

## THE CORPORATE PLAN 2008/12 – LEADING OUR FOREST COMMUNITIES

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council's Corporate Plan – The Heart of the Forest was approved by the Council in April 2003, and was originally intended to cover the 4 years 2003-2007.
- 1.2 It was agreed in 2007 to defer the production of a new plan until 2007/08 to allow the administration elected in May 2007 time to review its priorities. It has also allowed the Cabinet to reflect on the responses to the Future Matters – Issues and Options Consultation, which is informing the preparation of the new Sustainable Community Strategy for the New Forest (to be reported to Cabinet and Council in June/July 2008).
- 1.3 It is proposed that the new plan cover the 4 years to 2011/12 which will fit well with the electoral and Sustainable Community Strategy timescales.
- 1.4 All members and employees have been given the opportunity to input into the Plan.

### 2. THE PURPOSE OF THE CORPORATE PLAN

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 It is an essential element of the Council's Performance Management System which will be the way to focus services and individuals on what is important to this Council.
- 2.3 The Council produces numerous other strategies which should flow from and feed into the Corporate Plan. These include the annual performance plans and individual service plans. It is proposed that in future these are supplemented by annual Portfolio Plans. The majority of aims in the Plan also have individual strategies associated with them.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 It is important to communicate the Plan effectively in order for it to impact on the organisation. Much of this communication will be through electronic means and through face to face communication at team meetings, briefings, Performance and Development interviews etc.
- 3.2 There is still a need to produce hard copy versions of the Plan however and these will be made available to all members, every business unit and the Council's main partners including Town and Parish Councils. Costs are likely to be in the order of £2,500 for design and printing and can be contained within existing budgets.

#### **4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Plan reflects a growing recognition of some major environmental issues to be tackled, particularly the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.
- 4.2 The production process for the hard copy versions of the Plan will seek to minimise environmental impact by the products used and the numbers produced. The environmental credentials of the product will be published.

#### **5. CRIME & DISORDER AND EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

#### **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 That the Cabinet recommends the new corporate plan to the Council for approval.

#### **For Further Information Please Contact:**

Dave Yates  
Chief Executive  
Tel: 023 8028 5478  
Email: [dave.yates@nfdc.gov.uk](mailto:dave.yates@nfdc.gov.uk)

#### **Background Papers:**

Future Matters Issues and Options  
Report and Consultation Results  
The Heart of the Forest - The  
Council's Corporate Plan 2003-2007

# **CORPORATE PLAN 2008-12 - LEADING OUR FOREST COMMUNITIES (Draft)**

## **INTRODUCTION**

**The Council's Corporate Plan, Leading our Forest Communities, sets out how the Council will continue to engage with the people of the area to shape the future of the New Forest District.**

We believe that the previous plan, the Heart of the Forest (2003-2007), has served us well. This new plan retains its Vision and Values, and builds on the key themes and corporate aims. The title reflects the fact that while many organisations have a valuable role in the life of the New Forest, it is the democratically elected District Council that continues to have the mandate to balance social, economic and environment needs, and provide leadership to the many communities of geography and interest which make up this unique place.

Alongside the continuing key themes of prudent financial management, excellent service performance and partnership working we have given increased prominence to environmental sustainability and our determination to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council and the District. We recognise that there is more we can do to enable all our customers to access our services (and other public sector services) in ways that best suit their needs and wishes. We will more actively review our physical assets and determine the feasibility of working from one main office base. And not least, our councillors will seek to engage the people of the Forest in the governance of their affairs so that individuals and communities are enabled to deal with the issues that face them.

We said in the Heart of the Forest that, while all our aims are important, we would give special priority to housing, crime and disorder and the state of our streets and public places. To these priorities we now add empowering young lives and also valuing and supporting older people. Following the damning UNICEF report on the wellbeing of young people in this country, we are keen to join the County Council and others in improving their life opportunities. In an area that has one of the highest elderly populations in the country we want to give increased attention to how we can benefit from their skills and experiences as well as helping provide the best possible care to those who need it.

The plan sits at the top of a family of Council strategies and plans linked to the Sustainable Community Strategy for the whole area. We will use it to drive annual Performance Plans which will set and monitor more detailed Portfolio Plans.

Plans by themselves mean nothing without the ability to turn them into action. We have re-ordered this document so that it is completely clear which Portfolio Holder will be taking the lead on which aim. We also have restructured and streamlined our management structure so that it is also clear which individuals and services within each Portfolio are accountable for getting things done.

The Council has an excellent track record for delivering on our promises. We are intent that this does not change, as we set out our aims for the future.

## **VISION**

To be an outward looking Council, working closely with the community and in partnership with others to enhance the quality of lives of present and future generations by:

- Preserving the environment of the New Forest District for the peaceful enjoyment of residents and visitors;
- Helping to create and maintain a local economy that brings opportunities for jobs

- and economic benefit to the area; and
- Understanding and fulfilling local needs through creating and maintaining healthy and safe communities for the enjoyment of all.

## **How we will deliver the Vision**

**1 By focusing on how we work.** Everything we do is delivered through a set of values which are shared by all Members and employees. These are:

- Caring
- Communication
- Openness and Trust
- Positive Thinking
- Quality
- Simplicity
- Value for Money
- Working Together

**2 By focusing on key themes.** These themes are of great significance to the success of the organisation and the New Forest community. These are:

- Managing our finances
- Maintaining excellent performance and improving effectiveness and efficiency
- Managing our assets including exploring the scope for one site administration
- Working to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council and the District
- Leading and enhancing local partnerships including the Local Strategic Partnership
- Engaging local people and communities in all we do
- Improving the ease and equality of access to public services of all our customers and citizens

**3 By focusing on key priorities.** The rest of this Plan sets out our Aims for the next 4 years. They are all important. Of these our key priorities are:

- Providing Affordable Housing
- Ensuring Streets and Public Spaces are Clean
- Tackling Crime and Disorder
- Empowering Young Lives
- Valuing and Supporting Older People

## **DRAFT CORPORATE AIMS (By Portfolio)**

### **1. Policy and Resources**

#### **1.1 Delivering through People**

People are vital to our success. Workforce challenges in delivering the local government agenda are immense. We will review our People Strategy and implement an action plan which will ensure that we have the right organisational structures in place to deliver services in the most efficient and effective way. We will continue to work in partnership to monitor and review our employment strategies including recruitment and retention, wellbeing, learning and development and pay and reward to ensure we are able to recruit and retain a healthy, skilled, highly motivated workforce who deliver excellent services to the citizens of the New Forest.

## **1.2 Improving Our Performance**

External inspections have repeatedly rated us as excellent. We believe there is more we can do to improve our performance, and increase our effectiveness and efficiency. In particular we will focus on improving our performance against the Council's key priorities and other issues where the community expresses a strong desire for us to do so. Where this requires moving resources from one area to another, we will do so.

## **1.3 Engaging the Public**

We will enable people to engage with us in a variety of ways and will use their views to help shape the services they receive and the way we deliver our role as a community leader. Our approach will be to better inform, consult, involve, collaborate with, and empower communities to bring about greater participation and interest in not only what we do but also in local democracy. Our councillors will play a key role in this.

## **1.4 Improving Partnership Work**

The Council will build on its excellent track record of working in partnership in many areas of work that directly affect the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of communities. But we can do better and we will challenge ourselves and others to ensure such work always adds value. The Council will continue to take a lead role in the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) which will deliver, monitor and review the 2008 – 2012 Sustainable Community Strategy. As part of its work, the LSP will help link working at Hampshire County level with the needs of our communities and the actions of our Town and Village Councils. We will seek to work in harmony with the National Park Authority as the needs of the communities for whom we share responsibilities are inextricably linked with the rest of our area.

## **2. Finance and Efficiency**

### **2.1 Managing our Finances**

We are concerned that excellence is not achieved at undue cost to the taxpayer. An excellent Authority will manage its finances efficiently and we will strive to continue our record of success in consistently achieving amongst the lowest annual increases in council tax within Hampshire. We will match our corporate priorities to a medium term financial plan, which clearly recognises what resources will be available and what we believe people are willing to pay.

### **2.2 Managing our Physical Assets**

We will ensure that assets owned by the Council are optimised in their use in providing services to the wider community. Property or land will not be held unnecessarily. To accomplish this, the Council will continue to review and rationalise its property base to enable re-investment of resources into new assets which will support and enhance the community it serves. We will develop a number of new initiatives including examining the scope to consolidate our two main public offices into one location and exploring depot facilities in partnership with neighbouring authorities. Recognising the impact of climate change, a prime focus in the management of our assets will be the implementation of appropriate energy efficiency initiatives.

### **2.3 Providing Easy Access for All**

We will meet the challenge of rising expectations for better quality and more joined-up customer service. We will do this partly by embracing new technologies. We will continue to provide local offices, where it is economical to do so. We will further develop our contact

centre approach and our interactive website, so that customers can access our services at times that suit them.

### **3. Crime and Disorder**

#### **3.1 Tackling Crime and Disorder**

We have created a Crime and Disorder portfolio for an individual cabinet member and regard our duties in this area as extremely important. Along with our partners we will assist to deliver a community safety strategy whilst meeting the requirements of recent legislation but we will emphasize just how safe the Forest is. We will seek stronger community involvement and the use of CCTV will remain a priority. We will emphasize the need to reduce and minimise road casualties in the area.

#### **3.2 Dealing with Emergencies**

We will continue to review emergency planning to meet our changing local needs and to implement any new requirements brought about by changing legislation.

### **4. Employment, Health and Well Being**

#### **4.1 Helping Local Businesses to Succeed**

In support of a vibrant business sector, we will facilitate business investment, support the development of new businesses and improvement in the skills and employment prospects of the workforce. In doing so, we will support the development of local identity and distinctiveness and place all of this activity within the context of seeking sustainable development. Partners are key to our delivery, in particular, the New Forest Business Partnership.

In an area that includes England's newest National Park, we will continue to recognise our responsibility to play a part in tourism and visitor management. Our purpose will be to ensure the wise development of tourism, balancing the needs of visitors, the tourism industry, local communities and most especially our unique environment.

#### **4.2 Improving Peoples Health**

We will work with partners to develop a Health and WellBeing Board. It will oversee the approach we take to the health improvement and well being of those who work and live in the New Forest. It will seek to improve access to, and information on, services whilst targeting those most in need, with a focus on adult and older people's health. It will be the strategic planning mechanism for us to further develop our approach to health improvement within the locality and will oversee the development and implementation of the Health and WellBeing Action Plans for this area.

#### **4.3 Valuing and Supporting Older People**

We already have a higher proportion of older people in the New Forest than many areas and the number of the elderly and in particular the very elderly will continue to grow. Most have invaluable skills and expertise to contribute to community life. Some elderly people are vulnerable, however, and we will work closely with partners to help meet their needs.

#### **4.4 Providing Equal Opportunities**

This Council seeks to ensure that all residents in the New Forest have equal access to fair employment and services provided by the Council. We wish to make a positive difference to the lives of residents and to demonstrate this commitment the Council aims to achieve

the highest level of the Equality Standard for Local Government. We will measure our success not only by the delivery of ambitious 3 year action plans set in partnership with our residents and partner organisations within our Corporate Equality Scheme but also by the satisfaction of our minority communities.

## **5. Environment**

### **5.1 Ensuring Streets and Public Spaces are Clean**

The Council will champion the provision of well kept facilities and a clean environment throughout the District. Working in partnership with local communities we will strive to target resources to maintain and enhance the quality of the District's street scene, including street cleansing, grounds maintenance, public conveniences and environmental enhancements.

### **5.2 Protecting the Environment and Promoting the Wise Use of Natural Resources**

The Council will seek to reduce its own carbon footprint and will encourage others to contribute towards an overall reduction in the carbon footprint of the district. It will work with others in both proactive and reactive ways to reduce levels of air, land, water, light and noise pollution and the waste of non renewable energy and natural resources.

### **5.3 Minimising and Managing Waste**

The Council will continue to work in partnership with councils in Hampshire to maintain and develop the integrated waste and resource management programme, Project Integra. The Council is committed to providing a comprehensive and sustainable waste management service for the District and will strive to meet both national and locally agreed targets for waste recycling. Working with local communities and the business sector we will seek to reduce the volume of waste collected by the promotion of recycling initiatives, public engagement and waste minimisation programmes.

### **5.4 Managing our Coastline**

The coastline is at an increasing risk of erosion. As a result the Council will carry out an annual maintenance programme for the existing defences, using its powers under the Coast Protection Act. The Council will also aim to secure capital funding through this Act to protect the coastline from further erosion where it is economically and environmentally justified. Additionally, Coast Protection Strategy Studies, Shoreline Management Plans and a Coastal Management Plan will be conducted where Government funding is available. We will continue to play a lead role in the Southeast Strategic Regional Monitoring Programme and in the development of a national monitoring framework.

## **6. Housing**

### **6.1 Providing Affordable Housing**

Affordable housing is essential to ensure the sustainability of the District and to ensure that families and their children can remain in the area and contribute to our continuing economic success.

The Council will work with our partners and stakeholders to ensure the appropriate number of homes are provided to meet the needs of the District. It is important that the right type of housing is built to meet the local needs of our communities. All new homes will be energy-efficient, provide affordable warmth and be built using sustainable construction technologies.

## **6.2 Improving Housing Standards in the District**

We will meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010 and will thereafter continue to repair, improve and modernise our housing stock to maintain this minimum standard. We will use our powers and provide support to residents in the private sector to ensure the District's private sector homes are kept in a good state of repair. By listening and consulting we will strive to ensure that our services meet our tenants' aspirations and deliver high quality housing services.

## **7. Leisure, Culture and Youth Matters**

### **7.1 Empowering Young Lives**

Our intention is that every child and young person, including those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged, has the best possible start in life and develops to their full potential. To achieve this, we will co-ordinate our actions with partners agencies to provide services based on the needs of children and young people in this District. In doing so we will engage with children and young people so they have a voice in shaping services which are delivered across all public, voluntary and private sectors.

### **7.2 Encouraging Active Communities through Leisure and Culture**

We will improve the well being of individuals, enhance active and vibrant communities and improve the favourable condition of the environment in ways which make the best use of resources. This will be achieved through both direct provision and partnership working to secure a range of sustainable facilities and activities.

## **8. Planning and Transportation**

### **8.1 Securing Sites for Employment in Town and Country**

We will use the planning process to help maintain a sustainable local economy by contributing to:

- Safeguarding existing employment sites as well as work with partners to bring forward additional identified sites.
- Working with existing businesses to help them develop their premises to meet future needs.
- Helping to meet the challenges of the changing rural economy both in farming generally and commoning specifically, with strong partnership working with the National Park Authority and external funding such as LEADER.
- Enhancing our town centres to improve their attractiveness and helping them to be viable as important local community and commercial centres.

### **8.2 Using Planning to Protect the Environment**

We have secured policies in the Draft South East Plan which avoids the need to provide for wider regional needs in this area. This reflects the environmental importance of the New Forest and its surrounding area. However, we have substantial local needs and through the local Development Framework we will do what we can to meet these particularly in respect of affordable housing and increased local employment for our existing residents.

Where new development is necessary we will use our planning powers to secure high standards and to ensure that it is sustainable. We will resist inappropriate development, large and small, which would damage the unique environment of this area.



### **8.3 Improving Transport and Traffic Management**

We will work with Hampshire County and other partners to improve transport because safe access to schools, jobs and community facilities is vital for a healthy community and a successful local economy. With partners we will also develop traffic management measures that reduce the environmental impact on the District.

### **8.4 Increasing Local Distinctiveness**

We will support the creation of flourishing, safe and healthy places by raising the quality of existing public space, creating new open space and improving access to natural green space. The distinctive and valued character of our towns, villages and landscapes should be protected and enhanced. The engagement of local communities in appreciating and caring for the historic environment will be increased. We are working towards a future in which there is wide understanding and achievement of high quality environmental design throughout the public realm, bringing major health, quality of life, and other socio-economic benefits to our communities.