

NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting: CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND LOCAL ECONOMY
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Date and Time: THURSDAY, 19 JANUARY 2023, AT 9.30 AM*

Place: BRADBURY ROOM - APPLETREE COURT, BEAULIEU
ROAD, LYNDHURST, SO43 7PA

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PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Members of the public may watch this meeting live on the [Council's website](#).

*Members of the public may speak in accordance with the Council's public participation scheme:

- (a) immediately before the meeting starts, on items within the Corporate Affairs and Local Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel's terms of reference which are not on the public agenda; and/or
- (b) on individual items on the public agenda, when the Chairman calls that item. Speeches may not exceed three minutes.

Anyone wishing to speak should contact the name and number shown above no later than 12.00 noon on Monday, 16 January 2023.

Kate Ryan
Chief Executive

Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, Hampshire. SO43 7PA
www.newforest.gov.uk

This agenda can be viewed online (<https://democracy.newforest.gov.uk>).

It can also be made available on audio tape, in Braille and large print.

AGENDA

Apologies

1. MINUTES

To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on 16 May and 17 November 2022 as correct records.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To note any declarations of interest made by members in connection with an

agenda item. The nature of the interest must also be specified.

Members are asked to discuss any possible interests with Democratic Services prior to the meeting.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To note any issues raised during the public participation period.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

A reminder that this Panel is responsible for the overview and scrutiny of the following Cabinet Portfolio Holders and their areas of responsibility

1. Leader (Portfolio Holder – Cllr Jill Cleary)
 - a. Political Structures
 - b. Employee Engagement
 - c. Corporate Plan
 - d. Transformation and Business Improvement
 - e. Smarter Working
 - f. Local Enterprise Partnership
 - g. Solent Freeport
 - h. Elections and Electoral Registration
 - i. Resident Insight, Communications and Design

2. Business, Tourism and High Streets (Portfolio Holder – Cllr Michael Harris)
 - a. Support for New Forest Businesses
 - b. Economic Development Strategy
 - c. High Streets
 - d. Funding/Bidding Opportunities
 - e. Go New Forest Liaison

3. Finance, Investment and Corporate Services (Portfolio Holder – Cllr Jeremy Heron)
 - a. Medium Term Financial Plan
 - b. Accountancy
 - c. Revenue and Benefits
 - d. Estates and Valuation including Investments
 - e. ICT and ICT Strategy
 - f. Human Resources
 - g. Customer Strategy and Services
 - h. Building Facilities
 - i. Health and Safety
 - j. Business Continuity
 - k. Legal Services
 - l. Democratic Services

5. ASSET MAINTENANCE AND REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME AND GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24 (Pages 5 - 14)

To receive details of the proposed programmes and pass any comments to Cabinet.

6. CAPITAL STRATEGY 2023/24 (Pages 15 - 24)

To receive details of the proposed strategy and pass any comments to Cabinet.

7. RESIDENT INSIGHT (Pages 25 - 32)

To note key findings from the recent resident insight survey.

8. COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY (Pages 33 - 36)

To receive an update on the additional communications activities following additional investment in this area.

9. CONSULTATION WITH RATE PAYING BUSINESSES IN THE DISTRICT ON THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL STRATEGY: SUMMARY OF RESPONSES (Pages 37 - 40)

To consider responses to the Business Rate Payer Budget Consultation.

10. PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S REPORTS AND PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD (Pages 41 - 46)

To receive an oral update from the Portfolio Holders on developments within their Portfolio areas, including Performance Dashboards.

11. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 47 - 50)

a) To consider the Panel's future Work Programme, including any reviews of previous work undertaken; and

(b) To receive any updates on Task and Finish Group work.

12. ANY OTHER ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

To:

Councillors

Alexis McEvoy (Chairman)
Derek Tipp (Vice-Chairman)
Alan Alvey
Keith Craze
Jack Davies

Councillors

Richard Frampton
Alison Hoare
Mahmoud Kangarani
Martyn Levitt
Alan O'Sullivan

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EMT – 11 JANUARY 2023

**CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND LOCAL ECONOMY
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
19 JANUARY 2023**

**PORTFOLIO: FINANCE,
INVESTMENT & CORPORATE
SERVICES**

ASSET MAINTENANCE & REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME AND GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That Panel members give feedback on the schedule of projects as outlined in the report and summarised at Appendix 1 and 2 for onward consideration by the Cabinet.

2. Purpose of the report

- 2.1 This report provides the proposed revenue funded Asset Maintenance & Replacement programme (AMR) and General Fund Capital programme for 2023/24 and outline budgets to 2025/26.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council's revenue budgets include large sums for the maintenance and cyclical replacement of Council owned assets. The AMR programme budget for 2022/23 totalled £1.900 million to the General Fund and £230,000 to the HRA (£2.130 million total shown within appendix 1), with a further £710,000 of requirements funded by the General Fund and HRA for the ICT Digital Strategy (£625,000) and Community Grants (£85,000).
- 3.2 The September 2022 Medium Term Financial Plan included a revenue budget allowance to cover the AMR programme for 2023/24 of £2.050 million for the General Fund and £300,000 to the HRA (total £2.350 million). The increase from 2022/23 directly related to inflationary pressures with regards to the Vehicle and Plant replacement programme, as reported to the Cabinet in September. There are currently no further planned adjustments to the overall programme budget over the period covered by the current Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 3.3 Service Managers were asked to come up with their proposed projects for 2023/24 with a strong brief that the programme had to consist of essential items and be realistic in terms of timeframes and deliverability. The programme sums

now being proposed matches the funding allocated, with further work required to reprioritise projects to align to the sums available.

- 3.4 The proposed General Fund Capital Programme for 2023/24 totals £14.749 million. Projects are funded by NFDC resources (capital reserve and receipts received), various grants / funds and Developer Contributions / CIL. This programme total does not include the Asset Investment Strategy, due to uncertainty in the timing of the purchases.

4. Proposed Asset Maintenance and Replacement Programme 2023/24

- 4.1 The bid categories for the submitted programme for 2023/24 were;

- 1 – Protect & Maintain Front Line Service Delivery
- 2 – Efficiency / Savings / Income Generation
- 3 – Improve / Enhance Value of Asset

- 4.2 The summary programme covering 2023/24 – 2026/27 is included as appendix 1. The budget is monitored at this overall summary level to allow for sufficient flexibility should more urgent projects come to light during the financial year.

4.3 Further Information Relating to Projects

4.3.1 Health & Leisure Centres Annual Maintenance Programme £500,000

During 2019, a full condition survey of the Council's 5 Leisure Centres was procured by the Council and carried out by a third-party specialist. The resultant report identified a works schedule covering a 15 year period to maintain the centres at the current standard/condition. Annually, this report will be reviewed and will inform the necessary maintenance required at the Leisure Centres. The maximum the Council can afford to fund during 2023/24 is £500k. The prioritised programme of works will be agreed with the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources & Transformation.

4.3.2 Offices and Depots £200,000

Three project bids were put forward;

- ATC North Wing Externals (to include guttering, loose tiles, fascias, soffits, windows repointing)
- ATC East Wing Covering (water ingress, so necessary to build up felt roof covering and perimeter edge trim)
- LTH Single Story Roof (water ingress, so repair required with a life through to 2026)

The Facilities Manager will be asked to prioritise projects with a total budget of £200,000 available.

4.3.3 Cemeteries – Lymington Chapel Building £5,000

Budget provision of £5,000 is being set aside within the programme to carry out feasibility surveys on required works to the Lymington Chapel building.

A follow up project bid may then be made during the financial year to carry out further works.

4.3.4 Eling Tide Mill £5,000

Budget provision of £5,000 is being set aside within the programme to carry out feasibility surveys on required works related to the deuteriation of the undercroft wall and ground beams that support the machinery at the Tide Mill. A follow up project bid may then be made during the financial year to carry out further works.

4.3.5 Deployable Camera's £15,000

The Council will not tolerate fly-tipping, and so will be investing in deployable cameras to use in hot-spot locations throughout the District. In addition, this will enable the council to deploy cameras to developing areas or hotspots of ASB that are not within the existing public CCTV network range. The ability to rapidly deploy cameras at a relative low cost will prevent the escalation of emerging trends, whilst providing community reassurance

4.3.6 ICT Equipment Replacement Programme £150,000

The Council invested significantly in new devices over the period 2017-2019. Some of the devices will reach beyond their 4 year suggested useful life during 2023/24, and so a cyclical replacement programme will need to continue during the period covered by this Medium Term Financial Plan.

4.3.7 Vehicles & Plant Replacement Programme £1,450,000

Members will note that the replacement of Vehicles & Plant (V&P) occurs on both the revenue AMR programme and the Capital Programme. The Council's policy is to capitalise individual items with a value greater than £10k and then depreciate these over their estimated useful life. The capital programme therefore includes the cash amount required to purchase the V&P, and the revenue programme includes the depreciation charge. The depreciation charge to revenue then makes a direct contribution towards the capital cost through a charge known as the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). The significant Capital Outlay required will result in older less efficient vehicles being replaced with the latest more efficient models.

For 23-24 the replacement programme for the refuse and recycling part of the fleet focuses in the main on vehicles which can be utilised on our current service, whilst also being suitable for a future service, albeit in some cases with some retrospective modifications likely.

4.3.8 Programme Contingency £65,000

A contingency of £65,000 will be included to support the delivery of the programme as outlined above against inflationary pressures, and will look to finance the delivery of priority works emanating from the feasibility sums, as outlined above.

4.4 The programme as outlined above totals £2.390 million. Of this total, approximately £340,000 is rechargeable to the HRA leaving £2.050 million to be funded via the General Fund. The increase to the HRA will be accommodated within the detailed budget planning for 23/24.

4.5 **Other One-Off Funded Programmes**

Budget provision of £625,000 has been provided for projects in the ICT Digital Strategy. This cost is allocated c75% to the General Fund and c25% to the HRA.

The Community Grants Panel have been given a maximum budget of £100,000 for one-off construction grant applications for 2023/24. The Panel are aware this is a financial ceiling, and not a target. Currently the recommendation from the Task and Finish group to the Community, Partnerships and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Panel is £92,000.

	General Fund £'000	HRA £'000	TOTAL £'000
ICT Strategy	500	125	625
Community Grants	92		92
	592	125	717

The above will require financial resources, funded by the revenue budget or reserves and will be included on the Medium - Term Financial Planning Reports through Cabinet.

5. General Fund Capital Programme 2023/24

5.1 The capital programme consists of projects funded by NFDC resources (capital reserve and receipts received), various grants / funds and Developer Contributions / CIL.

5.2 The proposed programme for 2023/24 totalling £14.749 million including the outline financing is included as appendix 2. The project proposals for a 3 year period have been included for overall context. Where a project commences (or continues into) in 23/24 and spans several financial years, to commitment to start in 23/24 is a commitment to approve the funding required to complete over the period of the programme. Where a sum is included in future years, it is not requiring approval now, but is included for completeness and overall programme context; approval for these items will come at the appropriate point in the budget setting cycle for the year in question. Due to the lead in time of the Vehicles and Plant Acquisition programme, the programme sums for 23/24 and 24/25 will be approved now to enable necessary work to commence in the year prior to when the new V&P will actually be delivered.

5.3 Further Information Relating to NFDC Funded Projects

5.3.1 New Depot Site £4.875 million for 23/24 and £1.625 million for 24/25

Total funding of £7.0 million (£0.500 million in 2022/23, £4.875 million in 2023/24 and £1.625 million in 2024/25) has been earmarked over the period of this capital programme for the new depot project at Hardley Industrial Estate, as a replacement for the Claymeadow depot. This scheme will progress subject to Cabinet approval of a business case.

5.3.2 Vehicles & Plant £3.062 million for 23/24 and £1.309 million for 24/25

The significant Capital Outlay required will result in older less efficient vehicles being replaced with the latest more efficient models. For 23-24 the replacement programme for the refuse and recycling part of the fleet focuses in the main on vehicles which can be utilised on our current service, whilst also being suitable for a future service, albeit in some cases with some retrospective modifications likely.

5.3.3 Vehicles and Plant – New Waste Strategy £150,000

Preparations are underway for the commencement of the new wheeled bin Garden Waste Service to go live from 2024. Some retrospective bin lift alterations will be made to existing vehicles at an estimated cost of £150,000 to make them suitable for the new service.

5.3.4 New Garden Waste Containers £592,000

The procurement of wheeled bins will take effect in 2023/24, and a separate report during the year will confirm the proposed updated charging regime for the new service.

5.3.5 Crow Lane Ringwood £250,000

Total funding of £8.445 million was approved by Council in September 2021 to complete the project to deliver a new industrial site at Crow Lane Ringwood. The project has progressed well, and is within the overall approved sum. The budget requirement for 2023/24 is largely for the release of final retentions.

5.3.6 Public Convenience Modernisation Programme £300,000

The Public Convenience task & finish group determine which Public Conveniences are deemed as suitable for renovation and when. The standard sum of £300,000 has been allowed for within the Capital Programme.

5.3.7 Sustainability and Climate Action £250,000

The Climate Strategy report being developed for presentation to the Cabinet in February outlines the proposed actions to be taken by the Council and requests an annual budget of £250,000.

5.4 Further Information Relating to Part or Non-NFDC Funded Projects

5.4.1 South-East Strategic Coastal Monitoring £2.631 million / £1.811 million / £2.216 million

This project is the continuation of the regional coastal monitoring programme, for the next phase that will go through to 2027. The figures above are for the full approval for the SE region as managed and co-ordinated by NFDC.

NFDC Capital Contribution: £nil

5.4.2 Milford-On-Sea Beach Study £10,000 / £280,000

This project is a follow on from the Westover urgent works undertaken during 2020. The expected scope and coastal frontage will be broadened to consider the wider defended Milford frontage.

The commencement and delivery of this project will be subject to the outcomes of the Christchurch Bay Strategy Study, with a current completion date of October 2023. Currently estimated costs are shown allocated across 2023/24 and 2024/25, as the strategy study is refined and developed these costs may change.

NFDC Capital Contribution: £50,000

5.4.3 Barton HDD Trials £10,000 / £230,000 / £15,000

Works expected to take the form of test drainage trials to determine suitability and effectiveness of the system. The aim being to control and manage groundwater levels to reduce erosion risk.

As the project is developed it may be that monitoring costs can be refined, there be an opportunity for NFDC to undertake an element of the monitoring.

NFDC Capital Contribution: £75,000

5.4.4 Hurst Spit Shingle Source Study £100,000 / £35,000

The existing Hurst Spit Beach Management Plan (BMP) has been in existence since 1996. The plan requires updating to consider additional data, past performance of the Spit and future management operations. This study will enable this work to be undertaken, enabling the BMP to be updated in line with current practices.

NFDC Capital Contribution: £nil

5.4.5 Developer Contributions / CIL £1.0 million PA

A separate report will confirm the proposed projects, with the Capital Programme at this stage setting aside a gross overall budget to be set for drawdown for individual project delivery.

NFDC Capital Contribution: £nil

5.4.6 Better Care Fund £1.3 million / £1.5 million / £1.5 million

The Council facilitates the delivery of Disabled Facility Adaptations each year, using central government 'Better Care Fund' to pay for said adaptations. The Council's contribution is in the staffing resource to deliver the adaptations.

NFDC Capital Contribution: £nil

6. **Crime & Disorder / Equality & Diversity / Environmental Implications**

6.1 As the Council invests in the maintenance and replacement of its assets, it will do so ensuring environmental implications are considered and where it can, the delivery of energy efficiencies, whether that be in lighting / heating or in more economic vehicles, will be at the forefront of the Council's spending decisions.

7. **Conclusion**

7.1 The AMR programme represents a significant element of the Council's annual net expenditure. The General Fund programme matches the budget outlined for for 2022/23 at £2.050 million and the HRA proportion at £340,000 will be accommodated within the detailed budget planning.

7.2 The Council is committed to the continuation of its investment in ICT and the financial implications to deliver the strategy will be included in the appropriate Medium Term Financial Planning Reports through Cabinet.

7.3 The General fund Capital programme is funded in several ways, and the net NFDC funding requirement for 2023/24 after internal borrowing is taken into account is £6.217 million.

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Transformation
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Background Papers

APPENDIX 1

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
ASSET MAINTENANCE & REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Asset Maintenance				
Health & Leisure Centres	550	500		
Offices, Depots and Outlying Buildings	118	200		
Feasibility Surveys		10		
Deployable CCTV Cameras		15		
Cemeteries	15			
Contingency	35	65		
	718	790	790	790
ICT Replacement Programme	100	150	150	150
Vehicles and Plant (Depreciation / MRP)	1,312	1,450	1,450	1,450
	2,130	2,390	2,390	2,390
Less: Proportion allocated to HRA	-230	-340	-340	-340
	1,900	2,050	2,050	2,050

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2022-2026

CAPITAL PROJECTS REQUIREMENTS WITH FINANCING

	Portfolio	PROJECT REQUIREMENTS £			ORIGINAL 2023/24 PROJECT FINANCING £				
		2022/23 £ Budget Revised (Nov. Cabinet)	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	NFDC Resources / Loan	Better Care Fund	Grant / Income	DC / CIL
Sustainability Fund - Unallocated	LEADER / ALL	300,000	250,000	250,000	250,000				
Sustainability Fund - Crow Lane Solar Panels	LEADER / ALL	200,000							
Disabled Facilities Grants	HOU (GF)	900,000	1,300,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,300,000			
Strategic Regional Coastal Monitoring (22-27)	ENV & COAST	1,775,000	2,631,000	1,811,000	2,216,000		2,631,000		
Strategic Regional Coastal Monitoring (18-21)	ENV & COAST	363,000							
Strategic Regional Coastal Monitoring (12-17)	ENV & COAST	12,000							
Barton Horizontal Directional Drilling Trials	ENV & COAST	50,000	10,000	230,000	15,000		10,000		
Milford Promenade Handrail	ENV & COAST	115,000							
Hurst Spit Beach Shingle Source Study	ENV & COAST	15,000	100,000	35,000			100,000		
Milford Beach and Cliff Study	ENV & COAST		10,000	280,000			10,000		
Waste Strategy Container Roll Out	ENV & COAST		592,000		4,908,000	592,000			
Public Convenience Modernisation Programme	PEOPLE & PL	12,000	300,000	300,000	300,000				
Public Convenience Refurb Scheme - Lym Quay Enhancem	PEOPLE & PL	230,000							
Public Convenience Refurb Scheme - Barton-on-Sea	PEOPLE & PL	200,000							
Public Convenience - Changing Places - Brockenhurst	PEOPLE & PL		43,000				43,000		
Public Convenience - Changing Places - Ringwood	PEOPLE & PL		112,000				112,000		
Public Convenience - Changing Places - Hythe	PEOPLE & PL		64,000				64,000		
Health & Leisure Centres	PART & WELL	2,014,000							
New Depot Site: Hardley	F,I & CS	500,000	4,875,000	1,625,000	4,875,000				
V&P; Replacement Programme	F,I & CS	1,800,000	3,062,000	1,309,000	996,000	3,062,000			
V&P; Replacement Programme - Waste Strategy	F,I & CS		150,000		5,840,000	150,000			
Smarter Working; Future Delivery	F,I & CS	75,000							
Economic Sustainability & Regeneration Projects	F,I & CS								
- Platinum Jubilee Business Park, Ringwood	F,I & CS	5,667,000	250,000		250,000				
- Station Road, New Milton	F,I & CS	5,500,000							
Open Space Schemes	P&I	730,000							
Mitigation Schemes	P&I	680,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000			1,000,000	
TOTAL GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME		21,138,000	14,749,000	8,340,000	17,025,000	9,479,000	1,300,000	2,970,000	1,000,000
									14,749,000
LOAN FINANCED					V&P	-3,062,000			
					80% of Economic Regeneration	-200,000			
RESIDUAL NFDC RESOURCES						6,217,000			

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CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND LOCAL ECONOMY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL – 19 JANUARY 2023

CABINET – 1 FEBRUARY 2023

**PORTFOLIO: FINANCE, INVESTMENT
& CORPORATE SERVICES**

CAPITAL STRATEGY 2023/24

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1. That the Cabinet recommend to Full Council that the Capital Strategy 2023/24 be approved, including the adoption of the MRP statement.

OR

- 1.2. The Corporate Affairs and Local Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel is recommended to request Cabinet approve the Capital Strategy 2023/24, including the adoption of the MRP statement.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. The Capital Strategy is a high-level document, giving an overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management come together, with an overview of current activities and the implications for future financial sustainability.
- 2.2. By producing this strategy report, the Council is following statutory guidance issued by the Government in January 2018.
- 2.3. This report has been produced for Panel before final 23/24 budgets have been prepared and therefore there may be some minor amendments made to the report presented to Cabinet.

3. OVERVIEW OF WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE CAPITAL STRATEGY

- 3.1. The Capital Strategy confirms at high level what the Council is intending to spend its money on over the medium term and how it intends to finance this expenditure. Over the period covered by 2023/24 to 2025/26, total capital expenditure is forecast at around £139 million.
- 3.2. As demonstrated throughout the report, the Council is initially intending to utilise the cash balances it has accrued to deliver the various adopted strategies, including the acquisition and development of Commercial Property, which aims to provide a sustainable and buoyant economy within the New Forest and present options for regeneration, Residential Property Ownership and additional Council owned Housing.
- 3.3. The Council will supplement internal resources, when necessary, with external borrowing and in accordance with advice it receives from its contracted Treasury Management experts. Based on the current set of prudential indicators, external borrowing will be required each year from 2023/24.

- 3.4. It is vitally important that the Council has regard to the relationship between the financing costs of the capital programme and the revenue General Fund, and Housing Revenue Account. This is covered within the report by the prudential indicators.
- 3.5. This Council has established a sound level of governance surrounding its capital investments and employs suitably qualified personnel in order to fulfil the objectives of the Strategy. External support and expertise is sought where necessary, and officers have the ability to communicate openly and freely with members of the Cabinet.

4. MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION

- 4.1. Where General Fund capital spend has been financed by loan (internal borrowing), and has increased the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), the Council is required to make a provision to repay a proportion of the accumulated amount each year. This amount is charged to revenue and is called the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). This charge reduces the CFR each year and is based on the expected economic use period related to the capital expenditure.
- 4.2. Full Council is required to approve an MRP statement in advance of each financial year. The Council is recommended to approve the following MRP statement:

“ For capital expenditure that has been incurred, and which has given rise to a CFR, the MRP policy for expenditure other than that incurred on investment property and dwellings, shall be to charge revenue an amount equal to the depreciation of any asset financed by loan. The MRP policy specific to investment properties and dwellings financed by loan, shall be to charge revenue an amount equivalent to the sum of borrowing utilised, over a repayment period of 50 years.”

5. ENVIRONMENTAL / CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. There are no implications arising from this report.

6. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL COMMENTS

7. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS

For Further Information Please Contact:

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Background Papers:

Capital Strategy 2023/24

1.0 Introduction

This capital strategy gives a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

The report also includes the prudential indicators, as required by the Prudential Code.

2.0 Capital Expenditure and Financing

Capital expenditure is where the Council spends money on assets, such as property or vehicles, that will be used for more than one year. The Council has some limited discretion on what counts as capital expenditure, for example assets costing below £10,000 are not capitalised and are charged to revenue in year.

In 2023/24, the Council is planning capital expenditure of £50.159 million as summarised below:

Table 1: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Expenditure in £ millions

	2021/22 actual	2022/23 forecast	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget	2025/26 budget
General Fund services	5.027	9.971	14.799	8.340	17.025
Council housing (HRA)	12.862	20.900	27.610	24.850	24.550
Capital investments	6.127	11.609	7.750	7.500	7.000
TOTAL	24.016	42.480	50.159	40.690	48.575

The General Fund capital programme includes the cyclical replacement of Vehicles and Plant and a New Depot Facility. The Council also plans to incur £21 million of capital expenditure on economic sustainability and regeneration projects within the District, the majority of which will also generate a revenue return. These are detailed later in this report in section 4.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a ring-fenced account which ensures that council housing does not subsidise, or is itself subsidised by, other local services. HRA capital expenditure is therefore recorded separately and includes the maintenance of existing stock and the building and acquisitions of new homes over the forecast period, in line with the Housing strategy.

Governance: Service managers bid annually in the early Autumn to include projects in the Council's capital programme. Bids are collated by the Chief Finance Officer and reviewed collectively by the Executive Management Team. The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny

Panel appraise the proposed programme and makes recommendations to the Cabinet. The final capital programme is then presented to Cabinet and to Council in February each year.

- Full details of the Council's capital programme are available within the Feb 2023 Cabinet papers (Medium Term Financial Plan / Annual Budget 2023/24)

All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Council's own resources (revenue, reserves and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing). The planned financing of the above expenditure is as follows:

Table 2: Capital financing in £ millions

	2021/22 actual	2022/23 forecast	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget	2025/26 budget
External sources (Grants / DC's)	1.912	5.947	9.522	7.506	6.861
Capital Receipts	2.779	2.500	3.000	2.000	2.000
Capital Reserves	2.655	6.655	8.845	5.145	3.290
Revenue Contributions	9.088	10.998	10.500	10.850	10.800
Debt / Loan	7.582	16.380	18.292	15.189	25.624
TOTAL	24.016	42.480	50.159	40.690	48.575

Prior to 2023/24 any borrowing required to meet the Council's capital expenditure was met by using cash held in reserves rather than raising loans. This action is known as internal borrowing but this report identifies that external borrowing will also be required from 2023/24. Internal borrowing is replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue which is known as minimum revenue provision (MRP, explained further below). Alternatively, additional (beyond those already anticipated within the financing as shown within table 2) proceeds from selling capital assets (known as capital receipts) may be used to replace debt finance. Planned MRP and debt repayment are as follows:

Table 3: Replacement of debt finance in £ millions

	2021/22 actual	2022/23 forecast	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget	2025/26 budget
Capital Expenditure Financed by Debt / Loan	7.582	16.380	18.292	15.189	25.624
Own resources - Debt Repayment	-4.100	-4.100	-2.950	-2.950	-2.950
Own resources - MRP Provision	-1.166	-1.715	-2.310	-2.610	-3.372
Movement in CFR	2.316	10.565	13.032	9.629	19.302

The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP, debt repayments and capital receipts used to replace debt. The CFR is expected to increase by £13.032 million during 2023/24. Based on the above figures for expenditure and financing, the Council's estimated CFR is as follows:

Table 4: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement in £ millions

	31.3.2022 actual	31.3.2023 budget	31.3.2024 budget	31.3.2025 budget	31.3.2026 budget
General Fund services	4.331	6.394	7.988	7.669	17.245
Council housing (HRA)	128.078	127.935	134.009	138.907	143.639
Capital investments	11.801	20.446	25.810	30.859	35.853
Total CFR at Year End	144.210	154.775	167.807	177.436	196.738
Movement in CFR from one year to the next	2.316	10.565	13.032	9.629	19.302

Minimum Revenue Provision: Where General Fund capital spend has been financed by loan (internal borrowing), and has increased the CFR, the Council is required to make a provision to repay a proportion of the accumulated amount each year. This amount is charged to revenue and is called the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). This charge reduces the CFR each year and is based on the expected economic use period related to the capital expenditure.

Full Council is required to approve an MRP statement in advance of each financial year. The Council is recommended to approve the following MRP statement:

“ For capital expenditure that has been incurred, and which has given rise to a CFR, the MRP policy for expenditure other than that incurred on investment property and dwellings, shall be to charge revenue an amount equal to the depreciation of any asset financed by loan. The MRP policy specific to investment properties and dwellings financed by loan, shall be to charge revenue an amount equivalent to the sum of borrowing utilised, over a repayment period of 50 years.”

For Council Housing and the refinancing settlement of 2012, the Council approved a business plan that charged amounts to revenue to ensure that any borrowings are reduced in accordance with the maturity of the debt outstanding. The proposed 2023/24 HRA budget confirms that new borrowing is required to produce a balanced budget and provide the necessary finance to the Capital Programme.

Asset management: Service Managers from across the Council manage assets in their service delivery areas. The Council's Service Manager for Estates and Valuation has overall responsibility for the management of the Council's property estate records, including liaising with the Council's Accountancy department on statutory annual financial reporting. To ensure that property assets continue to be of long-term use, the Council will be producing an overarching Accommodation Strategy.

Asset disposals: When a capital asset is no longer needed, it may be sold so that the proceeds (capital receipts), can be spent on new assets or to repay debt. Repayments of capital grants, loans and investments also generate capital receipts. Council dwelling sales through the Right to Buy scheme also generate capital receipts. Although some of these are currently returned to the government, the majority are available to the Council to spend on new housing. The Council plans to receive £2.2 million of capital receipts in the coming financial year as follows:

Table 5: Capital receipts in £ millions

	2021/22 actual	2022/23 forecast	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget	2025/26 budget
Asset sales	5.720	3.600	2.000	2.000	2.000
Loans repaid	0.101	0.451	0.201	0.401	0.000
TOTAL	5.821	4.051	2.201	2.401	2.000

- The majority of forecast asset disposals relate to Right to Buy receipts.
- In 2014, the Council arranged £2m of prudential borrowing on behalf Lymington Harbour Commissioner. This is being repaid annually.
- In 2022/23, the Council provided a loan facility to the New Forest Enterprise Centre to finance planned maintenance works. The outstanding loan value at the end of 2022/23 is expected to be £300,000, with full repayment due by 31/3/2025.

3.0 Treasury Management

Treasury management is concerned with keeping sufficient but not excessive cash available to meet the Council's spending needs, while managing the risks involved. Surplus cash is invested until required, while a shortage of cash will be met by borrowing, to avoid excessive credit balances or overdrafts in the bank current account. The Council is typically cash rich in the short-term as revenue income is received before it is spent but will become cash poor in the long-term as capital expenditure is incurred before being financed. The revenue cash surpluses are offset against capital cash shortfalls to reduce overall borrowing.

At the last balance sheet date (31/03/22), the Council had £122.6 million borrowing at an average interest rate of 3.32% (due principally to the HRA refinancing settlement in 2012) and held £85.09 million treasury investments (including sums received from Central government for redistribution) earning an average rate of 1.03%.

Borrowing strategy: The Council's main objectives when borrowing are to achieve a low but certain cost of finance while retaining flexibility should plans change in future. These objectives are often conflicting and the Council therefore seeks to strike a balance between cheaper short-term loans and long-term fixed rate loans where the future cost is known but higher.

Projected levels of the Council's total outstanding debt are shown in table 6 below, compared with the capital financing requirement (see above).

Table 6: Prudential Indicator: Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement in £millions

	31.3.2022 actual	31.3.2023 budget	31.3.2024 budget	31.3.2025 budget	31.3.2026 budget
Debt - HRA Settlement	122.2	118.1	114.0	109.9	105.8
Debt - Capital Programme	0.4	0.2	13.7	31.2	56.4
Total Debt	122.6	118.3	127.7	141.1	162.2
Capital Financing Requirement	144.2	154.8	167.8	177.4	196.7

Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short-term. As can be seen from table 6, the Council expects to comply with this in the medium term.

Affordable borrowing limit: The Council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each year and to keep it under review. In line with statutory guidance, a lower “operational boundary” is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

Table 7: Prudential Indicators: Authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt in £millions

	2021/22 limit	2022/23 limit	2023/24 limit	2024/25 limit	2025/26 limit
Authorised limit – total external debt	195.8	207.3	225.5	236.4	256.5
Operational boundary – total external debt	178.5	189.6	207.2	217.4	237.1

- Further details on borrowing are included within the treasury management strategy

Investment strategy: Treasury investments arise from receiving cash before it is paid out again. Investments made for service reasons or for pure financial gain are not generally considered to be part of treasury management.

The Council's policy on treasury investments is to prioritise security and liquidity over yield, that is to focus on minimising risk rather than maximising returns. Cash that is likely to be spent in the near term is invested securely, for example with the government, other local authorities or selected high-quality banks, to minimise the risk of loss. Money that will be held for longer terms is invested more widely, including in bonds, shares and property, to balance the risk of loss against the risk of receiving returns below inflation. Both near-term

and longer-term investments may be held in pooled funds, where an external fund manager makes decisions on which particular investments to buy and the Council may request its money back at short notice.

Table 8: Treasury management investments in £millions

	31.3.2022 actual	31.3.2023 budget	31.3.2024 budget	31.3.2025 budget	31.3.2026 budget
Near-term investments	70.5	9.0	0.1	0.2	0.1
Longer-term investments	14.6	13.6	10.0	10.0	10.0
TOTAL	85.1	22.6	10.1	10.2	10.1

- Further details on treasury investments are included within the treasury management strategy

Table 8 suggests that the majority of the Council's cash will be utilised over the period through internal borrowing to fund the needs of the Council's capital programme, until minimum balances reach £10 million. Use of cash for capital programme financing will be supplemented through external borrowing, when required (hence the increase in debt headroom as per table 7). The Council should expect to retain a minimum level of cash, known as the **Liability Benchmark**. The General Fund balance reserve at £3 million and the HRA reserve at £1 million are an absolute minimum, with further headroom added to set where the Council's basic benchmark should be (**£10 million** in total).

Governance: Decisions on treasury management investment and borrowing are made daily and are therefore delegated to the Head of Finance and staff, who must act in line with the treasury management strategy approved by Council. A mid-year and an outturn report on treasury management activity are presented to the audit committee. The audit committee is responsible for scrutinising treasury management decisions.

4.0 Commercial Activities for the Purpose of Economic Sustainability, Regeneration and Income

The Council intends to invest in commercial and residential property to support a sustainable local economy within the New Forest and encourage regeneration projects. The Council will invest in and will lend to its Wholly Owned Trading Company and will in return receive an income. Investment properties were valued at £18.5 million on the Council's balance sheet as at 31/03/22 and long terms loans to the WOC totalled £2.673 million as at the same date. In 2022/23 to date, the Council has purchased a major shop unit in New Milton, a smaller shop unit in Totton, has made significant progress on the development of industrial units in Ringwood (set for completion in January 2023) and has completed a further 4 residential acquisitions.

To support the wider objective of economic sustainability and regeneration the Council accepts higher risk on commercial and residential investment than with treasury

investments. The principal risk exposures include vacancies and falls in capital values. These risks in relation to commercial property are managed by predominantly targeting acquisitions with existing medium-long term tenancies in place and being sensible about the purchase price in relation to the Council's desire to promote and sustain employment sites within the district, and the income yields achievable. In order that commercial investments remain proportionate to the size of the authority, these are currently subject to an overall maximum investment limit of £50 million (updated in December 2022). Residential property investments are currently subject to an overall investment limit of £10 million.

Governance: Decisions on commercial investments are made by an investment panel in line with the criteria and limits approved by Council in the Commercial Property Investment strategy. Decisions on residential investments are taken by the Board of Directors of the wholly owned company, in line with the criteria and limits approved by Council in the Residential Property Strategy. Property and most other commercial investments are also capital expenditure and purchases have therefore also been pre-approved as part of the capital programme.

- Further details, including the risk management on commercial and residential investments are outlined in these respective strategy documents;
 - [Commercial Property Investment Strategy - 2017](#)
 - [Commercial Property Investment Strategy - 2022](#)
 - [Residential Property Investment Strategy](#)

5.0 Liabilities

In addition to debt of £122.6 million detailed above, the Council is committed to making future payments to cover its pension fund liability (valued at £91 million as at 31/03/22), It has also set aside £4.0 million in provisions, with £3.4 million of this to cover risks of business rate appeals.

Governance: Decisions on incurring new discretionary liabilities are taken by the Chief Finance Officer. The risk of liabilities crystallising and requiring payment is monitored by Accountancy and reported when necessary.

- Further details on liabilities are shown within the Council's draft balance sheet on page 18 of the 2021/22 draft Annual Financial Report, further supported by notes to the accounts:
 - [Annual Financial Report - 2021-22](#)

Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue, offset by any investment income receivable*. The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from Council Tax, business rates and general government grants for the General fund, and the income receivable from rents within the HRA.

*In relation to the finance costs incurred within the General Fund, the income to be generated will exceed the additional MRP and interest charges, but as this income is to be used to directly contribute towards the funding of services, the income is not netted off against the finance costs within the table 9.

Table 9: Prudential Indicator: Proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream

	31.3.2022 actual	31.3.2023 budget	31.3.2024 budget	31.3.2025 budget	31.3.2026 budget
General Fund; Financing costs (£m)	0.19	0.70	1.83	2.24	3.40
General Fund; Proportion of net revenue stream	1.0%	3.4%	8.3%	10.2%	15.5%
HRA; Financing costs (£m)	4.1	4.0	4.3	4.8	5.2
HRA; Proportion of net revenue stream	14.2%	13.3%	13.3%	13.8%	14.7%

Sustainability: Due to the very long-term nature of capital expenditure and financing, the revenue budget implications of expenditure incurred in the next few years will extend for up to 50 years into the future. The Chief Finance Officer is satisfied that the proposed capital programme is prudent, affordable and sustainable considering that the majority of the planned expenditure is revenue earning.

7.0 Knowledge and Skills

The Council employs professionally qualified and experienced staff in senior positions with responsibility for making capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions. For example, the Chief Finance Officer and the Council's two principal accountants are all qualified accountants with several years' experience between them, the Service Manager for Estates and Valuation is a qualified solicitor with many years of experience in property law, commercial and corporate transactions and is supported by highly experienced and professionally qualified surveyors and valuers (members of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors).

Where Council staff do not have the knowledge and skills required, use is made of external advisers and consultants that are specialists in their field. The Council currently employs Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers and has a Service Level Agreement with Hampshire County Council's Treasury Management department for day-to-day treasury management activities. The Council instructs external surveyors, valuers, architects and quantity surveyors to provide specialist advice on a project by project basis. This approach is more cost effective than employing such staff directly and ensures that the Council has access to knowledge and skills commensurate with its risk appetite.

RESIDENT INSIGHT

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 That the Panel supports:

The next steps as outlined within the report;

A two-yearly resident survey going forward; and

Sharing findings and anonymised data with our partners.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The context within which local authorities operate has altered drastically in a very short space of time, due to national/societal events and changes such as Brexit, COVID-19, devolution, and financial pressures. These challenges and issues are both broad and specific in their nature including meeting new demands and expectations, servicing new client groups, financial sustainability, responsiveness to change, changing resident behaviours, protecting reputations, remaining relevant and maintaining trust.

2.2 To understand and meet these challenges, using robust insight and conducting meaningful engagement with residents will be more important than ever to inform decision making.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 New Forest District Council (NFDC) are keen to continue understanding their residents, particularly monitoring changes in behaviours, perceptions, expectations, and needs over time. By meaningfully reaching and engaging and gathering robust and insightful data, this guides an intelligent approach to inform decision-making, policy development and service delivery. This paper outlines the key findings from the recent resident insight survey undertaken.

4. METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

4.1 The resident insight survey conducted 760 interviews with residents aged 18+ years. LGA best practice advises that resident surveys should have a minimum sample size of 500 residents, representative of the local population.

4.2 Representative sample quotas were set based on the population profile of NFDC by gender, age, working status and an equal split of interviews per ward. The sample achieved very closely matches the population profile, meaning minimal statistical weighting was applied and providing reliability in the results. The breakdown of the sample achieved can be found at Appendix 1.

4.3 As NFDC's resident survey has a larger sample than the minimum guidance, and minimal weighting was applied to ensure the sample is representative, it has a narrower confidence interval when conducting statistical analysis. This means that if every New Forest resident was asked the survey questions, the results would be very similar to the survey findings.

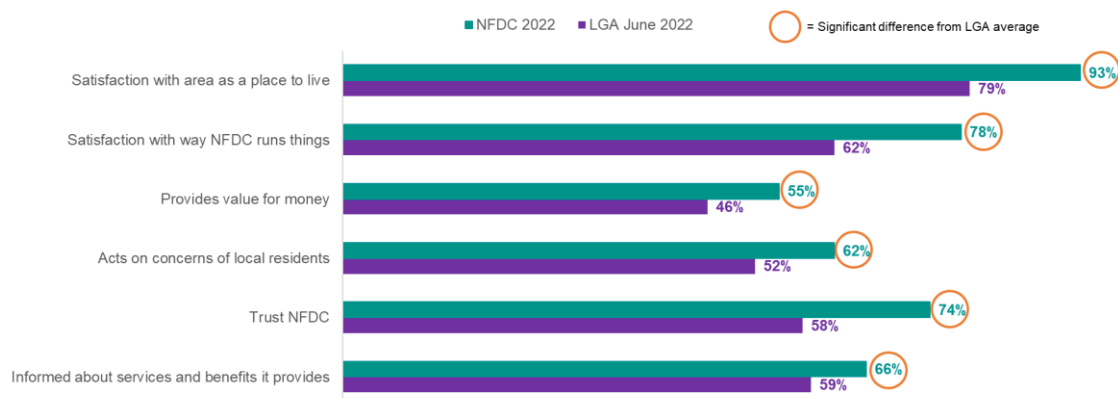
- 4.4 The resident insight survey used a quantitative methodology of telephone (613 interviews) and face-to-face (147) interviews. A mixed method enabled a targeted sampling approach, particularly for younger populations who are less likely to take part in telephone interviews.
- 4.5 Fieldwork was undertaken by a procured third-party supplier and was conducted between 8 September and 24 November 2022.
- 4.6 The questionnaire was designed by NFDC officers in consultation with EMT and Cabinet.

5. KEY FINDINGS

5.1 This section of the paper outlines the key findings from NFDC’s resident insight survey. Where applicable, findings have been benchmarked against national data indicators. Some of these findings are also summarised in Appendix 2.

5.2 Reputation

Across all reputation metrics, **NFDC scored significantly higher than the LGA average**. The breakdown of results can be found in the graph below.

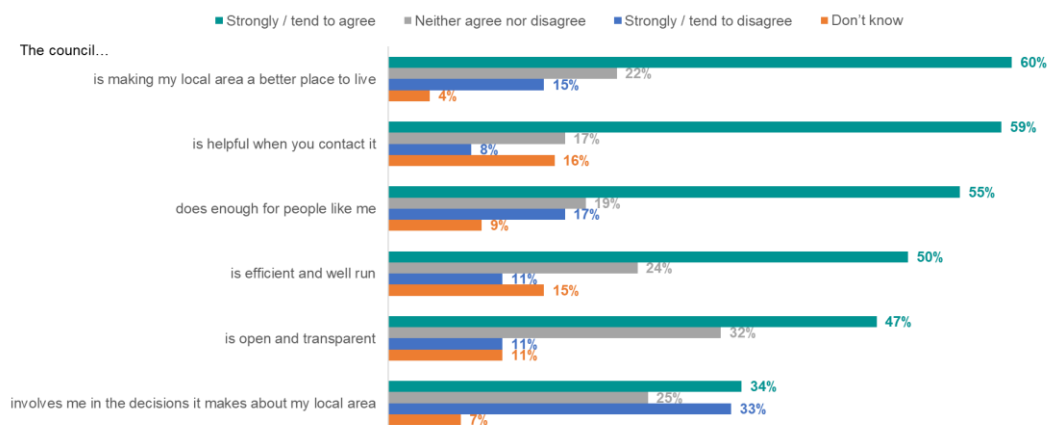


For some of the reputation metrics, there are proportions of the sample that provide a neutral/don’t know answer rather than a negative response, particularly satisfaction with the way NFDC runs things (16%), value for money (28%), and acts on concerns of local residents (17%). This is also the case on other questions in the survey, particularly image metrics and advocacy.

For those who provide a neutral/don’t know response, they are more likely to feel less involved in the decisions NFDC makes, and perhaps a key driver to consider when looking to convert these residents to positive sentiment.

5.3 Image

Image metrics are equally encouraging, and the breakdown of results can be found in the graph below.



5.4 Advocacy

Advocacy metrics indicated that **37% of residents speak highly of the council** whilst 47% have no views or responded, “don’t know”. Of this 47%, they are more likely to feel that the council does not involve them in the decisions it makes about the local area than those who speak highly of the council.

5.5 Involved in local decisions

This metric is a **key influencer on reputation, image, and advocacy metrics**, particularly influencing neutral/don’t know responses. Those who do not feel involved in the decisions NFDC makes about the local area are more likely to be aged 65+ years, live in affluent areas (rank IMD 5), have lived in the New Forest for 20+ years, are owner occupiers, less likely to have children living at home, and of AB social grade (see Appendix 3).

5.6 Service satisfaction

Residents were asked to rate satisfaction with universal services (waste and recycling collection, street sweeping / cleaning, council tax services) and NFDC services they have used in the last 12 months. Service satisfaction was favourable, and **the top-rated services were registering to vote (96%), community recycling banks (90%), garden waste collection (88%), health and leisure centres (87%) and waste and recycling services (83%).**

Waste and recycling collection was also ranked as **the most valued service** by residents (51% chose this service.)

5.7 Internet use

Over **9 in 10 residents (93%) cite they personally use the internet** at home or outside of work, which is in line with the Ofcom national indicator (also 93%.) NFDC residents are **significantly more likely** than the Ofcom national average to look online for public service information (NFDC 84%, Ofcom 64%), complete Government processes online (NFDC 82%, Ofcom 51%) and pay online for council tax or other local council services (NFDC 52%, Ofcom 43%).

5.8 Customer contact

Just over half (52%) of residents have **contacted NFDC in the last 12 months**. Of these, 37% did so regarding an enquiry or problem, 15% to make a payment, and 27% regarding a particular service to use or access.

The **most common contact method** across all three contact types was telephone (70% for those contacting about an enquiry or problem, 43% to make a payment and 60% regarding a particular service). This was followed by email for those contacting about an enquiry or problem or regarding a particular service (25% and 34% respectively) and automated payment for those making a payment (30%).

Across all three contact types, residents reported **high levels of ease of contact** (82% found it very / fairly easy to contact about an enquiry or problem, 92% to make a payment and 84% regarding a particular service.)

Residents were asked what their **preferred contact method** would be for the future, and telephone was cited as the preferred method when contacting about an enquiry or problem (60%) or regarding a particular service to use or access (47%). This may be due to it being the most used contact method now. Automated payment was the preferred method (46%) for making future payments.

5.9 Community safety

Nearly all residents (96%) report feeling **very or fairly safe in their local area**. Around three-quarters (73%) of residents' report feeling very or fairly safe after dark.

Nearly a quarter (24%) of residents reported that their quality of life is affected a great deal / a fair amount by **fear of crime**. They are more likely to be female, aged 65+ years, live in urban areas, have lived in the New Forest for 20+ years, owner occupiers, do not have children living at home and of AB social grade.

5.10 Climate

Three quarters (75%) of residents' report feeling **very or somewhat worried about the impact of climate change**.

Residents were also asked what steps they have taken in the last 12 months to benefit the environment or address climate change. **Most (91%) reported using less energy at home**, although 57% of those stated that this was not for the benefit of the environment, and it could be reasonably inferred that this is more likely due to the current energy crisis. Nearly two-thirds (61%) also reported making fewer journeys by car, van, or motorcycle, although 36% of those stated that this was not for the benefit of the environment. Nearly four in ten (38%) reported investing in energy saving measures such as loft insulation, and 26% stated that although something they have not done in the last 12 months, they would be willing to. One-quarter (25%) of residents reported buying electricity from a green supplier or generating their own energy, and 38% reported that although this is not something they have done in the last 12 months, they would be willing to.

5.11 Environment

When asked about the **protection and preservation of the environment** in the New Forest, the top things most important to residents were protection and preservation of woodland and forests (27%), less or better control of litter (24%), and rare/vulnerable species of animals, birds, fish, or insects (22%).

5.12 Recycling

Just over four-fifths (81%) of residents report it is very easy / easy to recycle. **Two-thirds (66%) of residents feel that NFDC could do more to encourage households to recycle more** including the ability to recycle more or a wider range of items (40%),

more information (about what to recycle 18% and how to recycle 13%) and receptacles (provision of wheelie bins 18% and more bags for recycling 11%).

5.13 Community

NFDC scored significantly higher than the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS) benchmark indicators for community metrics as follows: My local area is a place where people get on well together (NFDC 89%, DCMS 83%), My neighbourhood is changing for the better (NFDC 41%, DCMS 16%), I feel like I belong to this neighbourhood (NFDC 89%, DCMS 65%). I like the area I live in also ranked at 95%, although this is not asked in DCMS indicators.

5.14 Civic action

Just over two-fifths (44%) of residents' report spending a great deal / a fair amount of time **helping their community** or local area in the last 12 months. The most common activity undertaken was organising or helping to run a community activity or event (34%) followed by keeping the local area tidy (28%).

Just over three-fifths (62%) of residents report they are very or fairly interested in taking part in activities that help improve their community or neighbourhood in the future. The top activities they would be most interested in are organising or helping to run a community activity or event (32%) and keeping the local area tidy (27%). Those who are more likely to be interested are female, aged 35-54 or 65+, economically active, live in urban areas, AB social grade, and owner occupiers.

5.15 Household finances

Nearly two-thirds (62%) of residents report their financial situation in the last 12 months getting a little or a lot worse. Although 59% report their financial position as very or relatively comfortable, **34% report they are just about managing**. Of those who report they are just about managing, they are more likely to be female, economically active, live in urban areas, and owner occupiers. This will be important to continue monitoring as the cost-of-living crisis may deepen.

Residents were also asked if they have concerns paying for various household bills or other costs. Half (50%) reported concerns paying for home energy bills, 41% reported concerns paying for fuel for their vehicle and 41% reported concerns for paying for food/groceries. Just over one-third (34%) reported no concerns paying household costs or bills.

5.16 Health and Wellbeing

Seven in ten (70%) of residents report their health as very good / good, 19% as fair and 10% as poor / very poor.

Across wellbeing metrics, **NFDC scored significantly higher** than the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS) benchmark indicators. Residents were significantly more likely to hardly ever / never lack companionship (NFDC 82%, DCMS 56%), feel left out (NFDC 85%, DCMS 54%) and feel isolated from others (NFDC 87%, DCMS 53%).

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 This resident survey provides reliable and robust data, and used alongside other sources of corporate data, will continually support the effective delivery of political goals and strategic commitments.

6.2 There is an opportunity now to analyse this data further and move people with neutral views to more fixed positions through increased understanding of these groups.

7. NEXT STEPS

7.1 The survey information puts us in a good position to start shaping future service design, delivery and strategic objectives. This includes:

- i. Informing and mapping the development of the corporate plan priorities
- ii. Informing and mapping the development of the budget over the course of the financial cycle
- iii. Informing and mapping the development of sub-strategies, policy, and service priorities/delivery (such as regeneration, environment, community safety and community development). This also includes understanding, and therefore targeted delivery, of vulnerable or in-need customers or communities
- iv. Provide baseline data to support the transformation programme (including digital behaviours, channel shift and customer experience) and monitor over time
- v. Performance monitoring (particularly satisfaction and perception metrics) to allow for measurable progress of policy or service delivery and benchmark for improvement
- vi. Inform Communications and Engagement strategy/delivery, particularly micro-targeting audiences dependent on their needs, channel usage and views

7.2 Working with the Executive Management Team and service managers, an action plan will be developed to realise the benefits of this data and enable implementation of the next steps outlined above.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Resident Survey output will inform the Transformation Programme in terms of service design and delivery, which will ultimately result in financial benefits.

9. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The data will help inform the strategic community safety plan and priorities by getting a better understanding of the communities most likely to be impacted by crime or the fear of crime.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The data will help inform the climate and nature emergency action plan by understanding residents' views on the impact of climate change and environmental issues.

11. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The president survey ensured a representative sample was used which reflected the age gender and economic status of residents. In addition, a disability quota was monitored to ensure that this group was represented. Other demographical information was gathered, including ethnicity, income and housing status.

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Caroline Harvey
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Havant Borough Council

Background Papers:

Resident Insight 2022, Cabinet 6 July
2022

APPENDIX 1

Total sample		Quota target %	Sample Achieved %
Age	18-24	7%	7%
	25-34	11%	12%
	35-54	28%	25%
	55-64	18%	19%
	65+	36%	38%
Gender	Male	48%	46%
	Female	52%	54%
Working Status	Economically active	54%	53%
	Economically inactive	46%	47%

APPENDIX 2

TO FOLLOW

APPENDIX 3

SOCIAL GRADE	DESCRIPTION
AB	Higher and intermediate managerial roles, administrative or professional occupations.
C1	Supervisory, clerical and junior managerial roles, administrative or professional occupations.
C2	Skilled manual workers.
DE	Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers; State pensioners, casual and lowest grade workers, unemployed with state benefits only.

CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND LOCAL ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 19 JANUARY 2023

PORTFOLIO: LEADER

COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the panel note this update report.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 At the November 2022 meeting the panel requested an update report on communications activity, *“The Portfolio Holder confirmed a report would be forthcoming to the Panel in January, providing a six monthly update on communications activities, following additional investment in this area as agreed in the 22/23 budget.”*
- 2.2 This report covers the resource in the corporate communications team, and highlights the work that has been undertaken in the past six months. This includes work with the media, social media activity, and longer term projects the team support.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Two communications assistants were recruited in July 2022. This followed a period of having one post vacant for an extended time, and the desire to meet the recommendations in a review of communications at New Forest District Council (NFDC) by the Local Government Association to align communications activity more closely with strategic aims of the council.
- 3.2 The corporate communications resource is now four full time equivalents – a communications manager, a senior officer, and two assistants. In the corporate team there is also a graphic designer, and an officer responsible for website content.
- 3.3 The Council is preparing for the next four years, including a new cohort of councillors, a new corporate plan, a transformation project, and a host of projects and reviews. This, amongst the context of business as usual service activity, and national issues that NFDC has a role in. Moving to a more proactive and planned communications approach will provide support that will contribute to the success of these projects, and provide much needed information for residents and other stakeholders.

4. COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

- 4.1 The communications team manages the majority of all corporate external communication, including media relations and digital channels. See section 4.2 for details. More recently they have focused on implementing a new strategic communications approach, which aims to improve the council's engagement with its stakeholders and the wider community. Key activity over the last six months (July to mid-December) included:
- i. Supporting a range of public consultations, which will provide valuable insights into the community's needs and priorities.
 - ii. Developing and distributing regular e-newsletters, which have helped to keep stakeholders informed about council news and events.

- iii. Media training with service managers and the executive management team.
- iv. Optimisations and accessibility review of website.
- v. Providing support to other council teams on media relations and communications activities.

4.2 For the 6 month period (July to mid-December 2023), the following notable activity took place:

- i. Completed 487 communications requests from service officers, generated from the communications request form, email requests, and proactive work
- ii. 36 media releases issued
- iii. Completed the annual residents email survey in which residents scored the emails out of 10 for usefulness (9.27), easy to understand (9.46), and containing relevant information (9.35). All 3 of these ratings have improved since the 2021 survey. Comments received were overwhelmingly positive (83%) with 13% being neutral and only 4% negative
- iv. 248 additional residents email subscribers meaning that 8.44% of residents now receive our emails
- v. 15 residents emails sent
- vi. 33 communications emails to staff issued
- vii. Posted on Facebook 234 times, posts seen by 116,793 people
- viii. Cost of living campaign research and created, in support of officer working group. This is an ongoing topic and has included warm spaces, insulation advice, energy saving advice, and financial support information
- ix. Awarded first place at New Forest Show for NFDC's stand
- x. Communications support to key projects both internally and externally, including:
 - Care for the Forest campaign (with partners) including recreation mitigation actions and Operation Mountie speed reduction project
 - A communications plan underway for electoral changes, including voter ID and boundary changes
 - Community safety messaging, including domestic abuse support signposting
 - A communications plan underway for the proposed Public Space Protection Orders, including the current consultation phase
 - Support to the resident insight survey project, ongoing
 - Amplification of messaging for the Solent Freeport, and the Christchurch Bay coastal strategy engagement phases
 - Messaging to support the Youth Hub project led by economic development team and the investment strategy, including the Platinum Jubilee Business Park
 - Comprehensive and successful response to incidents, including Operation London Bridge, weather incidents, and ICT and outage related incidents.
 - Proactive and reactive activity for Cabinet and Council meetings

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Effective communication is crucial for the success of a district council. It ensures that information is accurately conveyed and understood, helps build trust and transparency with the community, supports behaviour change, and enables the council to make informed decisions. Without effective communication to convey important details and implications to the community, there may be misunderstanding, reduced access to services, and potential resistance to change. Communications also supports the wider role of the council within the community and supports democratic engagement, for example through supporting the elections process.

- 5.2 In addition to the activity outlined in this report, a strategic approach is being put in place focusing on key campaigns that align with council priorities and support outcomes. For example, cost of living, safe communities and clean streets are key themes.
- 5.3 Early results from the resident insight survey show that two thirds of our residents feel informed about the services and benefits NFDC provides. This is 7% above the national average. Whilst this is welcome news for our communications work, for other image measures, there is at least one-fifth of respondents commenting “neither” or “don’t know” which shows there is an awareness gap that communications activity could help address.
- 5.4 The wider themes from the survey feedback indicate areas of focus for our residents which will be reflected in a more strategic communications approach and the survey results will be used in detail to inform communications activity.
- 5.5 The communications team will continue to focus on enhancing the council's reputation and engagement with stakeholders.

6. FINANCIAL, CRIME AND DISORDER, ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY, DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None arising from this report

Background papers: None

For further information contact: Sara Hamilton, communications manager

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CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND LOCAL ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

19 JANUARY 2023

CONSULTATION WITH RATEPAYING BUSINESSES IN THE DISTRICT ON THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL STRATEGY: SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That panel members consider the responses to the Business Rate Payer Budget Consultation.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council is required under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to ensure that business rate payers are consulted on its proposed budget.
- 2.2 Through an introduction to the consultation, rate payers were provided with a link to the September published Medium Term Financial Plan ([click here](#)) and were advised that the forecast for the Council demonstrated a budget deficit to 2026/27 of some £3.353 million. It was confirmed that the Council's financial Strategy over the medium term includes actions to crystallise savings within services, increase income generation, and utilise accrued reserves to support the delivery of a balanced budget.
- 2.3 On 23 November 2022 the Council opened an online consultation with its business rate payers, and the membership organisations that represent them, to gather their views as to the priorities for the Council's budgets. The consultation was open for a period of three weeks, closing at 12 noon on Wednesday 14 December 2022.
- 2.4 The context, wording for the consultation and questions were agreed with the Financial Strategy Task and Finish Group, with the final wording and process overseen by the Council's Strategic Director Corporate Resources & Transformation / Section 151 Officer.
- 2.5 The survey was administered by the Economic Development team.
- 2.6 Responses were anonymous unless the business/business support organisation choose to provide their businesses name.
- 2.7 Response rate was very low with just 20 responses received.
- 2.8 Respondents were also encouraged to sign up to Economic Development's dedicated business support e-newsletter and social media accounts.

3. PROMOTING THE CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The consultation and link to the survey were extensively promoted through economic development's business enews and social media accounts. In addition, corporate communications promoted the survey via the main NFDC communication channels.
- 3.2 **Promotion through the Business Support e-newsletter:** the economic development business enews has 3,600 subscribers although not all are business rate payers. The first article on the consultation generated 233 subscriber click-throughs to the consultation

eform. Subsequent articles generated a further 178 click-throughs to the consultation webpage.

- 3.3 **Promotion through Facebook:** posts about the consultation were reshared and reached 1,588 people.
- 3.4 **Promotion through Twitter:** using both the corporate twitter account and the economic development account, tweets about the consultation were seen 776 times.
- 3.5 The consultation was also promoted through liaison with business membership organisations including New Forest Business Partnership.

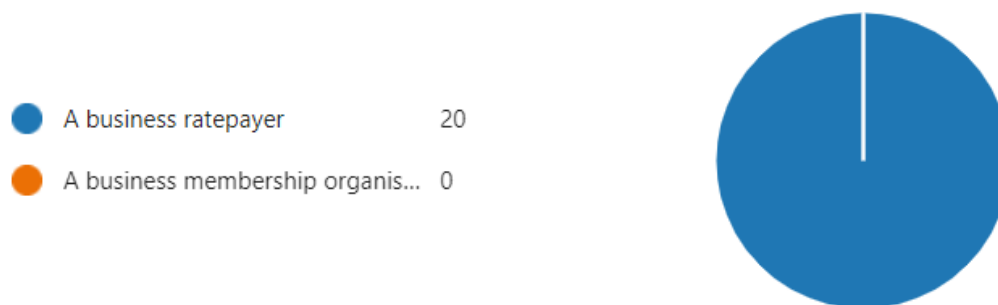
4. THE CONSULTATION

4.1 In total there were 20 responses to the consultation:

Question 1: 'Business/organisation name' (optional question), 11 respondents provided their business name. This included one Parish Council.

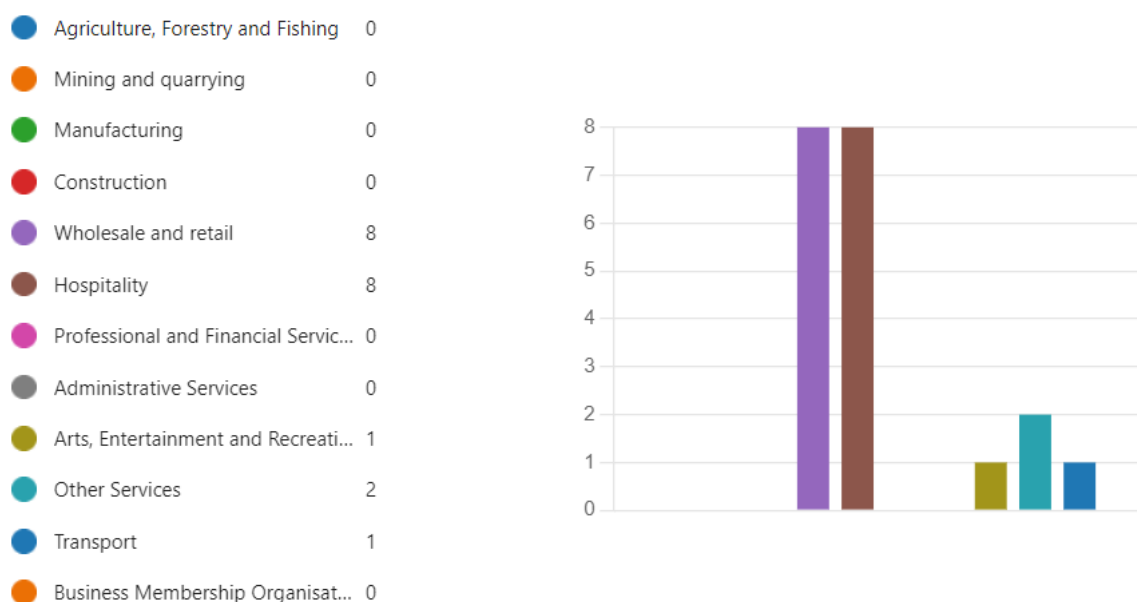
Question 2: 'Are you responding as a business ratepayer or a business membership organisation?'

Responses were received from:



Question 3: 'What is your main business activity?'

Responses were received from:



Question 4: 'What is the postcode of the business?' (Optional question)

Responses (based on the first four digits of the respondent's postcode) were received from across the district as shown below:

Post Code	Area Covered by Postcode	Number of responses
BH25	New Milton	2
SO40	Totton, Lyndhurst, Cadnam, Marchwood,	4
SO41	Milford-on-Sea, Pennington, Boldre, Hordle, Sway	2
SO42	Beaulieu	2
SO43	Lyndhurst	3
SO45	Hythe, Fawley, Blackfield, Calshot, Hardley	2
Not stated		6

Question 5: 'Do you believe there are any specific areas that the Council should focus on in its search for revenue savings or income generation proposals?'

There were only 17 responses to this question, and each gave a different response as to the specific areas that the Council should focus on in its search for revenue savings or income generation. As such, no conclusions can be drawn from this question.

Question 6: 'Are there any council services that you consider should be protected from any reductions?'

There were only 15 responses to this question, as such no conclusions can be drawn.

The following were most frequently cited by the respondents, relevant to activities undertaken by NFDC:

- Provision and maintenance of public toilets and litter collection/street cleanliness
- CCTV

Question 7: 'What do you think the Council could be doing to further support the business community, and how should this be funded?'

There were only 18 responses to this question, as such no conclusions can be drawn.

The following were most frequently cited by respondents, relevant to activities undertaken by NFDC:

- Business rates reduction/ rebate
- Street cleaning

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 New Forest District has 9,110 businesses (source: New Forest Economic Profile 2022). As such, the 20 responses to this consultation equate to a response rate of 0.2% of businesses within the district.

5.2 The consultation does not therefore provide statistically significant data and as such, no credible conclusions can be drawn.

- 5.3 The consultation was widely promoted through the Council's dedicated business communication channels and engagement with this communication, as stated above, was high.
- 5.4 However only 20 businesses completed the consultation. This suggests that businesses were dissuaded from completing the form for some reason.
- 5.5 The 2024/25 rate payer budget consultation, to be carried out later in 2023, will consider alternative methods for conducting the consultation, and will include guidance for respondents as to the services that are the responsibility of the Council as well as providing a summary of Council budget priorities. We would hope to achieve a larger response rate than achieved for the 2023/24 budget consultation.

For further information contact:

Alan Bethune
Strategic Director Corporate Resources &
Transformation

Section 151 Officer

alan.bethune@nfdc.gov.uk

Background Papers:

New Forest Economic Profile 2022

Business, Tourism and Highstreets Portfolio Performance Dashboard															
Quarter 2: 1st July - 30th September 2022								Portfolio Holder - Cllr Michael Harris							
Key Priorities		Key Activities				Key Actions									
Portfolio Priorities		Key Activity		Specific Actions			Target Date	Status Update							
Continuing to work with partners and businesses to grow the New Forest economy.	Identify all businesses within the district and target engagement		Identify all businesses within the district using a range of sources and continue to engage with businesses on a regular basis using business e-news email contact			Ongoing	The Economic Development team are exploring the options for subscription to a businesses' intelligence system and will provide an update in due course. The business support e-news continues to be the primary form of communication with over 3,500 businesses across the district receiving it on a regular basis.								
	Work in partnership to increase the uptake of apprenticeships and upskilling opportunities		Work in partnership to increase the uptake of apprenticeships and upskilling opportunities, including through Solent Apprenticeship Hub			Ongoing	Liaison with the local Job Centres is ongoing. In addition, the ED team have worked closely with other providers of skills training for businesses, including the Solent Growth Hub, to ensure opportunities are taken up by businesses. The Team Leader attends the Brockenhurst College Employer Partnership Forum and works with the college to promote work placement and other opportunities to local businesses.								
			Work with partners to set up the youth employment hub and collaborate on New Forest Young Entrepreneurs			Ongoing	By the end of Q2 22/23 the Central & West Hampshire Youth Employment Hub had provided ongoing support to 86 young people via the 'face to face' New Forest hubs in Brockenhurst & Totton. In addition a Youth Employment Hub outreach event was held at Blackfield where 14 young people, or their parents and guardians, received advice and information for the next steps in their careers. The Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) provides the majority of funding to support Youth Employment Hubs. Unfortunately DWP confirmed in September 2022 that due to a review of funding for all Hubs across the Country, funding for the Central & West Hampshire Youth Employment Hub will not be renewed after the end of the project on 31 October 2022. The ED team will work with partners to ensure young people have access to alternative sources of information and advice. During this period the Economic Development team also started the procurement process for delivery of a business's start up campaign, to be undertaken later in the year. Progress on this initiative will be included in the Q3 dashboard update.								
	Encourage inward investment for the New Forest					Ongoing	Work is ongoing with partners such as the Growth Hub and Get Set for Growth Solent to ensure New Forest businesses have access to grants and finance to support investment in their business. The team have also promoted schemes that will support efficiency savings within businesses such as free energy audits and the LoCASE grants for investment in energy efficient installations. The Ex Head and ED Team Leader have regular liaison meetings with the Partnership Manager for the Department for International Trade (DiT), to identify key inward investment enquiries and to share progress on key investment sites etc. The Ex Head is liaising with the DiT over their proposed visit to Freeport tax sites during Q3 22/23.								
	Establish a single point of entry to the council for businesses		Establish a single point of entry to the council for businesses by 2022/23			Ongoing	The NFDC website provides a clear route of entry to information and support for businesses, across the range of services provided by NFDC and its partners, and the ED team act as 'triage' for those businesses that do not know which route to take. This work is ongoing.								
Lobbying for essential improvements in broadband and mobile connectivity.	Lobby and work with partners to improve broadband and mobile connectivity		Identify and map areas of poor connectivity to assess the potential impact on businesses and inform the future action plan			Ongoing	Initial mapping showing access to broadband across the district has been completed. During this quarter, the Ex Head & ED Team Leader met with the Programme Director, Hampshire Superfast Broadband Programme. The details of this update were submitted to Corporate Affairs and Local Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel in September 2022.								
Helping businesses, industries and High Streets respond to social, environmental and technological changes and innovation.	Support networking for changing High Streets. Encourage direct communication with landlords to consider new and vibrant uses for vacant premises for community or economic use		Establish a programme of activities across the year to support an increase in footfall in our High Streets			Ongoing	This work is ongoing. At the end of this quarter, the Economic Development team started the procurement exercise for delivery of a new Shop Doctor programme for 2023. The results from the 2022 Shop Doctor programme were submitted to Corporate Affairs and Local Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel in September 2022.								
			Launch new programmes and networks with partners to enhance support for businesses in the district			Ongoing	During this quarter, the ED team worked with IOW Council to develop the ERDF Rural Productivity Hub & Spokes project. Delivery of the business support programme will commence in Q4 2022/23.								
	Encourage communities to maintain behavioural changes developed during the pandemic around shopping locally to support the green economy					Ongoing	This work programme is ongoing and is linked to the other high street initiatives described above.								
Supporting the visitor economy across the New Forest district	Work with Go New Forest to promote tourism within the New Forest		Work in partnership with Go New Forest to share key messages. Promote wider use of the district in order to manage capacity and improve visitor experience			Ongoing	Regular liaison is ongoing with Go New Forest to share key messages.								
Continuing to promote the New Forest as a filming destination.			Forge connections with location finders within the filming industry to promote the New Forest as a filming location			Ongoing	The Film: New Forest project promotes the New Forest to film & TV location finders. In order to ensure the district can offer a wide range of locations, a recruitment campaign for new locations was undertaken in this quarter. This will also bring income generation opportunities for the district's residents and businesses. A locations recruitment event was held on 21 September at which prospective location owners heard from the ED team who explained the role of the New Forest Film office as well as from a location manager on what they look for in a location and from Beaulieu Enterprises who have hosted a number of film & TV productions.								
Key Performance Indicators								Financial Information - Budgets £'000							
Cumulative KPIs		Unit	Freq.	Last Quarter	Annual Target	This Quarter	Desired DOT	Actual DOT	Status	Budget Description		Original Budget	July Cabinet	November Cabinet	Latest Budget
Businesses engaged in the business engagement programme		Num (cumulative)	Q	91	100	114	Up	Up		General Fund Revenue Position		297	57	-18	336
Film New Forest - Value of filming in the district		Num (cumulative)	Q	£53,700	£75,000	£75,800	Up	Up		Variation Percentage			19.2%	-6.1%	13.1%
Quarterly KPIs		Unit	Freq.	Last Quarter	Target	This Quarter	Desired DOT	Actual DOT	Status	Supporting Narrative		Economic Development Staff Vacancies -£19k, Changes to Pay Spine £1k			
Subscribers to 'Helping local businesses grow' e-news		Num	Q	3679	3000	3575	Up	Down							
New Forest locations available to Film & TV productions via the Film:New Forest locations database		Num	Q	78	80	117	Up	Up							
High Risks															
High Risk Area				Prob.	Impact	Score/RAG	Mitigation actions				Prob.	Impact	Score/RAG		
Insufficient labour supply and/appropriately skilled labour supply amongst the New Forest workforce to support the delivery of the Freeport and the wider growth agenda .				3	2	6	Work with partners and through the Freeport to provide a package of skills/upskilling and training to ensure supply of labour and ensure that local residents can benefit from growth.				3	2	6		
The broader economic climate is deteriorating, with a recession expected. Hospitality, leisure and small businesses are expected to be particularly impacted, with varying impact on the health of New Forest High Streets.				3	2	6	Annual monitoring of vacancy rates and footfall monitoring in place. Proactive campaigns are in place (as outlined above) to promote our highstreets win order to support businesses in improving their resilience and retaining their market share. Using planning system to promote mixed uses within town centres.				3	2	6		

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Finance, Investment and Corporate Services Portfolio Performance Dashboard														
Quarter 2: 1st July - 30th September 2022										Cllr Jeremy Heron				
Key Priorities		Key Activities			Key Actions									
Portfolio Priorities		Key Activity			Specific Actions		Target Date	Status Update						
Protecting front line services through sound financial planning, including the collection of taxation with appropriate support for individuals and businesses		Deliver the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan			Balanced budget agreed annually in February with supporting actions to deliver a financially sustainable medium term financial plan (MTFP)		Feb-23	Initial MTFP was presented to the Cabinet in September. Ultimately, the financial planning cycle will conclude in the annual budget report being presented in February.						
Modernisation and innovative use of ICT to enhance operational efficiencies across all services		Modernise our corporate and line of business ICT applications			Deliver modernised ICT applications and infrastructure, including Regulatory Services and Operations, and implement the new Digital Strategy		2025	The digital strategy 2022-25 has been adopted by the council. The Operations project is in the procurement stage and scheduled to complete this stage in December 2022/January 2023. The regulatory services project is in the implementation phase. Working with the supplier the council is scheduled to complete implementation of this project in June 2023. The Housing Management System project is still in development stage. Current forecast suggests a go live date of March 2023. Migration to Cloud project that moves the council data centre to Azure is in the procurement stage. The project target date for completion is Oct 2023.						
Using investments to support financial resilience and the local economy		Identify sites and opportunities in line with the Commercial Property Investment Strategy			Review the Commercial Property Strategy and continue to deliver the objectives of both this and the Residential Property Investment strategy		2022/23	On 29th July 2022 the Council completed the purchase of land at New Milton for £5.1M. Construction of the Council's development, the Platinum Jubilee Business Park, is continuing with completion of the industrial units expected by November 2022 and the 2 office units by January 2023. Offers on 2 further commercial property investments have been accepted, subject to contract. A renewed Asset Investment Strategy 2022 has been drafted for consideration and approval by the Council. A £2M increase in the next tranche of funds made available for investment in residential property has been approved at the commercial property investment panel (£8M cumulative).						
		Continue to acquire properties through the council's Residential Property Company			Commence delivery of new depot facilities aligned to future requirements		2024	Design settled, planning application is being prepared with target for submission now 2nd December 2022.						
Providing support to residents with benefits and welfare reforms, and supporting businesses to access financial reliefs and grants		Deliver government support to businesses, including business support grants and retail discounts, and households			Continue to deliver central government and locally funded support measures to residents most in need		30-Sep-22	We have distributed a total £4,356,538 of COVID Additional Relief Funding to 458 businesses, which represents 100% of the funding being distributed. We have distributed £427,200 in food vouchers to 8,053 low income households in receipt of Council Tax Support and/or Pension Credit. We have distributed Household Support Funding of £54,350 to 197 households to support vulnerable households on a range of support, including helping with rent arrears and emergencies. We await the next tranche of funding and eligibility and distribution criteria. Additional work is taking place to support our communities with the cost of living, as outlined below: We actively work with partners in the Cost of Living steering group and have an officer group to coordinate our response. We have a dedicated webpage, a communications strategy, promote and signpost to support, advice and information, as well as working with partners to pilot a community hub. We have made funding available to support local groups with the provision of a warm space and an application form is being developed, along with text for the website and social media.						
					Deliver the energy rebate and discretionary scheme in accordance with government guidance and timescales		30-Nov-22	The main energy rebate scheme has closed and we distributed £8.3m to 53,559 households. We proactively encouraged and supported those eligible with claiming their rebate, i.e. letter, phone and in person. Those that are eligible and did not claim had the £150 payment onto their council tax account to ensure nobody missed out. Our discretionary scheme remains open and to date we have made payments totalling £106,500 to 710 residents and we have been very proactive in identifying those eligible to ensure support is received. We are due to consider how to distribute the residual funding, expected to be circa £214,000, where payments must be completed by 30 November 2022.						
		Continue to manage the impact of Universal Credit and review our Council Tax Reduction scheme to maximise automation			Continue to work closely with partners in preparing for the migration to Universal Credit		Ongoing	We continue to monitor developments and work with partners.						
Key Performance Indicators									Financial Information - Budgets £'000					
Annual KPIs	Unit	Freq.	21/22	Target	22/23	Desired DOT	Actual DOT	Status	Budget Description	Original Budget	July Cabinet	November Cabinet	Latest Budget	
Achieved a balanced budget with reasonable council tax increases	% or £	Annual	£5 (2.88%)*	Greater of 2% or £5*	N/A	N/A	N/A		General Fund Revenue Position	3,778	557	-869	3,466	
General Fund budget variations	%	Annual	8.1%	+/- 3%	8.54%	N/A	Up		Variation Percentage		14.7%	-23.0%	-8.3%	
HRA Fund budget variations	%	Annual	NEW KPI	+/- 3%	4.64%	N/A	N/A		Supporting Narrative Unutilised Pay Review Funding -£226k, Investment Property Income Station Road New Milton -£187k, Staff vacancies Revenues and Benefits £-85k, Staff vacancies Communications & Information Offices -£32k, Lymington Town Hall service charges -£25k, Members car allowances -£10k, virements to other Portfolios re Pay Spine Change £74k, virements to Leader re Resident Insight and Climate Change Manager -£72k. Members Allowances Review and 22/23 Inflationary award £43k, Changes to Pay Spine £15k Corporate Plan Objectives rephase part Transformation Manager post to 23/24 -£80k Portfolio adjustments still to be allocated -£136k					
Value of Original Capital Programme Delivered	%	Annual	NEW KPI	80%	40%	Cumulative	N/A							
Increase in the value of residential investment	£m	Annual	£3.6m	£8m	Expected End of Year	Cumulative	N/A							
Increase in the value of commercial investment	£m	Annual	£14m	£30m	Expected End of Year	Cumulative	N/A							
Maintain high level of council tax collected	%	Quarterly (Cumulative)	98.53%	98.5% (by Q4)	57.93%	Cumulative	N/A		General Fund Capital Programme	12,076	-4,034	5,500	13,542	
Maintain high level of NNDR collected	%	Quarterly (Cumulative)	98.45%	98.5% (by Q4)	61.82%	Cumulative	N/A		Variation Percentage		-33.4%	45.5%	12.1%	
Quarterly KPIs	Unit	Freq.	Last Quarter	Target	This Quarter	Desired DOT	Actual DOT	Status	General Fund Capital Programme Investment Property Acquisition Station Road New Milton £5.5m					
ICT incidents resolved within SLA	%	Quarterly	98.00%	95%	95.60%	Up	Down							
Benefit realisation from ICT investment	New KPI in live consideration for future dashboard reporting													
Maintain a Remote Access Solution (VPN)*	%	Quarterly	99.80%	99.5%	99.80%	Up	-							
Energy rebate scheme payments made (to eligible premises)	%	Quarterly (Cumulative)	96.90%	100% (by Q4)	100.00%	Cumulative	N/A							
* 21/22 performance represents setting of 22/23 budget. Target represents setting of 23/24 budget. ** VPN outage for c.9hrs due to expired certificate. Majority of downtime was during 'out of hours' period with a 90 minute impact on the working day. This resulted in a 0.004% drop in the VPN availability. Steps have been put in place to avoid this scenario in the future.														
High Risks														
High Risk Area	Prob.	Impact	Score/RAG	Mitigation actions					Prob.	Impact	Score/RAG			
Comprehensive Spending Review may result in funding fluctuations and continued funding uncertainty	3	3	9	Prudent financial planning, with options to close the gap being drawn up and worked on. Budget equalisation reserve available to support the production of a balanced budget.					2	2	4			
Current high rate of inflation and other cost increases falling on the Council	4	3	12	Prudent financial planning and active budget monitoring. Recent reports highlight the significance of increased costs in homelessness; mitigated in part by a strong triennial pension revaluation.					4	2	8			
Lack of suitable commercial property investment opportunities in the District	3	2	6	Work with external agents in seeking off market opportunities.					2	2	4			
Lack of suitable residential property investment opportunities in the District	3	2	6	Strong links between Appletree and local agents to maximise chances of securing suitable properties. Sustained house price inflation and interest costs may impact purchase programme					2	2	4			
Delays in the delivery of new depot facilities	3	3	9	Robust project governance and progress oversight through the waste programme board.					2	3	6			
Ability to support vulnerable residents with increased cost of living and potential fuel poverty	3	3	9	Timely administration of government provided support, working closely with partners and continued engagement in the cost of living steering group and promotion of support and information.					2	2	4			

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Leaders - Portfolio Performance Dashboard															
Quarter 2: 1st July - 30th September 2022							Portfolio Holder - Cllr Jill Cleary								
Key Priorities		Key Activities				Key Actions									
Portfolio Priorities		Key Activity				Specific Actions			Target Date	Status Update					
Working with regional and local partners to ensure the prosperity of the New Forest area	Work with partners to deliver the greenest Freeport, securing sustainability and prosperity for the New Forest area				Continue to work to deliver the Solent Freeport with a focus on the development of skills and education, including working with the Education Sector and the Waterside Skills Forum			Ongoing	The Council has supported the submission of the Solent Freeport FBC and awaits HM Treasury approval. The Freeport Board submitted an EoI to enter into the Investment Zone programme with the Council as the significant local planning authority indicating that support was conditional on no reduction to any environmental designation or protections. The Waterside forum has re-formed, held it's first meeting in November 2022 and will meet quarterly going forwards.						
	Actively engage with partners, including the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Local Government Association, in exploring a County Deal							Ongoing	A draft Prospectus has been developed and has been discussed positively as a next wave bid with Ministers. Hampshire County Council is leading discussions and is seeking support for a pan-Hampshire proposal. There have been delays to progress due to changes at national government level.						
	Develop a UK Shared Prosperity Fund Local Investment Plan to deliver the three investment priorities of Community and Place, Supporting Local Business and People and Skills							Ongoing	Cabinet approved projects to be submitted as part of the bid in July. Bid submitted 1 Aug 2022 with support from partners. Still awaiting government feedback, Rural England Prosperity Fund now launched with bid submission 30th November 2022.						
	Annual review of the economic investment in the New Forest				Annual review of the economic growth and inward investment in the New Forest			2022/23	Continuing dialogue with developers, land owners, existing and potential investors, HCC, LEP and DIT (Department for International Trade) to support and facilitate growth and investment in the District. Planning permission for Solent Gateway now issued, further applications to approve detailed matters expected shortly. Commercial Agents appointed to market sites.						
Being an employer of choice	Deliver the Organisational Strategy and respond to changes in working arrangements through the continued roll out of the smarter working initiative, looking at where and how our staff work							2022/23	Two-week staff consultation has been completed. Review of hybrid working report taken to EMT to agree changes to the existing policy. Overwhelming support from staff to continue to offer hybrid working. Final policy has now been issued and Forestnet updated accordingly.						
	Respond to the outcomes of the staff survey and deliver the HR Strategy to support recruitment and retention							2022/23	Draft staff survey considered by EMT. In house design should enable the form to be completed and analysed without the cost of external support. The survey was launched during November with a closing date of the 9th December, and output will be reviewed by EMT and the wider leadership team. The HR Strategy will need a light touch review this year and will be picked up by the People Strand of the Transformation Programme.						
Excellence in services to our residents and continuing to maintain front line services					Identify and deliver a programmed approach to assets, services, and ways of working through a council-wide focus on transformation to further enhance modern working practices that meet the needs of our staff in delivering services that meet the needs of our residents			Ongoing	A report was presented to October Cabinet setting out drivers and opportunities for change in support of the transformation programme, including an indicative approach to how the transformation programme could be shaped over the next few months with the support of a third party specialist. Initial work has commenced with Ignite to develop an opportunity assessment which will be shared early in 2023. This will support the development of a full business case to be presented to the new administration for consideration during 2023. The officer Capital and Change board continues to review the development and oversight of the Council-wide approach to change and delivery of the transformation programme aligning, where appropriate, projects and initiatives with strategic direction and the transformation workstreams.						
Ensuring effective democratic engagement and representation								Ongoing	The Elections 2023 Project Board continues to provide oversight of the delivery of the extensive electoral changes, including ward boundary and legislative changes, on a monthly basis. These changes are being widely communicated to ensure electors understand the impact and any action they need to take with leaflets being sent as part of the annual canvass. Dedicated webpages have also been established containing information on all changes, both local and national. Ward boundary changes have been further supported by drop in sessions for members and Town and Parish Clerks during the summer which were well attended and helped inform the Polling Places and Districts review. The ward boundary changes have been reviewed and checked by a consultant from the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA) who has provided assurance that this has been approached with logic and rigor which gives us confidence in the accuracy of these fundamental changes. In addition, the revised electoral register has now been published.						
Key Performance Indicators									Financial Information - Budgets £'000						
Quarterly KPIs		Unit	Freq.	Last Quarter	Target	This Quarter	Desired DOT	Actual DOT	Status	Budget Description		Original Budget	July Cabinet	November Cabinet	Latest Budget
Portfolio indicators above or on target		%	Q	78%	Monitor	78%	Up	-		General Fund Revenue Position		496	85	53	634
Vacancies filled first time		%	Q	81%	85%	80%	Up	Down		Variation Percentage			17.1%	10.7%	27.8%
Subscribers to residents' email		% of residents	Q	8.5%	14%	8.6%	Up	Up		Supporting Narrative		Investment in Corporate Priorities: Climate Change Manager Virement £37k & Resident Insight Virement £35k. Additionally, changes to Pay Spine £1k, Register Of Elector Canvass savings -£20k			
Annual KPIs		Unit	Freq.	2021	Target	2022	Desired DOT	Actual DOT	Status	General Fund Capital Programme		500	0	0	500
Average customer rating of residents' email (usefulness, ease of understanding, relevant information)		Score out of 10	Annual	9.0	9.0	9.33	Up	Up		Variation Percentage			0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Level of customer satisfaction with Council services		%	Annual	N/A	60%	Available Dec/Jan	Up	N/A		Supporting Narrative					
High Risks															
High Risk Area				Prob.	Impact	Score/RAG	Mitigation actions					Prob.	Impact	Score/RAG	
Pressure on business resilience due to labour market pressures, skills shortages and likely cost of living and inflationary budget pressures				3	3	9	There is an ongoing assessment of the impact of these pressures on the Council's workforce, and where flagged as a specific issue causing recruitment or retention issues this is able to be addressed through the policy framework adopted. Signposting for wider support for employees has taken place as well as promotion of our wider benefit package. The Council also supports wider business resilience through our economic development town centre actions and business support.					3	2	6	
Cost of living rises will have a negative impact on the local community and wider economy				4	3	12	The Council continues to work hard to promote and support the wider economy and is seeking to maximise the opportunities of initiatives such as the Freeport to raise skills levels, create employment and therefore potential increased income for residents. The Council will also continue to distribute any government funding initiatives, and is working alongside our partners, including the Local Partnership Campaign Manager to explore and promote further support to households.					3	2	6	
Uncertainty over the legislative and national policy framework will impact on strategic direction and local decision making				3	3	9	This risk is mitigated through political and officer networks where specific concerns can be raised. This includes the Local Government Association and District Council network. Also through attendance at meetings and close liaison with partners, including with Hampshire County Council and the wider authorities. Specific risks will also be flagged through relevant project boards, and if appropriate in service risks registers.					3	2	6	
Potential impacts dependent on the level of winter energy resilience				3	3	9	Business Continuity and Threat Response plans being reviewed. Specific power outage protocol being drawn up and back-up power options being investigated.					2	2	4	

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CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND LOCAL ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

WORK PROGRAMME 2023/2024

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	LEAD OFFICER
23 MARCH 2023			
ICT Update	To receive an update on progress with the ICT Service	Report or Presentation	ICT Service Manager
Update on the New Forest Economy	To note statistics on the local labour market	Written Report	Sally Igra / Claire Upton-Brown
Staff Efficiency Ideas Scheme - Update	To receive an update on the Staff Efficiency Ideas Scheme	Written Report	Heleana Aylett
Council Tax Reduction T&F – Arrangements for 2023	To agree arrangements for the Council Tax Reduction T&F meetings for 2023	Discussion	Ryan Stevens
22 JUNE 2023			
Annual Performance and Provisional Budget Outturn	To receive the Annual Performance and Provisional Budget report	Written Report	Alan Bethune / Rebecca Drummond / Sheryl Parry
Transformation Programme Update	To receive an update on the Transformation Programme (See Financial Strategy T&F report to Panel on 17/11/22)	Written Report / Presentation	Kate Ryan / Alan Bethune

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	LEAD OFFICER
Commercial and Residential Property Annual Report	To receive the annual report on progress with Commercial and Residential Property	Presentation / Written Report	Andrew Smith
ICT Update	To receive an update on progress with the ICT Service	Report or Presentation	ICT Service Manager
21 SEPTEMBER 2023			
ICT Update	To receive an update on progress with the ICT Service	Report or Presentation	ICT Service Manager
Complaints Annual Report	To receive an annual overview of complaints received, and dealt with, by the Council's Complaints Team.	Written Report	Amanda Wilson
Broadband Provision Update	To receive an update on Broadband Provision in the District	Written Report	Sally Igra / Claire Upton-Brown
Update on the New Forest Economy	To note statistics on the local labour market	Written Report	Sally Igra / Claire Upton-Brown
16 NOVEMBER 2023			
Update on the New Forest Economy	To note statistics on the local labour market	Written Report	Sally Igra / Claire Upton-Brown
ICT Investment Vs Benefits Realisation	To receive a KPI assessment of ICT Investment Vs Benefits Realisation (Requested by Financial Strategy T&F Group in report to this Panel on 17 November 2022)	Written Report	ICT Manager

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	LEAD OFFICER
Council Tax Reduction Scheme	To receive the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group	Written Report	Ryan Stevens
18 JANUARY 2024			
Asset Maintenance and Replacement Programme	To receive details of the proposed programme and pass any comments to Cabinet.	Written Report	Alan Bethune
Capital Strategy	To receive details of the proposed strategy and pass any comments to Cabinet.	Written Report	Alan Bethune
Update on the New Forest Economy	To note statistics on the local labour market	Written Report	Sally Igra / Claire Upton-Brown
28 MARCH 2024			
ICT Update	To receive an update on progress with the ICT Service	Report or Presentation	ICT Service Manager
Council Tax Reduction T&F – Arrangements for 2024	To agree arrangements for the Council Tax Reduction T&F meetings for 2024	Discussion	Ryan Stevens
Update on the New Forest Economy	To note statistics on the local labour market	Written Report	Sally Igra / Claire Upton-Brown

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	LEAD OFFICER
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DATES TO BE ALLOCATED			
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Procurement Update	To receive regular updates summarising procurement activities	Report	Gary Jarvis
Economic Development Performance Indicators		TBC	Claire Upton-Brown