
- 'Involve the Public' – perhaps mention how the public needs to voice its opinion via the ballot box.
- Too old fashioned to capture the positive steps you are trying to achieve.
- No dithering – we cannot please everyone and with a positive direction at least everyone knows which direction you're going in.

COUNCILLORS

- Clarify – mandatory functions and discretionary services.
- Not explicit how each portfolio fits in.
- Policy for – provide management accounts at all levels with variance analyses of key factors.
- Policy for – pricing, income, subsidy of all discretionary services provided and assess/non users in community.
- Review – clarify portfolio holder roles.
- Urgent – clarify non portfolio holder roles and real impact in community (often by passed by partnerships and directly).
- Community Action – stress add value that is cost effective and minimises bureaucracy.
- Shorter introduction.
- Simplify ‘the message’ as much as possible.
- More emphasis on Planning. There is wide concern that planning applications are tested against too narrow a set of criteria to the exclusion of the environment and the morale of the people affected by change.
- A little more detail on how we can achieve our aims and perhaps the cost
- Don’t use technical wording. Public don’t understand medium term, traditional virtues of local government, offsetting savings, participatory needs assessments.
- Introduction – talk about concerns of affluent people but not poor, excluded can mean anyone.
- Need of poor disabled and those without own transport.

RESPONSES BY PARTNERS

Partner	Comment
Hythe and Dibden Parish Council	<u>Work with Public and Partners</u> The Council would like to see more emphasis on the District Council and Parish and Town Councils working together to develop a close working relationship.
	<u>Leisure Arts and Culture</u> There should be more consultation with the Parish on Leisure and Arts plans. Sufficient funding should be made available to support Leisure and the Arts.
	<u>Crime and Disorder</u> The document should clarify the ways the District Council is going to 'seek stronger community engagement in delivering real outcomes'.
	<u>Environmental Well-being</u> The Council was concerned that the charging for 'dog-waste' bags and extra 're-cycling' bags would actually work against the principles being strived for. The Council therefore suggests that the policy should be reviewed.
	<u>Older People</u> In the light of the vulnerability of older people it suggested that the District Council should review its policy on transport and taxi fares.
Totton College	<u>General</u> The Council suggests that District Council Members could be split into local area communities in order to work more closely with Town and Parish Councillors and the general public. Somewhere in the document priority should be given to people with disabilities.
	Good document, attractively presented. Suggest 'lifelong learning' should be a theme for both social and environmental well being. Similarly, it is like Social Inclusion and Health in the sense that NFDC is a partner rather than sole deliverer.
Hale Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▫ Any plan or restructuring that reinforces local government within local life is to be praised.▫ It would be nice to think that parish and town councils are listened to, but this Council's cynicism towards planning unfortunately only too often betrays the truth. Councils are not listened to on planning issues, especially this unending enlargement of rural properties with communities losing many of the smaller type of housing.▫ Areas that this Council considers are of acute importance are; crime, traffic, public transport, affordable housing and activities for youth. The Parish Council will be very interested to see how this plan works.

Bransgore Parish Council Disappointed that Quality Parish Councils initiative has been placed on hold for a year but would like to see mention of the extent and nature of Districts support for this venture in the revised plan.

New Forest Tourism Welcomes the plan and its content. Strong support for future expansion of partnership working.

New Forest Primary Care Trust Involve the public
The PCT sees this as a key area for development. Local people have a major part to play in deciding how services are improved and what priorities need to be addressed.

Develop a community strategy

The development of a community strategy for the New Forest is supported by the PCT. The PCT is committed to working with the Local Strategic Partnership in identifying common goals and ensuring a strategic approach is taken across the district. The PCT support development of joint community needs assessment, in particular when identifying joint priorities and actions.

Work with partners

The PCT already has excellent relationships with the Council and believes the development of joint working arrangements and partnerships is the future structure of working. The PCT regards partnership working as essential to tackle the health issues that exist in the community. The partnership agenda is incredibly exciting and has the potential for exploring the use of pooled budgets, development of joint teams, units and new services to ensure integrated planning and delivery.

Social well-being

The PCT agrees that health is now a multi-agency issues and is currently working on developing a new Health Improvement and Modernisation Plan (HIMP) for the New Forest. The HIMP will provide a shared local vision on how to improve the health of the people of the New Forest and will be developed in partnership with all local stakeholders. A key challenge for the PCT will be closely link and integrate the HIMP to the community strategy.

The PCT recognises that many agencies other than the health service have a role to play in influencing health and that there is a need to address health issues outside clinical and care settings. Health and well-being requires integrated action at a number of levels through a wide range of services. NFDC is regarded as a key local partner to achieve this and this commitment is demonstrated through the Council's Corporate Plan.

The New Forest Primary Care Trust supports the Council's new Corporate Plan and is committed to the common vision of improving the health and well-being of the district.

New Forest
Committee

Given the proposed life of this plan, it seems appropriate to mention the National Park status that is likely to be conferred over a large part of the District by 2004, and how the District Council will be seeking to ensure that its work contributes towards National Park purposes where appropriate, ie conserving the natural beauty of the New Forest (including ecology, landscape, archaeology, built and cultural heritage) and promoting understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities.

We hope that as new arrangements unfold, New Forest District Council will continue to play a key role in the conservation of the special qualities of the New Forest and the sustainable support of its local communities. Indeed National Park status is likely to present new challenges and opportunities for the Council, with scope for innovative partnerships with a new authority. It is my firm view that our local communities expect all organisations to be well prepared and constructive in ensuring that there is a seamless transition as well as an early increase in environmental emphasis, following National Park designation.

Forestry
Commission

General support for a fairly comprehensive document.