

NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting:	HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
Date and Time:	WEDNESDAY, 21 JUNE 2023, AT 6.00 PM
Place:	COUNCIL CHAMBER - APPLETREE COURT, BEAULIEU ROAD, LYNDHURST, SO43 7PA
Enquiries to:	Email: karen.warde@nfdc.gov.uk Karen Wardle Tel: 023 8028 5071

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) on items within the Housing and Communities 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 Friday, 16 June 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 following meetings as correct records:

- 15 March 2023 (Housing and Homelessness Overview and Scrutiny Panel)
- 22 May 2023

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 receive any public participation in accordance with the Council's public participation scheme.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE PANEL

To note the Panel is responsible for the overview and scrutiny of the following Council services:

- (a) Housing Estate Management and Support
- (b) Housing Maintenance and Compliance
- (c) Housing Options, Rents, Support and Private Sector Housing
- (d) Housing Strategy and Development
- (e) Environmental and Regulation (including licensing, health and wellbeing and Arts and Culture)
- (f) This Panel will also be the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee under Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006, with power to co-opt representatives of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership onto the Panel when it reviews Partnership matters, and to agree terms of such co-option.

5. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND PROVISIONAL BUDGET OUTTURN 2022/23 (Pages 5 - 26)

To consider the annual performance of services under the review of this Panel and the provisional budget outturn figures.

6. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT (DFG) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY (Pages 27 - 48)

To consider the revised DFG financial assistance policy.

7. CALL-IN REQUEST: SALE OF COUNCIL GARAGES AT BURNETT CLOSE, HYTHE (Pages 49 - 54)

To consider the call-in decision to approve the sale of Council garages at Burnett Close in Hythe.

8. AIR QUALITY UPDATE (Pages 55 - 62)

To consider an update on air quality and the development of an Air Quality Strategy.

9. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' UPDATES

An opportunity for the Portfolio Holders' to provide any updates to the Panel on developments within their portfolio.

10. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 63 - 64)

To agree the work programme to guide the Panel's activities over the coming months.

11. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

To:

Councillors

Steve Clarke (Chairman)
Ian Murray (Vice-Chairman)
Kate Crisell
Sean Cullen
Patrick Mballa

Councillors

Neville Penman
Caroline Rackham
Janet Richards
Neil Tungate

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HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – 21 JUNE 2023

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND PROVISIONAL BUDGET OUTTURN 2022/23

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Panel note:
- a) the Annual Performance Report for 2022/23;
 - b) the provisional outturn of the General Fund revenue and capital budgets for 2022/23;
 - c) the provisional outturn of the Housing Revenue Account and capital budgets for 2022/23; and
 - d) the yearend rephasings as included within the provisional outturn figures.

2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 2.1 This report provides an overview of performance and delivery of the Corporate Plan for 2022/23 and sets out provisional outturn results for Revenue and Capital budgets for both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account.
- 2.2 The Council's statutory Statement of Accounts will be completed and signed by the Responsible Financial (S151) Officer and will be presented as final to the Audit Committee following the completion of an external audit. Should there be any significant variations from the figures presented in this report, they will be highlighted at that Committee. The Outturn now presented is in management format.

3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 Community Matters, the Council's Corporate Plan for 2020-2024, sets out the overarching commitments and vision for the Council and focuses on the challenges faced and the plans to address them, including priorities for each Portfolio. It was originally approved in March 2020, and then revisited in May 2021 in order to align responsibilities with the new Cabinet structure that came into effect in April 2021. The Annual Performance Report (Appendix 1) reflects the progress in delivering the Corporate Plan.
- 3.2 Work will now commence on drafting the administration's new corporate plan for the four-year term, which will be subject to consultation later this year. This will be underpinned by the development of a new performance management framework that will continue to see performance for the relevant portfolios presented to overview and scrutiny panels during the year.
- 3.3 The Annual Budget is an important element of the delivery of the Council's financial strategy which supports the delivery of core services and provides value for money to local taxpayers. Financial Monitoring Reports and Medium-Term Financial Plan updates are presented to Cabinet throughout the year, providing up to date information on current performance and the budget outlook over a medium-term period.

- 3.4 The Council's financial planning process supports the delivery of the corporate objectives and the setting of the annual budget and its performance is an important element of the overall Corporate Plan.
- 3.5 Financial monitoring reports have been presented to Cabinet in July 2022, November 2022 and February 2023. The February reported position for the General Fund, Capital Programme and Housing Revenue Account budgets were as follows:

	Original Budget Set Feb '22	Latest Budget Feb '23 Cabinet	Reported Variations upto Feb '23 Cabinet
	£'m	£'m	£'m
General Fund - Net Budget Requirement	20.674	21.373	0.699
General Fund - Business Rate Retention	(6.381)	(6.381)	0
General Fund - Capital Programme	17.174	20.699	3.525
Housing Revenue Account - Income	(30.225)	(29.909)	0.316
Housing Revenue Account - Expenditure	21.305	22.591	1.286
Housing Revenue Account - Capital Programme	24.900	20.900	(4.000)

- 3.6 This report at section 5 and the Appendices includes the provisional budget outturn position statements covering the General Fund (Appendix 2A and 2B), the Housing Revenue Account (Appendix 2C) and combined Capital Programme (Appendix 3).

4. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 4.1 The Annual Performance Report (Appendix 1) illustrates the Council's achievements during 2022/23 highlighting each Portfolio's performance against the priorities set.

5. BUDGET OUTTURN

- 5.1 The General Fund Net Budget Requirement (Revenue) provisional outturn position confirms a spend of £20.107m against an original budget of £20.674m. Within those figures, the net spend at Service Portfolio level is just £56,000 over the original budgeted sum for the year (£20.174m spend as against £20.118m original budget). The outturn variation that has reduced the net budget requirement has occurred outside of the service Portfolio's and is due to additional interest earnings of £893,000 to the General Fund above the originally budgeted sum. These additional interest earnings mean that the General Fund has been able to support 2022/23 Capital Programme financing of £1.675m (the originally budgeted contribution was £1.750m, originally reduced through Financial Monitoring to help finance additional costs of pay award).

5.2 Rephasings to future years included in the outturn total £964,000 and include:

5.2.1	ICT Work Programme	£329,000
5.2.2	Homes for Ukraine Support	£269,000
5.2.3	Corporate Plan Priorities budget	£188,000
5.2.4	UK shared Prosperity Fund	£86,000
5.2.5	Net Other	£92,000

5.3 Business Rates income was originally budgeted at £6.381m, with the provisional outturn being £5.801m. This £580,000 reduction is mainly associated with a required increase to the appeals provision.

5.4 **When combined, the overall general fund variations result in a neutral position for the year with no transfers to or from general non-committed reserves.** The Financial Monitoring reports presented through Cabinet during the year included the reasoning for the significant variations and the summarised position is shown within Appendix 2A, with further detail on the new outturn General Fund variations being shown within Appendix 2B.

5.5 The original General Fund Capital Programme budget was set at £17.174m. This was increased via financial monitoring through the year to take into account the scheme rephasings from 2021/22 and updated for new requirements, including investment in economic regeneration and employment projects. The outturn position confirms a spend for the year of £21.641m. Outturn project variations (including a new acquisition) total +£1.747m, with this figure netted down by £805,000 of rephasings to future years. This results in a year-end variation in comparison to the revised budget of +£942,000.

5.6 The Housing Revenue Account provisional position confirms income for the year of £30.083m (a reduction of £142,000 from the original budget) and revenue spend for the year of £22.321m (an increase of £1.016m from the original budget). After taking these variations into account, and after allowing for net transfers from earmarked reserves of £174,000 and contributions to capital of £9.120m, this results in an overall deficit for the year of £1.184m with this sum being transferred from the Acquisition and Development reserve.

5.7 The original Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme budget was set at £24.900m. This was reduced via financial monitoring through the year to £20.900m. The outturn position confirms a spend for the year of £22.077m. Outturn project variations (including additional affordable housing additions) total +£2.397m, with this figure netted down by £1.220m of rephasings to future years. This results in a year-end variation in comparison to the revised budget of +£1.177m.

5.8 The following table summarises the positions as explained above (although all stated positions are still subject to change during the course of External Audit):

	Original Budget Set Feb '22	Provisional Outturn Position	Total Variation
	£'m	£'m	£'m
General Fund - Net Budget Requirement	20.674	20.107	(0.567)
General Fund - Business Rate Retention	(6.381)	(5.801)	0.580
General Fund - Capital Programme	17.174	21.641	4.467
Housing Revenue Account - Income	(30.225)	(30.083)	0.142
Housing Revenue Account - Expenditure	21.305	22.321	1.016
Housing Revenue Account - Capital Programme	24.900	22.077	(2.823)

6. CRIME & DISORDER / EQUALITY & DIVERSITY / ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

Further Information:

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Background Papers

The Corporate Plan 2020-2024
'Community Matters'
Cabinet 4 March 2020

The Corporate Plan 2020-2024
'Community Matters' (Revised
2021)
Cabinet 6 October 2021

Financial Monitoring Report
Cabinet 29th July 2022
Cabinet November 2022
Cabinet February 2023



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ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022-23



A letter from the Leader

Although this year saw normal service fully resume following the pandemic, and some significant achievements to be proud of, it also saw increased challenges for our residents and the country as a whole.

In 2022 we celebrated the Platinum Jubilee of Elizabeth II, followed by the Queen's sad death.

We responded swiftly and appropriately to support our communities to reflect and mourn and arranged for the historic local proclamation of His Majesty King Charles III. The decision to extend the Green Canopy tree planting initiative will be a lasting and fitting tribute to the Queen, with 60 trees being planted in 30 locations.

We made progress on key corporate priorities including the waste strategy, a climate action plan, and the Solent Freeport approval announced in December that will support the Waterside and wider New Forest economy and provide access to higher skilled employment.

During the year we have seen increasing challenges facing our residents and impacting our services and budget as the cost of living, inflation and wider economic factors impact us all. In response we have set up a Cost of Living Steering Group that brings together a shared understanding of what our residents and communities need, and promotes initiatives such as the establishment of Food Larders and 5 Community Hubs to connect people to the support available.

It is this council's ambition to be an employer of choice in order to provide excellent services, and to support this we have reviewed our pay scales to



address recruitment difficulties and to ensure we are paying a minimum wage above the national employer's minimum.

Key pieces of work have commenced to inform our future plans, including the initial phases of a transformation programme that will deliver a leaner, more efficient organisation, characterised by modern business practices, sustainable service delivery and a skilled and motivated workforce, and most importantly ensuring that our residents and customers are at the heart of our decisions.

Through the resident insight survey undertaken during the year we know that although we have a higher than average level of satisfaction across our services, we also have areas for improvement. I am very grateful that the public's trust in the District Council is so high at 74% and we will build on this strong foundation to create future services that meet local priorities for the future.

We are now working on the new corporate plan moving forward with our priorities and major milestones for the next four years.

Cllr Jill Cleary


Leader of New Forest District Council

Portfolio highlights 2022-23

Leader's

UK Shared Prosperity Fund awarded

£1m

78%  of residents are satisfied with how NFDC is run

41%  of staff responded to staff survey

Recruited **82%** of the **177** vacancies filled this year first time

Finance, investment and corporate



Investments within the district now

£29.3m

Distributed **£8,044m+** of Energy Rebate support to **53,631** households

Completed the **Platinum Jubilee Business Park** project

Funding of **£17,700** to **22** organisations for the provision of warm spaces

Planning, regeneration and infrastructure




1,133 planning decisions issued

5 strategic plan sites with consent

£580k spent on recreational mitigation projects

Increased Building Control market share to **58%**

Partnering and wellbeing


100% of high risk food inspections undertaken 

527  offences actively tracked on council CCTV

Nearly **10,000** attendees to active lifestyle classes across all sites

Inactivity levels reduced to **18.4%**

Housing and homelessness

More than **70%** of rough sleepers entered housing pathway 

Answered **57,759**  tenants' calls, emails, and webchats

50 affordable council homes built

23 units of new temporary accommodation delivered

Environment and coastal

Circa **7,600m³** shingle recycled on Hurst Spit

Sold **30k** short stay and **15k** long stay parking clocks, generating a total of **£1.3m**



Installed **12** electric vehicle charging points, saving **18,000kg** CO₂ to date



21,000 garden waste customers

People and places



£68,792+ awarded in Councillor Community Engagement grants

89%  website accessibility score

Community grants approved **£221,600**

Responded to **2,552** fly tipping incidents


Business, tourism and high streets



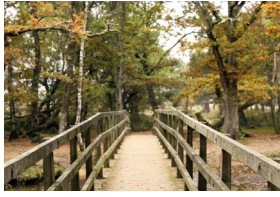
Carried out **78** Shop Doctor visits

86 beneficiaries of the Youth Employment Hub

49 businesses and residents benefitted from start-up business support

 **3,566** subscribers to the business support e-newsletter

Key portfolio achievements 2022-23



Leader's

Delivering a sustainable and prosperous New Forest and putting our community first

Ensuring the prosperity of the New Forest area remains a priority. The New Forest District Council received an allocation of £1 million through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Rural England Prosperity Fund provided a further top-up of £540,115 as part of the Rural Development Programme for England. The delivery of the projects directly and through local rural businesses will support delivery of the three investment priorities of Community and Place, Supporting Local Business and People and Skills.

Work continued with developers, landowners, investors and other parties to support and facilitate growth and investment in the district. A key achievement was securing the Government approval of the Solent Freeport Business case and through the Freeport Board and officer support we now move to deliver the benefits of the business case with a focus on securing long-lasting opportunities for the residents of the New Forest. The council has also prioritised community engagement in regeneration with a project being delivered in Totton town centre with residents highlighting priorities for improvement.

The Waterside Steering Group has been re-established and has been meeting regularly, providing a place to co-ordinate developments across the waterside, and discussing cross-cutting issues. Communications and engagement has been a focus to provide updated communication to stakeholders. Interim capacity has been brought in and will be ensuring key New Forest priorities are best placed to secure funding including A326 and public transport improvements.

A draft County Deal prospectus has been discussed positively as a next wave bid with Ministers. Hampshire County Council is leading discussions and it is anticipated that post local elections NFDC will engage as discussions with DLUHC progress to ensure that local priorities are reflected in a future prospectus.

The council is focusing on using data and insight to inform plans and priorities. A New Forest Economic Profile, which covered policy areas and themes relating to: economy,

Priorities

Working with regional and local partners to ensure the prosperity of the New Forest area.

Being an employer of choice.

Excellence in services to our residents and continuing to maintain front line services.

Ensuring effective democratic engagement and representation.

business, population, labour market, skills and occupations, was commissioned in September 2022.

The council also undertook an independent Residents survey which showed that 93% of residents are satisfied with the area as a place to live, and 78% are satisfied with the way that New Forest District Council runs things. 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%). There are areas to improve and insight on cost of living and climate concerns will be areas to explore more fully.

We have set ourselves an ambitious target for subscribers to our residents email news letter and continue activity to increase the number of residents who receive updates in this way.

Activity to be an employer of choice continued, including the pay scale review and a revised hybrid working policy. The pay scale review was undertaken to address particular recruitment difficulties, remove the cross-over between certain bands and make the pay scale more consistent. It has also addressed the Leader's clear desire for the District Council to pay a minimum wage above the national employers minimum.

Following overwhelming support from the workforce to continue hybrid working, the final policy has been issued with a view to promote improved work/life balance, saving on fuel costs as well as environmental and financial benefits.

An Employee Engagement Survey resulted in a larger response than previous years, (323 responses, equating to 41% of staff), and an overall action plan is being developed with management and staff.

Activities such as Chief executive staff briefings, visits, new Monthly meets and social activities such as wellbeing walks and the Christmas quiz support wider engagement.

Key performance indicators	Unit	Target	2021/22	2022/23	RAG
Portfolio indicators above or on target	%	Monitor	58%*	79.25%	
Vacancies filled first time	%	85%	81%	82%	
Subscribers to residents' email	% of residents	14%	8.5%	8.82%	
Average customer rating of residents' email (usefulness, ease of understanding, relevant information)	Score out of 10	9	9	9.33	
Level of customer satisfaction with council services	%	60%	N/A**	78%	

*Partial calculation of 2021/22 based on Q3 and Q4 indicators.

**Customer satisfaction survey first undertaken in 2022. Next comparable score will be available in 2024.



Planning, regeneration and infrastructure

Delivering a sustainable and prosperous New Forest and putting our community first

The Solent Freeport received final Government approval in December 2022, providing an important opportunity to deliver economic growth for the Solent and particularly the regeneration of the Waterside.

Most of the 18 strategic sites identified in the Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1 are now in pre-application or application stage, with 5 having a resolution to grant permission subject to completion of a S106. Development has commenced on 2 sites.

The council continues to proactively work with developers to ensure that allocated development sites are delivered successfully, with the necessary supporting infrastructure. The council has also been working with stakeholders to address water quality issues and deliver Biodiversity Net Gain projects.

The council has continued to use the Community Infrastructure Levy (and S106 monies) to deliver much needed infrastructure, including a programme of open space and recreational mitigation projects. Expenditure in 22/23 was on these projects of £580k. A programme of works for 23/24 projects was approved in March 2023.

A local cycling and walking infrastructure plan (LCWIP) for the Waterside was approved by Hampshire County Council in November 2022 with a separate plan currently being prepared for the remainder of the District. These plans will help to guide future decisions on funding for walking and cycling infrastructure improvements.

The number of planning applications received during the year was 1,358 (1,363 in 2021/22). Of the 1,133 decisions issued 91% were determined within the nationally prescribed timescales (80% in 2021/22). The project to upgrade the Planning and Regulatory Services IT system is progressing and expected to complete in 2023.

Priorities

Delivering the vision of the Local Plan and encouraging development that meets local needs and delivers positive economic, social, and environmental outcomes.

Working with partners, applicants, and developers to ensure a positive, timely and enabling attitude to development.

Working with the Partnership for South Hampshire authorities on a Joint Strategy and Statement of Common Ground to address future growth and unmet housing need.

Using contributions to deliver green infrastructure projects that address the impact of development on the natural environment.

Ensuring Building Control are engaged at the earliest stage to make future development projects safe.

Explore different delivery models to deliver our housing target including maximising the number of affordable homes.

Set a vision for the future of each of our towns.

Building control market share increased to 58%. Work with architects and builders continues to ensure the minimum standards are met and the market share is maintained and improved.

Work continues with local communities to take forward a shared vision for the future of their towns through the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. Ringwood's Neighbourhood Plan was subject to public consultation in Feb/Mar 2023.

Key performance indicators	Unit	Target	2021/22	2022/23	RAG
Number of houses completed each year (as set out in the Annual Authority Monitoring Report)	Num	400	79	TBC-July23	
Number of green infrastructure projects delivered each year	Num	3	3	3	
Number of Biodiversity Net Gain projects delivered each year	Num	-	4	15	
Additional employment floorspace created within the district	m ²	-	3,591m ²	TBC-July23	
New Forest District Council building control market share	%	55%	55%	58%	
Determination of planning applications within the nationally prescribed time frames	%	Major 60%, Minor 70%, Other 80%	Major 90%, Minor 65%, Other 85%	Major 100%, Minor 81%, Other 86%	
Number of projects that New Forest District Council are involved in to deliver sustainable transport options	Num	-	9	13	



Housing and homelessness services

Creating balanced communities and housing options that are affordable and sustainable

The Housing teams continued to work towards the strategic objectives set out in the Housing Strategy 2018.

Since a peak of over 90 households in emergency accommodation in June 2022, the number has now reduced to 49, with 20 awaiting to move into longer term accommodation – progress that has been aided through the provision of three additional council owned Temporary Accommodation schemes during 2022/23. And with plans moving forward to refurbish the Parsonage Barn Lane Hostel in Ringwood, more family temporary accommodation is due to complete in the current year. £180k grant funding secured to prevent the use of temporary accommodation for prison leavers.

Our Multi-Agency approach has evolved to focus on building specific partnerships with single agencies or small groups of local voluntary groups. Strategic Partnerships across Hampshire have continued to work on improving hospital and prison discharges.

The Government funding of £729k to fund Rough Sleeper Services for the next 3 years has been secured. This includes employment and counselling services to support rough sleepers back in to work. Two specific buildings for rough sleepers are now in use and the complex rough sleeper cohort reduced from 8 to 1, and rough sleepers on any given night reduced from 30 to 1.

The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund has awarded the council £560K to deliver 70 Air Source Heat Pumps this year with 3 members of staff undergoing qualifications in PAS2035 Retrofit Assessment. New retrofit modelling software has been procured and the pilot hot water and heating flat upgrade scheme project has commenced.

The Empty Homes Strategy has been delivered bringing 47 properties back into use and we are currently working on bringing further 72 homes back into use.

During the year a total of 101 new affordable homes were provided across the New Forest, with 50 delivered

Priorities

Meeting local housing needs and promoting sustainable growth.

Increasing the supply of high-quality affordable homes.

Improving the housing circumstances of those most in need.

Enabling the best use of housing to meet the needs of people, including support for a high quality, strong private rented sector.

by the council. 12 new build homes featured enhanced energy efficiency measures and access to electric vehicle charging points, and 23 are addressing the priority need for temporary accommodation. To date a total of 285 additional council homes have now been completed towards the target of 600 additional homes by 2026, with a further 144 in the pipeline or under construction.

Partnerships with Mental Health services go from strength to strength and joint focus is turning to how the MH Practitioner can be funded in the long term.

NFDC has been involved in the co-production of the HCC Care Leavers protocol and is enhancing relationships with practitioners by delivering County Wide training.

Compliance Monitoring has been enhanced with bi-monthly Strategic Compliance Board, monthly Fire Safety Operational Group, quarterly Fire Safety Strategies Group, and the Annual Compliance Report has been published and received scrutiny from EMT and the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel.

New Tenant Satisfaction Measures will require NFDC to report compliance annually to Government in 2024 and two Landlord Forums have been held in 2022 to support a safe and thriving private rented sector and support the council to tackle homelessness.

Key performance indicators	Unit	Target	2021/22	2022/23	RAG
Additional council homes delivered by 2026 (cumulative figures)	Num	600	24 (235)	50 (285)	
Additional affordable homes delivered by others	Num	60	N/A	51	
Prevention duty cases successfully prevented	%	50%	56%	56%	Green
Private sector property inspections resulting in Category 1 hazards	%	<40%	27%	24%	Green
Rough sleepers entering accommodation pathway	%	32%	19%	70.25%	Green
Households in external emergency B&B accommodation	Num	<70	79	49	Green



People and places

Engaging with our communities and maintaining the quality of the place in which they live

In support of the arts and cultural heritage of the New Forest the Culture in Common programme has launched and is led by our partners Energise Me. A programme director and a programme administrator have been employed to deliver the 3-year programme. Culture in Common is a community engagement project and Community Anchors have been recruited and trained to ensure that the cultural programme is developed by the targeted local communities. A business and development plan have been written and submitted to the Arts Council England. The district council are a member of the managing consortium.

A number of projects have been delivered, including "Halloween in Hythe", the Totton Lantern Procession, Family Support Services Christmas event with song writing in New Milton, Junk Band workshop with military families, Rap workshop, and Clay Model and Walk Workshops.

As part of our work with the Arts Council England we received partnership funding to recruit a Creative and Cultural Development Officer post. This post has taken on the development of Folio and scoping of future arts and cultural offers within the district.

A Resident Insight survey was undertaken to gauge the views of our residents, resulting in a higher than average level of satisfaction across our services, according to national benchmarks LGA reports. Building on this work, a project has commenced to better understand our processes and service delivery from a customer perspective and the technology opportunities to improve the way we work in this area. The Waste and Operations ICT project contract has been awarded and will focus on improvements to the customer experience.

Total spend on Councillor Community Engagement Grants for 2022/23, was £68,792.16, (this included the spend of carry-over from 2021/22).

Priorities

Putting residents at the centre of what we do and how we do it.

Modernising customer services and responding to changing needs.

Engaging with partners and the community to inform and contribute towards wider outcomes.

Ensuring our open space is clean, accessible, and well maintained, and contributes to the sustainable and natural environment of the New Forest.

Supporting the arts and cultural heritage of the New Forest.

The council also approved community grant awards to 13 organisations of £129,600 (revenue) and 6 organisations of £92,000 (capital). The continuation of Community Transport grants was also approved.

External funding has been identified for elements of the Litter Strategy Delivery with two-year funding secured for a 'Behavioural Insight Post' to help change people's attitude towards littering and its impact on our environment. Funding has also been identified for the second trial area for 'Smart Bins'.

Arrangements have been put in place to collect and dispose of specialist waste containing persistent organic pollutants, such as soft furnishings. Any mixed loads containing these items must now be incinerated and treated as a separate waste stream, in compliance with the legislation announced in August. Consequently, the approach to the removal and enforcement action taken in relation to fly tipping has been updated.

Key performance indicators	Unit	Target	2021/22	2022/23	RAG
Trees removed from NFDC land	Num	-	376	314	
Trees planted on NFDC land	Num	-	181	296*	
Total fly tipping incidents responded to	Num	-	2,613	2,552	
Specialist fly tipping** incidents responded to	Num	-	N/A	26	
Website optimisations resulting in an improved customer experience	Num	4	17	5	
Website accessibility (Target is government set benchmark)	%	87%	91%	89%	

* Figure includes 60 trees planted for Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee and 236 trees as part of 2:1. 700 whips were additionally planted to as part of Jubilee celebration.

** 'Specialist fly tipping' refers to the incidents that have health or other implications, and require specialists (e.g. asbestos or clinical waste).



Finance, investment and corporate services

Enabling service provision and ensuring value for money for the council tax payer

A balanced budget for 2023/24 was set by the Council in February 2023 with a Council Tax increase of 2.99% in line with the Government's parameters. The council's Medium Term Financial Plan was updated as part of that budget setting report, and actions are underway to address the forecast deficit over the medium term.

Additional support was made available in response to the Cost of Living and energy crisis. Using the Household Support Fund, food vouchers totalling £701,950 were distributed to 8,737 households along with £99,350 to support 363 financially vulnerable households with their housing costs. The government provided Council Tax Support Funding of £208,018 to support households in receipt of Council Tax Support with their council tax bills for 23/24. To date 4,058 households have been supported, totalling £139,681.

A Cost of Living Steering Group has been established with partners to support the Food Larders and 5 Community Hubs with focus on the promotion of the support available, including providing funding of £17,700 to 22 organisations for the provision of warm spaces.

Other support has included 458 businesses being granted £4,356,538 of COVID Additional Relief Funding and a one-off £150 Council Tax Energy Rebate payment was awarded to 53,631 eligible households totalling £8,044,650, and £321,117 to 7,262 households from our discretionary energy rebate scheme. Additionally, the Government has provided funding of £1,435,200 for the Energy Bill Support Scheme and £236,000 for the Alternative Fuel scheme. These schemes support households not eligible for the direct payment support, with a one-off payment of £400 and £200 respectively. These schemes commenced during February 2023 and end on 31 May 2023. To date we have distributed £317,000 to 828 households.

Priorities

Protecting front line services through sound financial planning, including the collection of taxation with appropriate support for individuals and businesses.

Modernisation and innovative use of ICT to enhance operational efficiencies across all services.

Using investments to support financial resilience and the local economy.

Providing support to residents with benefits and welfare reforms, and supporting businesses to access financial reliefs and grants.

The Platinum Jubilee Business Park has been completed and heads of terms have been agreed for 68% of the available space in support of business activity and jobs within the district. £150K was approved for the improvements at Salisbury Road Totton suburban retail units. Appletree Lettings acquired further residential properties and now holds 16 homes in its portfolio providing open market rental housing.

Planning permission was secured for the construction of the new operational depot at Hardley and the council is undertaking the tender process for the appointment of the building contractor.

Modernisation of digital systems continues across services, including an updated payment system, launch of the new housing management system (Locata), a refreshed audio-visual setup in the council chamber and continued adoption of Microsoft 365 tools.

Delivery of additional modernisation proposals will be driven by our customer and transformation objectives as well as continuous digital service improvements.

Key performance indicators	Unit	Target	2021/22	2022/23	RAG
Achieved a balanced budget with reasonable council tax increases	% / £	Greater of 2% or £5*	£5	2.99% / £5.63 (23/24 bud)	Green
General Fund budget variations	%	+/-3%	-8.10%	-2.74%	Green
HRA Fund budget variations	%	+/-3%	-	3.89%	Yellow
Value of Original Capital programme delivered	%	80%	-	84%	Green
Increase in the value of residential investment	£m	£8m	£3.4m	£5.1m	Yellow
Increase in the value of commercial investment	£m	£30m	£14m	£29.3m**	Green
Maintain high level of Council Tax collected	%	98.50%	98.53%	98.56%	Green
Maintain high level of NNDR collected	%	98.50%	98.45%	98.83%	Green
ICT incidents resolved with SLA	%	95%	96%	96.8%	Green

* 21/22 performance represents setting of 22/23 budget. Target represents setting of 23/24 budget.

** Reported figure includes invoiced and committed amounts for Platinum Jubilee Development.



Partnering and wellbeing

Improving the health and wellbeing of our community

Since the commencement of the second year of the contract in July 2022, Freedom Leisure have continually grown their membership base. Health and Fitness memberships increased by 6.2% in total during the period of July 2022 to March 2023 with just under 2,000 people joining a health and fitness membership.

Membership Numbers have grown by a net 371 members, totalling 5,966 members across the portfolio at the end of March, is the highest number it has been since the contract commenced. Free swimming for under 3's saw 1,339 attendees during the year and nearly 10,000 attendees to active lifestyle classes across all sites.

Freedom Leisure have also largely concluded their £2.4million capital investment programmes at three of the five district leisure centres as at the 31st March. Applemore, Ringwood and Totton improvements included a new reception and café areas, upgraded changing rooms and new soft play facilities.

The contract with MyTime Active at Dibden Golf Centre has shown strong performance, with pay and play golf participation levels increasing, up on pre pandemic levels. The popularity of golf has continued with participation averaging 2,300 golfers per month and the clubhouse hosting several festive functions and weddings during the winter months.

The council continues to work closely with sports clubs to encourage increased levels of participation in sport, which has included supporting the development of new football facilities in Ringwood.

The council's Health and Wellbeing Plan has been adopted to support the outcomes identified in the 'Strategy for the Health and Wellbeing of Hampshire'. The identified priorities included 'Increasing Physical Activity' and 'Improving Mental Wellbeing' as well as 'Working in Partnership' with both community, regional and national partners.

The Food and Safety team inspected 100% of the high risk, non-compliant food businesses within the set timescales in the Food Standards Agency Recovery Plan. A total of 683

Priorities

Working with partners to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents.

Ensuring that public health prevention principles are embedded within core services of the council.

Increasing the level of physical activity within the district.

Providing affordable, accessible, and sustainable leisure facilities.

Ensuring regulatory services are delivered for the benefit of our residents.

Ensuring the New Forest remains a safe place to live, work and visit.

food premises received an inspection, of which 150 were new food businesses setting up in the district. Currently 82% of food businesses in the New Forest have the top food hygiene rating score of 5 compared to the national average of 77% of businesses.

A review of the Taxi Tariff has been undertaken, with a subsequent increase in fares to support the local taxi trade and the Taxi Licensing Policy is being revised and updated, in order that it reflects all statutory standards and best practice guidance to ensure a safe, inclusive, accessible and attractive service across the New Forest.

Event guidance has been produced for licensed premises which gives advice on the control of noise from premises and health and safety guidance, to assist businesses in running events safely and successfully whilst reducing the likelihood of noise complaints.

Community safety remains a high priority. Public space cameras operate in 7 towns and villages across the District, providing an active deterrence to crime and disorder. The council's CCTV Service actively tracked 527 offences between January and December 2022. 109 partners and professionals attended the 'No Age for Abuse' webinar training event convened by the Community Safety team at the end of 2022. The event highlighted the need for additional therapeutic support for victims of domestic abuse, provided partners with additional tools and resources when responding and supporting this particular vulnerable group.

The upgrade and the digital platform for the Appletree Careline remained on target throughout 2022, commencing the transition stage of switching from an analogue to digital system in early 2023.

Key performance indicators	Unit	Target	2021/22	2022/23	RAG
Participation in Community Safety engagement events and completion of annual crime and disorder survey	Num	5	5	14	Green
Residents' satisfaction on the low level of reported crime and anti-social behaviour within the district	%	95%	97%	96%	Green
Inactivity levels	%	-	28.7%	18.4%	Green
Level of investment in the leisure centres by Freedom Leisure (cumulative)	£	£2,407,900 (by Jan 23)	N/A	£2,095,000	Yellow
Support Communities through programmes to improve the mental wellbeing of residents (cumulative)	Num	3	3	5	Green
Increase the engagement with lower socio-economic communities (cumulative)	Num	3	3	6	Green
Sedentary adults with recognised medical conditions enrolled in the Freedom Leisure Active Lifestyles referral programme	Num	100	339	347	Green
Inspections of higher risk and non-compliant food businesses to improve public safety	%	98%	83%	100%	Green



Environment and coastal services

Working to reduce the impact on our special environment and protecting communities by managing our changing coastlines

Following the appointment of the Climate Change & Sustainability Manager in November 2022 work is now underway across all four work programmes identified in the Climate Change and Nature Emergency report and Action Plan 2023 - carbon reduction, nature recovery, climate resilience and programme management. With the oversight of the Climate Change and Nature Steering Group, progress has been made on both internal and external projects, with a number of initiatives being driven by services and/or in partnership with key stakeholders.

Notable projects in development include energy assessments of key corporate sites, investigations into fleet and depot electrification, creation of a community renewable energy programme, and collaboration between housing, planning and environmental colleagues to deliver energy and biodiversity improvements across the council's housing estate. Member and staff events have taken place to raise awareness of climate and sustainability and build support to service improvements. Wider engagement included a focused stakeholder event with partners to inform them about the climate and nature emergency.

Cross-service working is underway to ensure that our response to the Climate Change and Nature Emergency is proportionate to the anticipated risks of climate change, and delivered in a way that contributes to corporate and district-wide sustainability.

The council approved a new Waste Strategy in 2022, which will increase recycling, and reduce waste and carbon emissions.

Procurement of goods and services to support the rollout of garden waste wheeled bins in 2024 and the wider service change in 2025 is underway.

Work with Hampshire partners to understand local implications of national waste and recycling policy changes continues. An operations ICT system supplier has been appointed and contract mobilisation is now underway, for implementation by 2024, which will support the council's Waste Strategy.

Plans and funding opportunities to protect our coastline continue to be developed. Christchurch Bay Strategy has been progressing with completion due early 2024.

Priorities

Ensuring sustainability is at the centre of our decisions to preserve resources and the environment for future generations.

Working with others to protect and enhance our natural environment.

Reducing waste and increasing recycling.

Developing plans and funding opportunities to protect our coastline.

Supporting sustainability and the local economy through the strategic review and use of car parking assets.

Developing a strategy for our assets at Keyhaven, considering environmental objectives, flood protection and the local economy.

Investment planning for Hurst to Lymington (H2L) Strategy is to commence around Autumn 2023.

Work on the delivery of future Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) activities has continued through the development of two strategies, with NFDC being involved at both project team and board level. NFDC continued to work with BCP Council on the delivery of the Christchurch Bay and Harbour FCERM Strategy. The draft shortlist options appraisal report has been completed and further engagement with local communities is being planned for June 2023. Investment planning for the Hurst to Lymington (H2L) Strategy is to commence around Autumn 2023.

Hurst Spit recycling works have been completed, circa 7,600m³ of shingle was recycled from North Point back onto the main body of the spit to ensure it has greater resilience to storm events.

The council installed a further 12 public electric vehicle charging points in 2022-23. Phase 2 of the installation programme is progressing with the planned ultra-rapid hub in Ringwood and additional rapid charging points at Lymington St Thomas Street car park.

Key performance indicators	Unit	Target	2021/22	2022/23	RAG
Household waste sent for reuse, recycling, and composting	%	55%	33%	33.4%	
Number of electric charging points	Num	10	29	12	
Total CO ₂ emissions saved through electric charging points (cumulative)*	kg	9,250kg	7,275kg	18,000kg	
Climate change action plan delivered against target	%	Monitor	-	Adopted in 2023	

*Data (including target) reflects cumulative CO₂ emissions saved through electric charging points since programme launch in January 2022.



Business, tourism and high streets

Helping local businesses to grow and prosper

The council continued to work with partners and businesses this year to grow the New Forest economy.

The council maintains a database on key employers in the district, which helps to inform and target business engagement activities. The council publicises opportunities to support growth and resilience via a business e-newsletter and dedicated social media. Just over 3,500 businesses across the district were subscribed to the business support e-newsletter this past year.

The council administered the government's Covid support Additional Restrictions Grant 6 for businesses, allocating 162 grants totalling £647,590.

The council continued to promote the value of apprenticeship schemes to businesses, as well as the support available to employers. Liaison with the local Job Centre Plus continued to promote services and engage with jobseekers, residents and businesses, and the council has worked closely with providers of skills training, including the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership, to encourage businesses to take up the opportunities presented.

The Central and West Hampshire Youth Employment Hub was a partnership between New Forest District Council, other local councils and the Department for Work and Pensions. The Hub connected with and listened to young people, offering skills training and routes into employment, and worked closely with employers and training and education providers. The Hub provided ongoing face to face support to 86 young people from across the district.

Work is ongoing with partners such as the Solent Growth Hub and Get Set for Growth Solent that ensures New Forest businesses have access to support and investment in their business, and council engages with the Department for International Trade to identify key inward investment and to share progress on investment sites.

The council has initiated schemes to support our high streets. The New Forest Shop Doctor programme aims to improve the customer experience in identified town centres

Priorities

Continuing to work with partners and businesses grow the New Forest economy.

Lobbying for essential improvements in broadband and mobile connectivity.

Helping businesses, industries, and high streets respond to social, environmental, and technological changes and innovation.

Supporting the visitor economy across the New Forest district.

Continuing to promote the New Forest as a filming destination.

through a series of mystery shopper visits to participating businesses. The 2023 programme was open to independent retail and hospitality businesses in Hythe, Lyndhurst, Brockenhurst, New Milton, Barton on Sea and Milford on Sea. 78 local businesses were visited, and feedback has been delivered directly to businesses and via feedback events for the towns.

The council provided a short-term loan to the New Forest Enterprise Centre during 2022 to facilitate a major refurbishment project. The centre continues to perform well in terms of occupancy, providing premises to over 60 businesses and organisations.

The council's own investment in property within the district continues to provide accommodation for businesses operating out of the New Forest. The joint project within the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Investment and Corporate Services to build the Platinum Jubilee Business Park is an excellent example of this council playing a significant role in supporting the New Forest economy.

Key performance indicators	Unit	Target	2021/22	2022/23	RAG
Business engaged in the business engagement programme	Num	100	1,633*	357	Green
Film:New Forest - value of filming in the district	£	£75,000	£234,750	£245,300	Green
Subscribers to 'Helping local businesses grow' e-news	Num	3,000	3,687	3,566	Green
New Forest locations available to Film and TV productions via Film:New Forest location database	Num	80	81	107	Green

*Figures for 21/22 include businesses benefiting from Covid support.

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FINANCIAL MONITORING 2022/23

GENERAL FUND OUTTURN 2022/23

	Feb-22	Feb-23	Outturn 2022/23			
	2022/23 £'000's Original Budget	2022/23 £'000's Updated Budget	2022/23 £'000's New Variations Expend.	2022/23 £'000's New Variations Income	2022/23 £'000's New Variations Rephasings	2022/23 £'000's Outturn Position
PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS						
Business, Tourism and High Streets	297	310	-7	0	-5	298
Environment and Coastal Services	4,100	4,372	56	-128	-93	4,207
Finance, Investment and Corporate Services	3,778	3,216	228	-290	-237	2,917
Housing and Homelessness Services	2,025	3,375	-8	-9	-313	3,045
Leader	496	570	-18	0	-92	460
Partnering and Wellbeing	3,013	3,150	-114	-1	-58	2,977
People and Places	3,713	3,997	-14	-49	-66	3,868
Planning, Regeneration and Infrastructure	2,696	2,690	-86	-120	-82	2,402
Multi Portfolio adjustments - To be allocated	0	228	-210	0	-18	0
	20,118	21,908	-173	-597	-964	20,174
Reversal of Depreciation	-1,589	-1,589	46			-1,543
Contribution (from) / to Earmarked Revenue Reserves	-38	-284	-402	71	964	349
NET PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS	18,491	20,035	-529	-526	0	18,980
Minimum Revenue Provision	1,571	1,626	-143			1,483
Contribution to Capital Programme Financing (RCCO)	1,750	850	825			1,675
Interest Earnings (Net)	-772	-772	10	-903		-1,665
New Homes Bonus	-366	-366				-366
GENERAL FUND NET BUDGET REQUIREMENTS	20,674	21,373	163	-1,429	0	20,107
COUNCIL TAX CALCULATION						
Budget Requirement	20,674	21,373	163	-1,429		20,107
Less: Settlement Funding Assessment						
Lower Tier Service Grant	-179	-179		-4		-183
Services/Other Grant	-276	-276		-9		-285
Business Rates Baseline	-3,997	-3,997				-3,997
	-4,452	-4,452	0	-13	0	-4,465
Locally Retained Business Rates	-2,185	-2,185		580		-1,605
Estimated Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit Business Rates	-199	-199				-199
Estimated Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit Council Tax	-253	-253				-253
Use of (-) / Contribution to (+) Variation Reserves	0	-699	-163	862		0
COUNCIL TAX	13,585	13,585	0	0	0	13,585
TAX BASE NUMBER OF PROPERTIES	72,122.70	72,122.70				72,122.70
COUNCIL TAX PER BAND D PROPERTY	188.36	188.36				188.36
GENERAL FUND BALANCE 31 MARCH	3,000	3,000				3,000

FINANCIAL MONITORING 2022/23

VARIATION ANALYSIS GENERAL FUND 2022/23

PORTFOLIO ADJUSTMENTS

Business, Tourism and High Streets

Economic Development - Salary /Supplies & Service underspends
Corporate Allocations re ICT rephasings

Outturn			
2022/23	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23
£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
New	New	New	New
Variations	Variations	Variations	Variations
Expend.	Income	Rephasings	Total
-7			-5
-7	0	-5	-12
8			
99			
-66			
14	45		
87			
		-13	
		-1	-20
-83			
	-134		
	-25	-20	
			-53
-20			
17			
56	-128	-93	-165
	-49		
-27	-10		
	-27		
212			
-2	-44		
15	-130		
113	-23		
2	8		
	-15		
-23			
		-188	
-51			
		-49	
-12			
1			
228	-290	-237	-299
-5	-21		
4	15		
		-269	
20			
		-44	
-6			
-21	-3		
-8	-9	-313	-330
		-86	
-24			
		-6	
6			
-18	0	-92	-110

Environment and Coastal Services

Climate and Nature Action - £8k spend on revenue
Car Parks - Meter income collection/running costs +£60k, Employees various £30k, other £9k
Coast Protection - Maintenance underspend
Keyhaven - Employees costs & Income shortfall
Refuse Coll. - Transport +£86k (See Rec.), Op. +£38k, Tip Fees +£25k & ICT -£70k, net +£8k
Refuse Coll. - Special Collections income higher than budgeted
Refuse Coll. - Vehicle refurbishment underspend/rephase
Recycling - Non Op. Vacancies -£50k, Op. +£30k, Transport -£83k (see Refuse), other +£20k
Recycling - income - Glass sales -£68k, Trade Waste -£32k, Project Integra -£26k, other -£8k
Recycling - Vehicle refurbishment underspend/rephase
Corporate Allocations re ICT rephasings
Pension costs allocation
Net Other

Finance, Investment and Corporate Services

Commercial Investment Properties - net additional rents
R&B - Housing Benefits Admin (£27k salaries underspend, DCLG £10k variation on budget)
R&B - Rent Allowances Benefits
R&B - Rent Rebates
R&B - NNDR Collection (DCLG Grant £44k & net other -£2k)
R&B - Council Tax Collection (DCLG Grant -£130k & net other +£15k)
Corporate Management (external audit fee +£68k, SA10* +£56k, other £-11k, DCLG Grant -£23k,)
Treasury Management (HRA Debt Mngt Fee Income)
Covid-19 NFDC (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy Grant)
Pension Increase Act - Added Years Pension (variation to budget)
Contingency - Corporate Plan Priorities
Contingency - Other
Corporate Allocations re ICT rephasings
Pension costs allocation
Net Other

Housing and Homelessness Services

Stillwater Park
Homelessness
Homes for Ukraine
Shared Amenities Contribution
Corporate Allocations re ICT rephasings
Pension costs allocation
Net Other

Leader

UK Shared Prosperity Fund
Registration of Electors - Canvasser Salaries Underspend
Corporate Allocations re ICT rephasings
Net Other

FINANCIAL MONITORING 2022/23

VARIATION ANALYSIS GENERAL FUND 2022/23

PORTFOLIO ADJUSTMENTS

Partnering and Wellbeing

	Outturn			
	2022/23 £'000's New Variations Expend.	2022/23 £'000's New Variations Income	2022/23 £'000's New Variations Rephasings	2022/23 £'000's New Variations Total
Air Pollution - Rephase DERFA Grant				-9
Pest Control - income shortfall	-1	24		
Public Lighting - Electricity underspend	-37			
Health & Leisure - AMR Underspends	-317			
Health & Leisure - Contractual Payment Provision	287			
Health & Leisure - Salary Underspends	-11			
Health & Leisure - income		-25		
Community Safety supplies & Services underspends	-13			
Corporate Allocations re ICT rephasings			-49	
Net Other	-22			
	-114	-1	-58	-173

People and Places

Eling Tide Mill - Running costs grant not paid -£32k & Maintenance underspend -£4k	-36			
Grants - Rephase x 4 grants not completed in 22/23			-43	
Open Spaces - Maint. etc overspend +£15k / DC income -£37k & Other income -£5k	15	-42		
Open Spaces - Committed CIL Maintenance Expenditure - See Reserve below	7			
Corporate Allocations re ICT rephasings			-23	
Net Other		-7		
	-14	-49	-66	-129

Planning, Regeneration and Infrastructure

S106 Monitoring Income (into reserve)		-69		
Building Control - Overspend salaries/Shortfall income	17	37		
Policy- Underspends Salaries and Supplies& Services/Additional Income	-71	-47		
Policy (Trees/Env Action) Underspends Salaries	-24			
Development Management - Additional Income		-41		
Net Other	-8			
Corporate Allocations re ICT rephasings			-82	
	-86	-120	-82	-288

Portfolio adjustments - Non Direct

ICT Work Programme			-18	
Reallocated to Services	-210			
	-210	0	-18	-228

TOTAL PORTFOLIO ADJUSTMENTS

	-173	-597	-964	-1734
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NON-PORTFOLIO ADJUSTMENTS

Minimum Revenue Provision				
Contribution to Capital Programme Financing (RCCO)				
Contribution to/from(-) Earmarked Reserves	-402	71	964	
TOTAL NON-PORTFOLIO ADJUSTMENTS	-402	71	964	633

GRAND TOTAL ADJUSTMENTS (Credited to (-) / Debited from (+) Budget Reserves)

	-575	-526	0	-1101
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FINANCIAL MONITORING 2022/23

REVISED HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET
2022/23

	Feb-22	Feb-23	Outturn 2022/23	
	2022/23 £'000 Original Budget	2022/23 £'000 Updated Budget	2022/23 £'000 New Variations	2022/23 £'000 Outturn Position
INCOME				
Dwelling Rents	-28,414	-28,094	-5	-28,099
Non Dwelling Rents	-672	-652	-6	-658
Charges for Services & Facilities	-732	-756	-15	-771
Contributions towards Expenditure	-60	-60		-60
Interest Receivable	-58	-58	-135	-193
Sales Administration Recharge	-33	-33	7	-26
Shared Amenities Contribution	-256	-256	-20	-276
TOTAL INCOME	-30,225	-29,909	-174	-30,083
EXPENDITURE				
Repairs & Maintenance				
Cyclical Maintenance	1,196	1,324	40	1,364
Reactive Maintenance	3,648	4,136	42	4,178
Supervision & Management				
General Management	6,209	6,385	-134	6,251
Special Services	1,377	1,831	-161	1,670
Homeless Assistance	91	131	-18	113
Rents, Rates, Taxes and Other Charges	81	81	61	142
Provision for Bad Debt	150	150	110	260
Capital Financing Costs - Settlement Adjustment	8,156	8,156		8,156
Capital Financing Costs - Development Strategy	397	397	-210	187
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	21,305	22,591	-270	22,321
HRA OPERATING SURPLUS(-)	-8,920	-7,318	-444	-7,762
Contribution to Capital - supporting Housing Strategy	9,120	9,120	0	9,120
HRA Total Annual Surplus(-) / Deficit	200	1,802	-444	1,358
Use of HRA Reserve for Major Projects	-200	-200	26	-174
HRA TOTAL ANNUAL SURPLUS(-) / DEFICIT	0	1,602	-418	1,184

FINANCIAL MONITORING 2022/23

CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN 2022/23

	Portfolio	Feb-22	Feb-23	Outturn 2022/23		
		2022/23 £'000's Original Budget	2022/23 £'000's Updated Budget	2022/23 £'000's New Variations Expend.	2022/23 £'000's New Variations Rephasing	2022/23 £'000's Outturn Position
Sustainability Fund - Unallocated	ENV/ALL	500	300	-300		
Sustainability Fund - Crow Lane Solar Panels	ENV/ALL		200	26		226
Disabled Facilities Grants	HSG (GF)	1,200	900	-37		863
South East Regional Coastal Monitoring Prog (22-27)	ENV & COAST	1,978	1,466		383	1,849
South East Regional Coastal Monitoring Prog (18-21)	ENV & COAST		363		-295	68
South East Regional Coastal Monitoring Prog (12-17)	ENV & COAST		12	-1		11
Barton Horizontal Directional Drilling Trails	ENV & COAST	225	50		-50	
Milford Promenade Handrail	ENV & COAST	115	115	-44	-6	65
Hurst Spit Beach Shingle Source Study	ENV & COAST	100	15		-13	2
Public Convenience Modernisation Programme	PEOPLE & PL	300				
Public Convenience Refurbishment - Lymington Quay	PEOPLE & PL		235			235
Public Convenience Modernisation Programme - Barton on Sea	PEOPLE & PL		32			32
Public Convenience Changing Places - Brockenhurst	PEOPLE & PL				2	2
Public Convenience Changing Places - Hythe	PEOPLE & PL				3	3
Public Convenience Modernisation Programme - Tech. advisor	PEOPLE & PL		15	5		20
Health & Leisure Centres	PART & WELL		2,014		-305	1,709
New Depot Site: Hardley	F,I & CS	4,000	500		-293	207
V&P; Replacement Programme	F,I & CS	3,081	1,800	45	-106	1,739
Smarter Working; Future Delivery (Office 365)	F,I & CS		75	-29		46
Economic Sustainability & Regeneration Projects						
- Crow Lane Ringwood	F,I & CS	4,995	5,667	-653		5,014
Station Road, New Milton	F,I & CS		5,430			5,430
1b Junction Road, Totton (Inv Prop)	F,I & CS			237		237
Unit 800 Ampress Park, Wellworthy Road (Inv Prop)	F,I & CS			2,078		2,078
Appletree Property Holdings	F,I & CS			442		442
Transport Schemes	P, R & I		100	3		103
Open Space / Mitigation Schemes	P, R & I	680	1,410	-25	-125	1,260
TOTAL GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME		17,174	20,699	1,747	-805	21,641
HRA - Major Repairs	HRA	5,500	5,500	-217		5,283
Major Structural Refurbishments	HRA	1,000	1,000		-635	365
Fire Risk Assessment Works	HRA	3,000	3,000		-585	2,415
Estate Improvements	HRA	200	200	16		216
Development Strategy	HRA	14,200	10,200	2,457		12,657
Disabled Facilities Grants	HRA	1,000	1,000	141		1,141
TOTAL HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME		24,900	20,900	2,397	-1,220	22,077
GRAND TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME		42,074	41,599	4,144	-2,025	43,718

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HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – 21 JUNE 2023

DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS - FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel considers the draft Disabled Facilities Grant - Financial Assistance Policy and makes a recommendation to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report presents the Council's draft Disabled Facilities Grant - Financial Assistance policy. This is a refreshed policy to take into account the latest guidance and best practice, and also to reflect grant increases due to the increased costs of works, requiring a more flexible approach to the award of funding. The proposed Policy is attached at Appendix 1.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) provide funding to improve accessibility and enable people to remain living independently in their own homes.
- 3.2 The Council has a statutory duty to administer DFGs. The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996; as amended by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002 (RRO) requires all Local Authorities to have a published document in place setting out the Council's policy on the aims and application of the local grant scheme.
- 3.3 The Council receives funding each year from the Government via the Better Care Fund to deliver the scheme in private housing. The budget for 23/24 is £1.2m. DFGs delivered to the Council's housing stock are funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The budget for 23/24 is £950k.
- 3.4 In 22/23 the Council delivered 97 and 84 DFGs in the Council's housing stock and other housing respectively.
- 3.5 In accordance with the regulations the maximum amount of grant allowed for each referral is up to £30,000, or other such amount determined by the Secretary of State. The Council is receiving an increasing number of complex referrals and requests for assistance, whereby senior officer discretion is increasingly being applied to increase the grant funding available to provide effective solutions. The number of requests for extensions (bathrooms or extra bedrooms) to existing housing is also increasing. Coupled with an increase in building costs, current policy limits are no longer able to provide adequate funding in an increasing number of referrals.
- 3.6 The revised policy proposes increases to existing spending limits to reduce the need for senior officer discretion on individual cases, which are becoming more common place.

4. Housing Financial Assistance Policy Key Components

- 4.1 The eligibility requirements, scope of works, and the general requirements governing mandatory DFGs are prescribed in legislation, and the Council is unable to deviate from these requirements.

- 4.2 However, the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (RRO) enables the Council to offer discretionary funding to promote independent living and wellbeing.
- 4.3 This discretionary funding can be delivered through several separate grants, covering different scenarios or criteria. Currently the Council has a number of separate discretionary grants available with maximum grant awards previously agreed by Members. It is proposed to increase several of these amounts to reflect inflationary increases in building costs and the increase in complex cases, which often require additional discretionary funding, on top of mandatory maximum allowances, to deliver effective adaptation schemes for disabled household members.
- 4.4 Whilst there are a number of discretionary funding elements within the proposed policy, in reality, discretionary funding is only ever granted in a small number of cases. In 22/23 the average spend on a DFG was £9,242. Discretionary funding above the mandatory DFG of £30k, was applied to 4 cases from the HRA and 2 cases from the Better Care Fund.
- 4.5 A summary of proposed funding revisions are shown below:

Table 1: Existing discretionary grants and revisions:

Type of Grant or Loan	Previous maximum funding limit	Proposed maximum funding limit
Additional DFG Top Up Grant	£10,000	£30,000
DFG Top Up Loan	£15,000	£15,000
Home Removal Loan	£10,000	To be renamed Relocation Grant* to provide financial support to move - £5,000. No longer provided as a loan.
Client Contribution Loan	£10,000	£10,000
Palliative Care Grant	£5,000	Delete - To be renamed Safe, Suitable and Warm Grant** - £5,000
Home Repair Loan	£15,000	£15,000
Hospital Discharge Grant	£5,000	£7,500
Minor Disabled Adaptation Grant	£1,000	Delete - Amended to Safe, Suitable and Warm Grant** - £5,000
NFDC contribution grant – where the means test determines the applicant must contribute to the DFG but specific circumstances make this prohibitive	New Proposal	£10,000
*Relocation Grant	New Proposal	£5,000
**Safe, Suitable and Warm Grant	New Proposal	£5,000
Abortive Fees Grant – where an application is withdrawn but has incurred fees, to reduce the financial impact on vulnerable people.	New Proposal	£2,000

- 4.6 The proposed funding options will enable more flexibility in NFDC’s approach to delivering adaptations, ensuring that those residents that need more extensive adaptations, or funds to allow them to access adaptations can be supported to do so and access funding available.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 This Financial Assistance Policy supports the Council’s Private Sector Housing Policy to enable safe independent living, and the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in preventing homelessness.
- 5.2 It is proposed that the DFG - Financial Assistance Policy be approved by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The funding for private properties including Registered Providers is through the Better Care Fund, allocated by Hampshire County Council. The Council currently has a reserve fund of £1.6m for private housing (a historic balance held and added to by an underspend during the covid pandemic) and any additional expenditure can be drawn down from this reserve, with financial approval.
- 6.2 The funding for Council owned properties is via the Housing Revenue Account, where £950k has been allocated for 23/24. It is not proposed to increase this budget.

7. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no crime & disorder implications arising from this policy

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 When carrying out adaptations in Council owned stock, the council aims to employ sustainable works and materials in line with its Greener Housing Strategy.

9. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are positive implications for those affected by particular characteristics and the award of grants under this Policy in bringing about much needed adaptations enabling people to remain independent in their properties for longer. The proposed revisions will enable more people to benefit from such works.
- 9.2 The revisions are designed to provide increased access to funding and increase the number of suitable solutions provided to vulnerable people.

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Background Papers:

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Disabled facilities grant financial assistance policy



Document

Name of policy	Disabled Facilities Grant Financial Assistance Policy
Document reference	HLSPOL15
Purpose of policy	This Policy sets out the mandatory legal framework for disabled facilities grants, and how the Council intends to use its powers under the RRO to provide interventions to promote independent living and well-being.
Policy applies to	This policy applies to all residents that require adaptations to their home in assisting them to remain independent and safe within their property, and applies to residents who live within Council housing stock and private housing.
Lead officer	Private Sector Housing Manager
First issued	1 May 2023
Latest update	
Version control	V1.0 1 May 2023
Review period	At least every three years from date of issue or as a result of legislative, contractual, organisational changes.
Update overview	- May 2023, New Policy

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DRAFT

1. Introduction

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) provide funding to improve accessibility and enable people to remain living independently in their own homes. Initially introduced by s.114 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, they are a means tested (for adults only), mandatory grant administered by New Forest District Council to meet or contribute towards the cost of 'relevant' adaptations that are 'necessary and appropriate' and 'reasonable and practicable' to meet the needs of a disabled adult or child.

The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996; as amended by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002 (RRO) requires all Local Authorities to have a published document in place setting out the Council's policy on the aims and application of the local grant scheme.

The Care Act 2014 shifted the focus to earlier intervention that offers a more preventative approach to supporting people.

This policy sets out the legal framework for DFGs, and how the Council intends to use its powers under the RRO to provide interventions to promote independent living and well-being.

This policy is set out in two parts:

- Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants - the mandatory legal framework for DFGs in accordance with the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 including eligibility criteria and the prescribed means test assessment.
- Discretionary DFGs – the Council's policy to provide discretionary interventions to promote independent living and wellbeing. The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (RRO) and latterly, the Better Care Fund enable Councils to support the wider prevention agenda of housing, social care and health authorities.

Mandatory and Discretionary DFGs carried out in New Forest District Council owned social Housing stock are funded via the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) as per the provision made for expenditure in the 2012 – 13 self-financing settlement.

All grant funds in the policy are aimed at NFDC housing stock and private properties in the New Forest District.

2. Mandatory disabled facilities grants

The Council has a statutory obligation to administer mandatory DFGs to provide aids and adaptations to enable disabled residents to live independently within their own homes.

The eligibility requirements, scope of works, and the general requirements governing mandatory DFGs are prescribed in legislation, and the Council is unable to deviate from these requirements.

New Forest District Council is required to administer DFGs to all eligible applicants irrespective of their tenure, and the Council aims to work collaboratively with Registered Providers to help fund aids and adaptations within social housing, to ensure everyone has the same opportunities to have their home adapted.

Both parents and/or carers, who have formal joint custody arrangements of children, will be allowed to apply for DFGs for adaptations for children with disabilities, confirmed by an Occupational Therapist referral from Hampshire County Council.

Eligible Grant Works

In accordance with the regulations and this policy the following works will attract mandatory DFG funding:

- Providing access to and from a home - for example, ramping, shallow steps, and hard standings/dropped kerbs for vehicular access;
- Making a home safe for a disabled person living in in the dwelling- for example, guard rails, safety glass;
- Providing access to the principal family room - door widening;
- Providing access to a bedroom - providing a stair lift or extension;
- Providing access to toilet facilities - by altering bathroom layouts or providing specialist WCs;
- Providing access to bathing/shower facilities - for example, level access shower;
- Providing access to a wash-hand basin;
- Enabling the disabled occupier to prepare and cook food - improved kitchen layout;
- Improving or providing space heating or heating controls;
- Enabling the disabled occupier to use and control power, light and heat - altering the position of light switches and power sockets;
- Enabling the disabled occupier to move around the home to care for another person - for example, enabling a disabled parent to care for a child.

In accordance with the regulations, the maximum amount of grant allowed for each referral is up to **£30,000**, or other such amount determined by the Secretary of State.

Eligibility Criteria

In determining whether a grant should be awarded, the relevant works must be “necessary and appropriate” and “reasonable and practicable”.

Necessary and Appropriate

Section 24 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 places a duty on housing authorities who are not themselves a social services authority, to consult with the relevant social services authority upon receipt of any referral.

2. Mandatory disabled facilities grants (Cont'd)

Furthermore, an Occupational Therapist must undertake an assessment and make a professional recommendation of works that are considered necessary and appropriate for the disabled person. The Council will then assess whether the proposed works are reasonable and practicable as per the criteria below.

Reasonable and practicable

Section 24 of the 1996 Act requires the local housing authority to be satisfied that it is reasonable and practicable to carry out the relevant works (as requested by an Occupational Therapist) having regard to the age and condition of the dwelling.

This reasonableness can relate to cost and includes where the works required are excessively costly due to the construction and type of property.

Consideration can also be given to offering alternative housing that meets the applicant's needs, particularly long-term needs, or which can be adapted at a lower cost.

In order that the Council can make decisions about eligibility, including the help that can be given if the client is eligible for a grant and about what works are most appropriate, Officers will need to gather and consider a range of information, which includes:

- The client's financial circumstances;
- The cost of the works;
- The time it is likely to take to deliver the adaptation(s) proposed;
- The extent of any family or other practical support;
- The suitability of the client's home for adaptation (including the extent of any under-occupation or over-occupation);
- The practicalities of adapting the client's home (taking into account both the site it sits on and its wider location);
- The length of time for which the client is likely to be able to take advantage of the adaptation(s) (to be expeditiously concluded with applicants' needs in mind);
- The likely need for future adaptations;
- The availability of, and eligibility for, suitable alternative accommodation; and
- The extent to which the adaptation(s) make appropriate use of the funding available to New Forest District Council.

Cost Decisions

New Forest District Council will only fund the recommended work on the referral and are not able to consider retrospective referrals/applications to fund works that have already started, or have already been completed.

Should the applicant wish to enhance the recommended adaptation over and above the referral recommendations then they will need to do so at their own expense. The funding of additional work should be discussed with the appointed contractor directly.

A scheme of adaptations must, in general terms, be reasonable, considering costs, building regulations and planning permission and the practicability of carrying out the works. Where a scheme involves substantial structural alterations or extensions, officers should consider re-housing the applicant as an alternative, if more suitable accommodation is available.

The council's decision making will consider the following specific criteria:

- Grant work should properly and fully meet the assessed needs of the client for the present and the immediate future. Grants which only partially meet those needs will only be considered in exceptional circumstances;
- Works funded by means of a DFG will provide the simplest and most cost-effective adaptations that will meet the client's assessed needs;
- Wherever the Council judges it to be a practicable and realistic option, the re-ordering and/or change of use of existing rooms will be the preferred solution and will take precedence over both the construction of extensions and the installation of equipment. This solution will also take precedence if it will result in a reduction in the requirement for, or cost of, equipment;
- There will be a presumption against approving a grant for adaptation of a new home if the client already occupies an adapted home. Each request will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, for example, if the adaptations are no longer suitable or a recommendation has been made by an occupational therapist;
- There will be a presumption against the refitting of any adaptations which have previously been removed by, or at the request of the applicant;
- There will be a presumption against the adaptation of under-occupied homes, and of under-occupied social rented houses in particular, and
- There will be a presumption against the adaptation of overcrowded homes or homes which are likely to become overcrowded.

Means Test (Financial Assessment)

The DFG means test is in place to ensure that funding reaches those people who are on the lowest incomes and least able to afford to pay for the adaptations themselves. Means testing applies to applications made by owner-occupiers, tenants and occupants of qualifying houseboats or caravans.

The assumed weekly needs of the householder (the "applicable amount") is calculated considering the number of people, their ages and other circumstances. This is then compared to actual income, and where income is greater than the applicable amount, a "loan generation factor" is applied to the "excess income" to arrive at a notional "affordable loan".

Contribution = (actual income-applicable amount) x loan generator factor.

This is the amount by which the grant is reduced, or the contribution expected by the applicant. The reduction in grant caused by this test is lower for tenants because it is assumed that loans will be available on less favourable terms than owner-occupiers.

It is the income of the disabled person, and where applicable their partner, that is considered, rather than the applicant if that is a different person (known as the "relevant person").

Exemptions to the means test

Where the disabled person is a child or young person, or is in receipt of one of the following income related benefits, then they are exempt from means testing and the amount of the grant is not reduced i.e. they do not have an assessed contribution:

- Income Support;
- Housing Benefit;
- Universal Credit;
- Guaranteed Pension Credit;
- Income-based Job-Seekers Allowance;
- Working Tax Credit with an annual income of less than £15,050; and
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance.

A child is a person under 16. A "young person" follows the definition of a qualifying young person for child benefit purposes. This refers to young people who are 16 or over but under 20 and receiving full time education up to and including A level.

Where the cost of the eligible works (including services and charges) is over £30,000, any assessed contribution from the means test is deducted from the maximum amount, not the cost of the works.

Successive applications

Should an applicant have previously received a DFG then, along with consultation with the Occupational Therapist, their eligibility for a successive grant will initially consider any decline in their physical or mental health followed by the application of the eligibility criteria described in section above.

If a successive application for a DFG on the same property is made, any previous contributions will be considered in the last 5 years for tenants and 10 years for owners. Any newly assessed contribution will be reduced by any previously assessed contribution if the applicant went ahead with the previous adaptations.

Nil Grant

Following the means test, should an applicant's contribution exceed the cost of the works deemed necessary and the applicant wishes to fund the works themselves then the applicant will be offered a "Nil Grant" application.

A Nil Grant application will ensure that any applicant contributions for eligible and relevant works will be considered and offset with respect to any future Disabled Facilities Grant applications.

The council will require a full and completed application for a "Nil Grant" award and all works will be subject to inspection and sign off as the cost of these works will potentially offset any Disabled facility Grant contributions.

Applicants who apply for a nil approval grant, can still benefit from the Council's Caseworker service, subject to a 7% (plus VAT) charge on the overall cost of the adaptation works, to co-ordinate and progress the work to their property. Caseworker fees will be charged for all completed administration work in the event of the applicant cancelling proposed works.

Payments

The maximum amount of grant will include the cost of eligible works, any VAT on eligible works, and other eligible services and charges associated with preparing the application and the carrying out of works, which include:

- confirming that the applicant has an owner's interest;
- technical and structural surveys;
- the design and preparation of plans and drawings;
- the preparation of specifications or schedules of relevant works;
- assistance in completing forms;
- advice on financing the costs of the relevant works which are not met by grant;
- making applications for building regulations approval (including any application fee and the preparation of related documents);
- making applications for planning permission (including any application fee and the preparation of related documents);
- making applications for listed building consent (including any application fee and the preparation of related documents);
- making applications for conservation area consent (including any application fee and the preparation of related documents);
- obtaining tenders/estimates;
- providing advice on building contracts;
- considering tenders;
- supervising the relevant works;
- disconnecting and reconnecting electricity, gas, water or drainage utilities where this is necessitated by the relevant works; and
- paying contractors.

The grant will only be paid on the provision of an acceptable invoice, demand or receipt of payment for the work from the applicant or contractor operating on their behalf.

An invoice will not be accepted:

- if it is for work or services provided by the applicant,
- where the works are carried out by the applicant or by a relative,
- for works not stated on the referral or pre-agreed before works commenced
- or materials and/or services that are gifted or not procured.

The grant can be either be paid to the applicant in instalments as work progresses or in full on completion. If paying by instalments, no more than 90% of the grant can be paid before the works are completed.

Property Charge

A Local Land Charge will be placed on an owner occupier's property, where the mandatory grant recipient is an owner occupier, and where the DFG adaptation exceeds £5,000. The land charge will be limited to a maximum of £10,000 (this is a mandatory limit). The Charge will be incurred if the property is disposed of within 10 years of completion of the DFG (subject to the consideration of certain criteria by the council listed below).

If a dwelling is sold or disposed of within 10 years, New Forest District Council will consider whether or not it is reasonable to demand repayment or part repayment of the charge taking into account:

- the extent to which the recipient of the grant would suffer financial hardship were they to be required to repay all or any of the grant;
- whether the disposal of the premises is to enable the recipient of the grant to take up employment, or to change the location of employment;
- whether the disposal is made for reasons connected with the physical or mental health or well-being of the recipient of the grant or of a disabled occupant of the premises; and
- whether the disposal is made to enable the recipient of the grant to live with, or near, any person who is disabled or infirm and in need of care, which the recipient of the grant is intending to provide, or who is intending to provide care of which the recipient of the grant is in need by reason of disability or infirmity, is satisfied that it is reasonable in all the circumstances to require the repayment.

Grant Conditions

All works must be completed within 12 months of the application approval date, or a longer period of time that has been agreed in writing by the Council. No retrospective applications will be considered.

All works must be completed in accordance with a specification of works agreed by the Council. The agreed works must be carried out to a satisfactory standard of workmanship.

The payment of any form of financial assistance will be subject to bona fide invoices being provided by the approved contractor, or in exceptional circumstances, with the approval by the Council, an alternative contractor. For example, if the original contractor is unable to carry out the works.

The Caseworker fee at date of publication was 7% plus VAT, however this is reviewed annually.

The disabled occupant must continue to occupy the property as their only or main residence for 5 years from the certified grant date, unless their health or personal circumstances prevent them from doing so

Where fraud is identified the award of the grant may be cancelled and we may seek to recover from the applicant any monies already paid, or costs incurred.

All decisions required to be taken by the Council under this Policy, in relation to the mandatory functions shall be made by the Private Sector Housing Manager

Maintenance

Applicants benefitting from a DFG must understand that New Forest District Council only facilitate the grant process. The contract to supply and install the required equipment, in line with the recommendations made by the Occupational Therapist, is between the applicant and the chosen contractor.

Once the DFG has been signed off, as complete, the responsibility, to service and maintain the equipment that has been supplied falls upon different parties:

- Owner-occupiers will be responsible for the ongoing servicing and maintenance of any equipment installed as part of a DFG;
- Private tenants will need to discuss and agree, the future servicing and maintenance requirements of any specifically installed equipment with their landlord, before agreeing to commence with the DFG;
- Housing Association tenants may find their landlords will take on the servicing and maintenance provision but as a result they may increase the applicant's rent/ service charge to cover the additional cost. Other housing associations may decide that it is the applicant's responsibility to service and maintain the equipment that has been specifically installed. Before the applicant agrees to go ahead with the DFG they need to discuss and agree, the future servicing and maintenance requirements of any of the specifically installed equipment with the relevant housing association;
- New Forest District Council tenants will have servicing and maintenance of any equipment installed as part of a DFG provided by the Housing Service.

3. Additional mandatory grant features

Extended warranties for lifts, wash/dry toilets etc

A five-year warranty and servicing contract is to be provided for all relevant adaptations and equipment (lifts, wash dry toilets, automatic doors etc) for private tenants and owners.

NFDC take on the responsibility for repairs, servicing, and maintenance of any equipment installed within their housing stock after the expiry of the manufacturer's one year warranty, unless otherwise stipulated and agreed.

Reduction in number of quotes required

One written contractor quote is required for grant eligible works estimated at under £15,000 unless they are particularly complex/non-standard. A minimum of two written contractor quotes are required for grant eligible works of £15,000 or over.

Consultation with the 'welfare authority' (Hampshire County Council - HCC)

The Council will consult with HCC via email to advise that a referral has been received from another service, E.g. NHS, private OT, giving a 14 calendar day period for any response or comments.

4. Discretionary disabled facilities grants

The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (RRO) and latterly the Better Care Fund for private residents enable Councils to support the wider prevention agenda of housing, social care and health authorities through the allocation of discretionary funding.

For New Forest District Council owned properties, any discretionary funding will be funded via the Housing Revenue Account.

Discretionary Provision

Discretionary grants will be awarded in exceptional circumstances only, and with the express agreement of the Private Sector Housing Manager in consultation with the Assistant Director of Housing and are subject to funds being available. Mandatory grants will be prioritised first. It is important to note that discretionary funding will only be available for eligible works identified by an Occupational Therapist.

The discretionary policy elements are:

DFG Top Up Grant (Funding more than the statutory maximum grant of £30,000)

This grant is intended to assist in cases where a major adaptation has been identified, which is likely to exceed the mandatory grant of £30,000 and is deemed essential to meet the needs of the disabled person once all other options such as moving home have been considered. This will involve a cost/benefit analysis to deem that the DFG top up is the most suitable and cost-effective option.

The discretionary grant is up to a maximum of £30,000 per property and will be applied in exceptional circumstances only following consultation with the Service Manager.

Examples where this additional grant may be awarded up to the maximum are:

- Where no alternative housing can provide the required solution;
- An extension is required to increase space in the home;
- An extensive set of refurbishments and alterations are required to the fabric of the building;
- The client receives 24-hour care and requires additional room for a carer and equipment.

If the applicant is considered for a discretionary grant, a financial means test will not be applied to this separate grant, even if the applicant has been assessed as having to make a contribution to top up the mandatory grant, following a means test to determine the mandatory grant. The contribution will still be required by the applicant to top up the mandatory grant.

In the same way a property charge is applied for a mandatory grant, a local land charge for the full amount of the discretionary DFG grant will be placed on the owner-occupied property for up to a ten-year period in addition to any mandatory grant local land charge.

Approval for this grant will be signed off by the Private Sector Housing Manager.

Partial Waiver of up to £10,000 contribution following the Means Test

The Private Sector Housing Manager will be granted the discretion to waive an amount up to £10,000 of an assessed contribution upon an assessment of individual circumstances, where it is likely that the DFG will not go ahead due to the size of applicant contribution calculated. Consideration will be given to the risk to health of a DFG not proceeding and alternative solutions. If discretion is applied, the applicant will not be required to fund this portion of the contribution towards the works.

This grant will not be applied in addition to the DFG Top Up Grant. Approval for this grant will be signed off by the Private Sector Housing Manager.

4. Discretionary disabled facilities grants

(Cont'd)

Hospital Discharge Grants

An additional grant of up to £7,500 is made available to disabled and/or vulnerable people being discharged home from hospital, rehabilitation centres or step-down beds to prevent re-admission (or admission) to hospital/rehabilitation centres/step down beds.

Eligibility applies for up to a month after the original discharge. This grant is not means tested. The Hospital Discharge Grant excludes people funded by NHS continuing healthcare or care provision provided by Hampshire County Council.

Works can include anything reasonable which would allow the person to return home/stay at home. Approval for this grant will be signed off by the Private Sector Housing Manager.

Relocation Grant

In some cases, moving home is more appropriate and cost effective to meet the needs of a disabled occupant, where it is not reasonable or practicable to adapt the existing home, where there is a suitably adapted home available elsewhere, or where there is under or over occupation of the home.

A grant up to a maximum of £5,000 to assist with moving costs will be considered at the Council's discretion and subject to available funds being available. The alternative property must either be already adapted or be adaptable at a reasonable cost. The grant can be used towards the expenses involved in moving home for example estate agent's fees, solicitor's fees, stamp duty, removal costs, disconnection and reconnection costs etc. Supporting quotes and/or invoices will be required, and the grant can only be paid once the applicant has exchanged contracts, or signed a new tenancy agreement, with a legally binding completion date.

This grant is not means tested.

The proposed property must be confirmed as suitable by the council's private sector housing team and be assessed to meet (or more easily adaptable) the needs of the disabled person, or child by an appropriately qualified professional e.g. a Hampshire County Council OT.

Approval for this grant will be signed off by the Private Sector Housing Manager.

Safe, Suitable and Warm Grant

Subject to funds being available, a grant of up to £5,000 is available to assist disabled people, including those with dementia or a visual impairment, to make changes to their home environment which supports them to live independently for longer and with reduced risks. This also includes palliative/end of life situations.

The grant is not means tested. Approval for this grant will be signed off by the Private Sector Housing Manager.

Abortive Fees Grant

A grant of up to £2,000 is available to cover reasonable professional fees and associated charges, where engaged to advise on what works are required and specialist technical detail e.g. structural engineer, surveyor to determine whether a DFG project is feasible. Fees are paid as part of the DFG if the works go ahead or paid via the abortive fees grant if the work cannot proceed.

It should be noted that the Abortive Fees Grant may not be approved where the council determines that the applicant has engaged the professional / specialist involved and then cancelled the works without justifiable cause.

Applicants cannot make more than one application for an Abortive Fees Grant in respect of the same grant eligible works.

The grant is means tested, see above. Approval for this grant will be signed off by the Private Sector Housing Manager.

DFG Top Up Loan (Funding in excess of the statutory maximum grant of £30,000)

This loan is intended to assist in cases where a major adaptation has been identified as essential to meet the needs of the disabled person and all other cost-effective options have been exhausted, including to a more suitable property.

The loan amount is up to a maximum of £15,000 per property and is repayable. Approval for this loan will be signed off by the Private Sector Housing Manager.

Client Contribution Loan

This loan is intended to assist in cases where a client has been assessed to make a contribution towards to cost if the eligible works.

The loan amount is up to a maximum of £10,000 per property and is repayable. Approval for this loan will be signed off by the Private Sector Housing Manager.

Home Repair Loan

This loan is intended to assist in cases where a Category 1 or serious Category 2 hazard have been identified as defined within the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). This is limited to repair works as determined by New Forest District Council.

The loan amount is up to a maximum of £15,000 per property and is repayable. Approval for this loan will be signed off by the Private Sector Housing Manager.

Low-cost Loans

Parity Trust who are a not-for-profit community financial institution administer the loan's on behalf of NFDC.

Additional Discretion

Council Tax Reduction (Income related only) to be considered a passported benefit

Council tax reduction benefit will be considered as a passported benefit for the purposes of the financial means test under a discretionary DFG scheme.

Promotional work to raise the profile of DFGs

Better Care funding is also used by the Council to work in partnership with other organisation to promote DFGs.

To meet these aims NFDC currently provides an annual grant to New Forest Disability Information Services (NFDIS) to provide two schemes monitored by a Service Level Agreement, which are;

- Just Got Home
- Independence Matter

5. General points

Exceptions and delegated authority

This policy is not intended to fetter the discretion of the Council. The policy is not intended to cover all circumstances and therefore the Council has the authority to deal with applications not meeting the requirements of the above policy and criteria. Grants outside of, and in excess of, the criteria set out above can be awarded at the discretion of the Assistant Director of Housing based on 'exceptional circumstances'. Such an award will only be made subject to the provision of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) England and Wales Order 2002 and subsequent guidance.

This delegation may also include authorisation for housing as an alternative solution.

Complaints procedure

If an applicant for a DFG whether mandatory or discretionary has cause for dissatisfaction with a service or decision, they will be directed to follow the Council's formal complaints procedure.

Grant funding or part funding repaid by applicants

Any grant monies repaid by applicants to the Council for whatever reason (e.g. breach of grant conditions, ceasing occupation etc.) will be paid into the DFG fund from which they originated, in order that the funding can be recycled to fund DFGs to other residents in need.

Equipment and minor adaptations first

The general principle is that equipment or a minor adaptation is tried first to assess whether it will meet the resident's needs prior to application for a DFG. This will help to manage the demands made on the DFG budget.

Accessible kitchens

Specialist or non-standard integrated hobs and ovens can be included as part of the DFG and grant funded works if they are assessed as being an essential part of the adaptation to meet the resident's needs.

Review of policy

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or whenever there is a fundamental change in legislative or regulatory provisions. Minor amendments to this Policy will be subject to the approval of the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

DRAFT

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HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – 21 JUNE 2023

CALL-IN REQUEST – SALE OF COUNCIL GARAGES AT BURNETT CLOSE, HYTHE

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That the Panel consider Councillor Alex Wade's call-in submission.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 On 27 April 2023, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness Services, Cllr Edward Heron made a decision to sell 4 Council owned garages at Burnett Close, Hythe for the sum of £7,500 to Collingwood Investments Limited.

- 2.2 Following this Portfolio Holder Decision, Cllr Alex Wade gave formal notice to call-in the decision. He stated the following as the reason for the call-in:

“As a local Ward Member I have been aware of the situation for some time and local Residents and Former Tenants will be very disappointed and frustrated with this decision. These garages are vital for safe and secure storage for those without adequate space and protect valued items such as Motorbikes and Cycles.”

- 2.3 In accordance with Council procedures, as no other call in notices have been received, the decision stands and Cllr Alex Wade has the opportunity to express his views about the decision to the Panel. He has been invited to attend the meeting in order to represent his call-in request and for the Panel to discuss the decision.

- 2.4 As the decision is being reviewed by the Panel (although implementation is unaffected), the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder has also been invited to attend the Panel to represent the Cabinet.

- 2.5 The Panel may also wish to call upon the appropriate officers to provide further information to the Panel in connection with the decision.

- 2.6 The views of the Panel on this matter will be reported directly to the Leader and the Council.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The full details of what led the Council to put forward a decision of sale can be found in the report to the Portfolio Holder at appendix 1.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The financial implications are set out in the Portfolio Holder decision, attached as Appendix 1. The sale of the garages will generate an additional one-off income payment of £7,500 to Housing Revenue Account. There will be savings to the repair and maintenance of the garages but there will be a loss of income from the 4 garages of £12.09 per garage per week.

5. CRIME AND DISORDER, ENVIRONMENTAL, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are none arising from this report.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The Portfolio Holder Councillor Edward Heron made a decision on 27 April. Since the decision was taken, the District Council has had local elections and there has been a change of Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness Services. The new Portfolio Holder with responsibility for this decision, Cllr Steve Davies will be present at the meeting to address the Panel.

6.2 The Panel will hear from Cllr Alex Wade and are able to report their views and considerations to the Leader and the Council.

For further information please contact:

Background Papers:

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023 8028 5242
Richard.knott@nfdc.gov.uk

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION – 27 APRIL 2023

SALE OF COUNCIL GARAGES AT BURNETT CLOSE, HYTHE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report seeks approval from the Portfolio Holder - Housing and Homelessness Services to sell the 4 Council owned garages at Burnett Close, Hythe to Collingwood Investments Ltd for the sum of £7,500.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 11th January 2000 the Council sold the land edged red on the plan at 4 – 14 Knightwood Road, Hythe, SO45 6JL (Appendix 1 – Location of Garages) to Collingwood Systems Limited (now known as Collingwood Investments Limited) who remain the registered owner. The land originally included 6 shop units and six maisonettes above, now converted into 12 units.
- 2.2 Unfortunately the transfer of the land did not reserve an express right of way in favour of the Council to the garages. There is no separate deed of easement and no indication in the property register for the land that any part of it is subject to a right of way.
- 2.3 Previous negotiations with Collingwood to secure access to the garages have been unsuccessful because to grant and document a new right of way, the owner demanded back contributions toward maintenance of the forecourt of £8,400, annual payments of £600 pa and a “substantial” (unspecified) one off payment for the grant of the access, plus a costs indemnity. In October 2021 the Owners informed the council the access across the forecourt to the garages would no longer be permitted.
- 2.4 In summary, the Council does not have direct access rights to the 4 Council garages (Appendix 1 – Location of Garages) and would rely upon agreeing an easement with Collingwood Investments Ltd and ongoing payment at a cost to NFDC. The Council has decanted the tenants of the garages and offered tenancies elsewhere. They have not been used since.
- 2.5 NFDC are responsible for the ongoing repair/maintenance of the 4 garages at an estimated cost of £1-2,000 per year.

3. THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1 To sell the 4 Council owned garages at Burnett Close, Hythe to Collingwood Investments Ltd.
- 3.2 The 4 Council owned garages have been valued up to £10,000.
- 3.3 As the adjacent landowner with rights to access the garages, NFDC approached Collingwood Investment Ltd, who had expressed previous interest in purchasing the 4 garages. This is a pragmatic proposal to resolve an on-going situation for many years.
- 3.4 Collingwood Investments Ltd have provisionally agreed to purchase the 4 garages for £7,500 subject to condition and internal inspection.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Given the access issues to the 4 garages at Burnett Close, Hythe and the ongoing maintenance/ repair costs, it is recommended that the garages are sold to Collingwood Investments Ltd for £7,500.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 By selling the 4 garages at Burnett Close the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) will receive income of £7,500. There will also be a saving in respect of the overall repairs/maintenance of the garages, but the loss of ongoing income from 4 garages at £12.09 per garage per week.

6. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are none arising from this report

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are none arising from this report

8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are none arising from this report

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Council sell the 4 Council owned garages at Burnett Close, Hythe to Collingwood Investments Ltd.

10. PORTFOLIO HOLDER ENDORSEMENT

I have agreed to the recommendation of this report.

Sign: Cllr Edward Heron

Date: 27 April 2023

For further information contact:

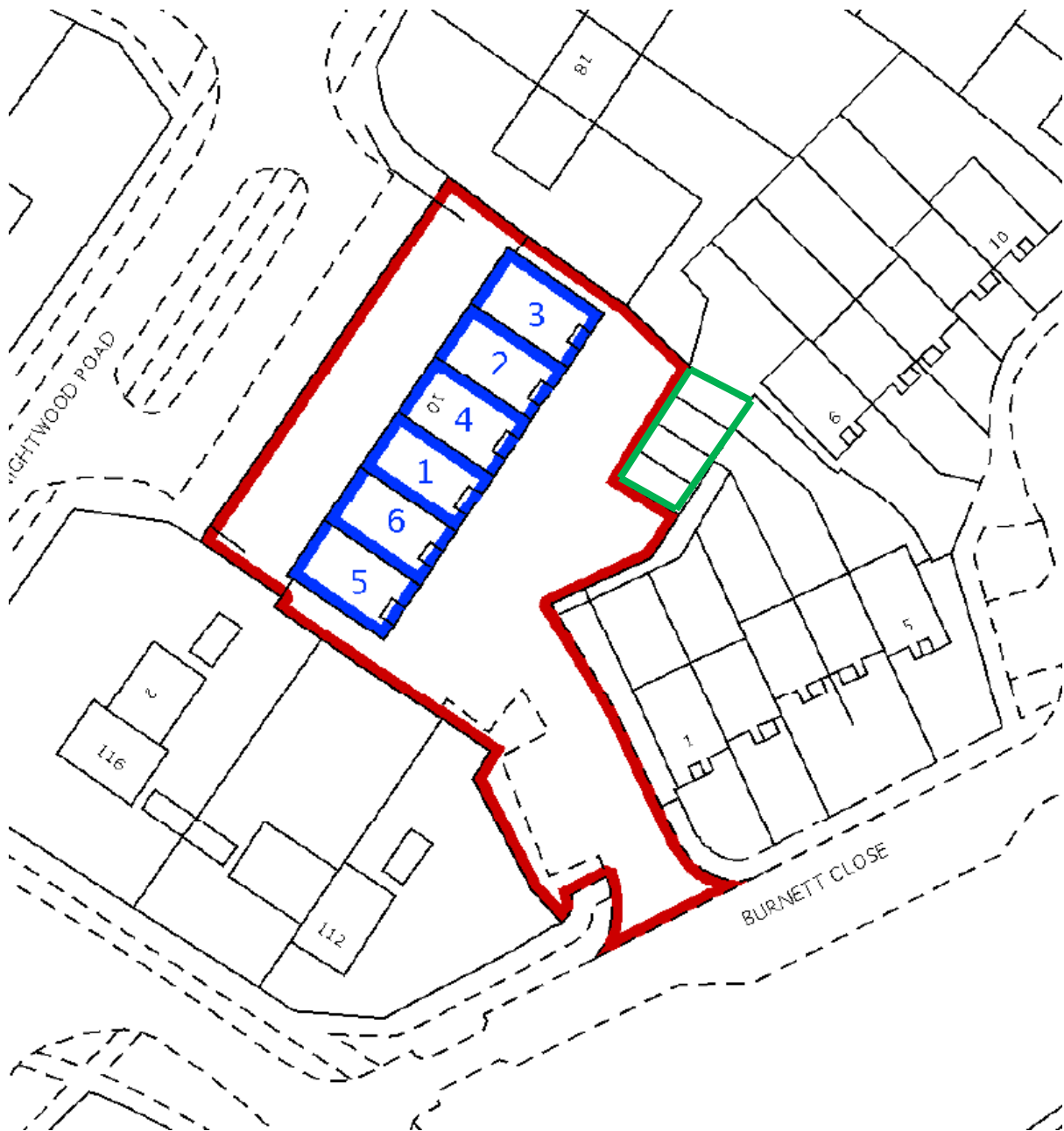
Background Papers:

Richard Knott
Assistant Director - Housing
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Richard.Knott@nfdc.gov.uk

None

Date on which notice given of this Decision – 27 April 2023
Last date for call in – 5 May 2023

Appendix 1 – Location of 4 Council owned garages at Burnett Close, Hythe



- NFDC Owned Garages
- Property owned by Collingwood Investments Ltd

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HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – 21 JUNE 2023

AIR QUALITY UPDATE

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That Panel considers and supports the decision to revoke the Lyndhurst Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and for the development of an 'Air Quality Strategy' for New Forest District Council.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report deals with the revocation of the Air Quality Management Area for Lyndhurst following extensive monitoring over the past 14 years. It is Government policy and good practice under technical guidance (LAQM PG (22) and TG (22)) for local authorities to revoke AQMA's when robust evidence demonstrates the air quality objectives are being met and will continue to do so.
- 2.2 It also proposes the development of a new Air Quality Strategy for the New Forest District area in line with the Environment Act 2021 and the revised Air Quality Strategy for England, which contain updated requirements on local authorities to deliver cleaner air. The revisions include a continuation of current requirements through the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) regime, monitoring and annual reporting but also introduces requirements to consider additional pollutants, utilise available enforcement powers to improve local air quality and in districts with no AQMA's produce a district wide Air Quality Strategy.
- 2.3 New Forest District Council is required to revoke its only AQMA following a significant improvement in air quality and air quality objectives being met. Work will then commence on the preparation of an Air Quality Strategy for the whole of the New Forest in order to meet the new requirements and continue to monitor and improve air quality in the district.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Air pollution adversely impacts human health including the respiratory and cardiovascular systems, foetal and child development. This results in the development of life changing health conditions, decreasing life expectancies and increasing health care costs. Air pollution also threatens the environment due to a reduction in habitats and biodiversity.
- 3.2 Local authorities continue to have a statutory duty through the LAQM regime to review and assess local air quality in their district in accordance with legislation, Government policy and guidance. Air pollution is assessed against Government set objectives and should it be evidenced that an air quality objective is being, or likely to be, exceeded, an AQMA must be declared.
- 3.3 Following declaration of an AQMA, local authorities are required to produce and develop an Air Quality Action Plan in coordination with relevant stakeholders. The Plan advises of measures, which if implemented, will reduce pollutant concentrations in pursuit of the air quality objectives.

- 3.4 The AQMA would subsequently be revoked by the local authority where evidence demonstrated that measures implemented had reduced pollution levels in order that air quality objectives were being met and would continue to do so. The AQMA is revoked through the revision of the original AQMA Order and submitted to Defra.
- 3.5 NFDC (Environmental Protection) has undertaken the review and assessment of local air quality proactively since 1998 using a combination of desktop, monitoring and modelling techniques. All assessments have been submitted as required to Government and all necessary action taken.
- 3.6 Monitoring has been and continues to be undertaken at numerous locations throughout New Forest including Totton, the Waterside, Lyndhurst, Lymington, Ringwood and Fordingbridge.
- 3.7 In 2005, NFDC declared 3 AQMAs for the exceedance of air quality objectives. 2 of the AQMAs have since been revoked as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1 – AQMA’s declared in NFDC

AQMA	POLLUTANT OBJECTIVE	AQMA REVOKED
Fawley	15 min mean – Sulphur dioxide (SO ₂)	2013
Totton	Annual mean - Nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂)	2016
Lyndhurst	Annual mean - Nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂)	

4. LYNDHURST AQMA

- 4.1 The AQMA in Lyndhurst was associated with emissions from vehicles travelling in the High Street, particularly in the ‘street canyon’ part of the road network (between the school and traffic lights).
- 4.2 Monitoring of NO₂ has been undertaken in Lyndhurst since 1998 using a combination of passive diffusion tubes and an automatic analyser. The monitoring work has also been supplemented with extensive air quality modelling work.
- 4.3 The Air Quality Action Plan for Lyndhurst was originally approved in 2008 and updated in 2019. The Plan outlines measures to improve air quality if implemented including the consideration of a by-pass, traffic schemes, enforcement and behaviour changes.
- 4.4 The implementation of traffic schemes including the use of the green filter and long vehicle detection in the High Street, as well as improvements in vehicle technologies, has resulted in NO₂ concentrations reducing significantly since 2010, with no monitored exceedance of NO₂ within the Lyndhurst AQMA noted since 2014 and are detailed in Appendix 1.
- 4.5 The most recent NFDC Air Quality Annual Status Report (2022) which reports monitoring, implementation of measures and local updates to Defra stated that the Council would be considering the revocation of the Lyndhurst AQMA based on the monitoring evidence. This position was supported by Defra.
- 4.6 NFDC has recently commissioned air quality consultants Ricardo to model pollutant concentrations within Lyndhurst at all residential receptors within the AQMA. This work expands upon the NFDC monitoring undertaken to determine whether the air quality objective is being met at all relevant locations in 2023 and considers worst case scenarios: an increase of 25% on 2019 (pre-Covid) vehicle numbers accessing Lyndhurst, and reduced fleet improvements.

- 4.7 The modelling work concluded the NO₂ annual mean objective will be met within Lyndhurst. The summary of the report is provided in Appendix 2.
- 4.8 Government policy and technical guidance (LAQM PG (22) and TG (22)) advises local authorities should revoke AQMA's when robust evidence demonstrates the air quality objectives are being met and will continue to do so. NFDC has the required evidence and support from Defra and is therefore seeking to progress the revocation of the Lyndhurst AQMA.
- 4.9 There is no requirement to consult on the Council's decision to revoke an AQMA, however all relevant stakeholders would be informed in a timely manner.
- 4.10 NFDC will continue to monitor NO₂ within Lyndhurst post revocation of the AQMA using the same monitoring equipment currently being utilised. This will ensure pollutant concentrations are continuously reviewed and reported to Defra.

5. AIR QUALITY STRATEGY

- 5.1 From 2023, The Environment Act 2021 requires local authorities with no declared AQMA's to produce an Air Quality Strategy for their district. NFDC will therefore be developing a Strategy for the District, following revocation of the Lyndhurst AQMA.
- 5.2 The Government states within their own recently published '*Air Quality Strategy for England*' and policy paper '*Air Quality Strategy: framework for local authority delivery*' (April 2023) that the purpose of the Air Quality Strategy is to enable local authorities to take preventative action to improve local air quality, rather than waiting for an air quality legal limit to be breached. Any breaches of air quality limits would continue to be dealt with through the LAQM regime and declaration of an AQMA.
- 5.3 Currently there is no Government guidance to advise on the requirements or development of an air quality strategy, however it is advised that it should be informed by the relevant local authority's own monitoring and assessments. The Strategy should also set out an enforcement strategy which prioritises the reduction of population exposure to pollutants, including areas experiencing disproportionately high levels of pollution.
- 5.4 It is intended that the Air Quality Strategy for New Forest is based on the Government's own air quality priorities which are:
- Planning reforms helping to deliver on air quality.
 - Building capacity in local councils through training, guidance and knowledge sharing.
 - Reducing emissions from industrial sources through improved enforcement of environmental permits.
 - Reducing pollution from domestic burning through smoke control areas and cleaner fuels.
 - Raising awareness within local communities of air quality impacts and how to reduce them.
 - Boosting active travel and public transport to improve air quality.
- 5.5 Current work undertaken by NFDC already includes many of the priorities listed by Government, including working with planning, improving local knowledge, environmental permitting, boosting active travel and raising awareness. It is intended that the Strategy will review the current work, improving and extending these priorities where necessary.

5.6 The Strategy will also focus on the pollutants noted by Government of particular concern:

- Fine particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})
- Nitrogen oxides
- Ammonia
- Indoor air pollutants

5.7 The Government has set 2 new legally binding targets for PM_{2.5}:

- 10µgm³ annual mean by 2040 (interim target of 12µgm³ by 2028)
- 35% reduction in average population exposure by 2040 (interim target of 22% reduction by 2028)

5.8 Government note particulate matter is a regional pollutant, however local authorities do have control over some sources of the particulate matter. Therefore, local authorities are expected to use their powers to reduce PM_{2.5} emissions from sources which are within their control. If Government considers local action has not gone far enough to reduce PM_{2.5}, it should be noted they will consider introducing a statutory duty on local authorities.

5.9 In developing a new Air Quality Strategy, the following steps will be undertaken:-:

- Review of current pollutant monitoring and assessments
- Review how local air quality is currently addressed within NFDC including collaborative working and the availability and use of enforcement powers
- Establish working relationships with all relevant stakeholders, internal and external, in the development of the Strategy including the involvement of the Director of Public Health
- Extend monitoring and assessments to include the pollutants of concern where appropriate to determine a baseline of pollutant concentrations
- Ensure local air quality is appropriately considered in the development of Council policies, strategies and plans
- Develop a targeted Strategy to improve local air quality with achievable delivery timescales. The Strategy will prioritise those residents exposed to higher concentrations of pollutants or those at increased risks from exposure to airborne pollutants.
- Annually report progress to Defra and the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

5.10 The likely timescales for the development of the Strategy will depend upon number of factors including scoping out the necessary work with help from external consultants and ensuring engagement with relevant stakeholders, neighbouring authorities and the community. It is likely that a Strategy will take 18 months to develop and take through the Council's decision-making processes.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Following the declaration of the Lyndhurst Air Quality Management Area in 2005 for the exceedance of the annual mean objective for nitrogen dioxide, the Council has been working to improve local air quality through the implementation of measures in accordance with Government policy and guidance. This work has improved traffic flow through Lyndhurst and resulted in significant reductions in monitored nitrogen dioxide concentrations.

- 6.2 Monitoring and modelling work has shown that the air quality objective has been met since 2015 throughout the Air Quality Management Area and is likely to continue to be met even if traffic figures increase and the expected improvements in the vehicle fleet are not progressed.
- 6.3 In accordance with Government guidance the Council should revoke the Lyndhurst Air Quality Management Area, however air quality monitoring in Lyndhurst will continue, with results reported annually to Defra.
- 6.4 In accordance with Government policy, the Council must work to develop an Air Quality Strategy for the District. The Strategy will be based on the Governments own priorities for air quality and pollutants of concern, and involve the collaborative working between other Council departments, Members, external stakeholders and neighbouring authorities.
- 6.5 The plan is to take the proposals to revoke Lyndhurst AQMA and develop a district wide strategy to Cabinet.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The current cost to monitor NO₂ in Lyndhurst using an automatic analyser and 22 passive diffusion tubes is £5,200 per year. It is recommended that the monitoring continues in Lyndhurst post formal revocation to ensure pollutant concentrations remain below the objective(s). The costs to operate the monitoring regime is currently covered by existing budgets.
- 7.2 There will be a cost to develop and implement an Air Quality Strategy. There will be a need to involve external consultants to guide the development of the Strategy as well as purchase of equipment to undertake additional monitoring and assessment of pollutants within the District. There may be opportunities to work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities to obtain funding for the development of the Strategy from Government grant funding schemes. It is likely that the cost will be in the region of £50K.

8. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None arising from this report.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The proposed actions have been identified based on positive improvements to air quality and the environment. Development and implementation of an Air Quality Strategy will identify actions to continue to monitor and improve air quality within the district and will support the Climate Change and Nature Emergency Strategy on the carbon reduction programme.

10. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Whilst air pollution will impact the health of every resident, it does not affect everyone equally. It is associated with impacts on development, cancers and respiratory disease and those at greater risk are the young, elderly and those with chronic pre-existing health conditions.

- 10.2 The locations in which residents live will also influence their exposure to air pollution. Typically areas of increased deprivation will have poorer air quality due to dense housing being located close to traffic and/or industrial sources. However, studies have also shown that residents in rural areas and living in areas of least deprivation can be exposed to higher pollutant concentrations due to use of solid fuel heating, increasing exposure to indoor air pollution.
- 10.3 The Air Quality Strategy will therefore need to identify residents of increased vulnerability to air pollution and an impact assessment will be undertaken to consider potential impacts of actions and incorporate mitigation measures as necessary.

For further information contact:

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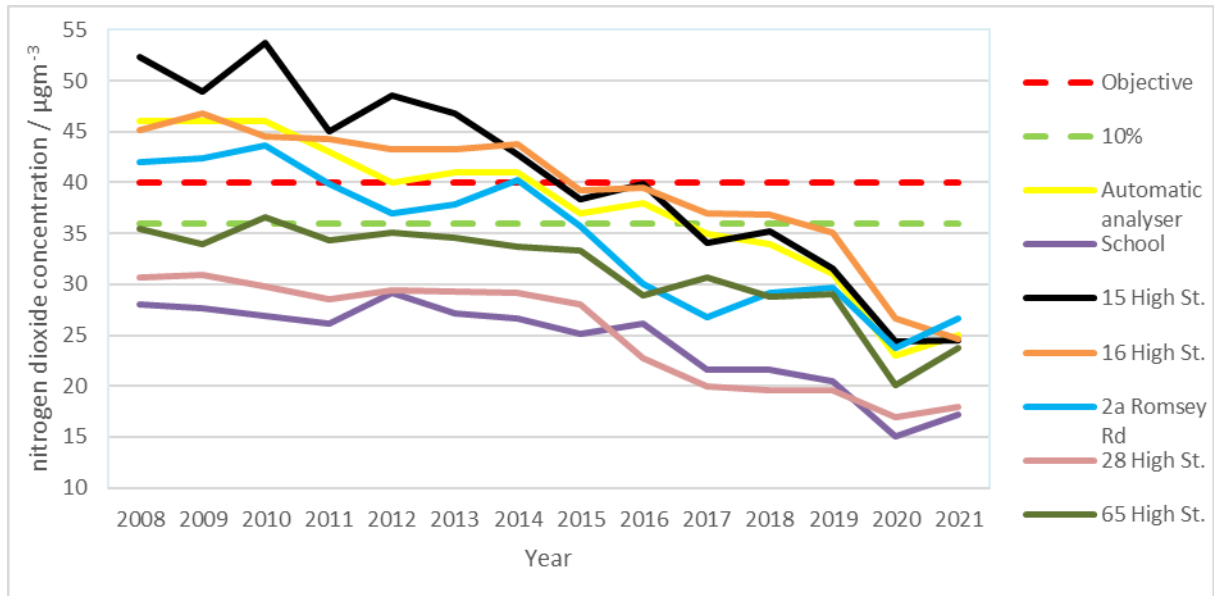
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Background Papers:

[Guidance | LAQM \(defra.gov.uk\)](https://www.defra.gov.uk/guidance/laqm)

[Air quality strategy: framework for local authority delivery - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/air-quality-strategy-framework-for-local-authority-delivery)

Monitoring results within Lyndhurst AQMA 2008-2021



Summary conclusions from Ricardo commissioned air quality model for Lyndhurst AQMA 2023

1. CONCLUSIONS

Ricardo was commissioned to carry out a detailed assessment of NO₂ concentrations in and around the Lyndhurst AQMA to determine whether compliance with the Air Quality Objective for annual mean NO₂ concentrations is achieved across the area and to determine whether compliance will be achieved in future years. Modelling was carried out for a 2019 baseline and a 2023 projected year.

In addition, to assess model uncertainty in future years, three theoretical worst-case scenarios were tested to quantify the potential impacts of conditions where emissions from road transport would be higher than expected in 2023:

- Scenario 2: Traffic volumes across Lyndhurst growing by 25%;
- Scenario 3: Slower than expected replacement of older road vehicles as a result of economic conditions leading to a 2-year delay in fleet renewal across the area;
- Scenario 4: a combination of scenarios 1 and 2.

The model accurately predicts concentrations at monitoring stations in the Lyndhurst AQMA in 2019, demonstrating that the model is correctly representing real-world conditions, lending confidence to the predictions for future years.

The modelling undertaken through this study shows that:

- No location is predicted to exceed the Air Quality Objective for annual mean NO₂ at any location of relevant exposure in 2019;
- No location is predicted to have an annual mean NO₂ concentration within 10% of the Air Quality Objective for annual mean NO₂ at any location of relevant exposure in 2023 should changes in traffic volumes and fleet composition follow the forecasted national trends.
- Furthermore, no locations of relevant exposure are predicted to exceed the Objective in a number of theoretical scenarios where emissions would be higher than those predicted from forecasted national trends, including a 25% increase in road traffic on all roads in Lyndhurst, a 2-year delay in fleet renewal compared to national fleet projections, and a combination of increased traffic and fleet delay.

Based on the data available, the modelling suggests that provided that monitoring data for 2022 matches the trends described above, the AQMA could be revoked without risk of future exceedances.

HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

WORK PROGRAMME 2023/2024

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	LEAD OFFICER
20 SEPTEMBER 2023			
Food and Safety Service Plan	To consider the Food and Safety Service Plan	Report to Panel	Joanne McClay
Social Housing Regulatory Regime Update	To receive an update	Report to Panel	Richard Knott
Housing Strategy / HRA Property development and acquisition update	To receive an update on the progress of the Housing Strategy and HRA property development and acquisition	Update to Panel	Tim Davis
Health and Leisure Centres and Dibden Golf Course	To receive an annual report providing an update on the contracts for the Health and Leisure centres and Dibden Golf Course	Report to Panel	Pawel Duchnowski
Delivery of the Greener Housing Strategy	To receive an annual update on the delivery of the Greener Housing Strategy	Report to Panel	Richard Knott
Homelessness Update	To receive an update on homelessness	Update to Panel	Richard Knott
17 JANUARY 2024			
Housing Revenue Account Budget and the Housing Public Sector Capital Expenditure Programme for 2024/25	To consider the HRA budget and the housing public sector capital expenditure programme for 2024/25	Report to Panel	Kevin Green

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	LEAD OFFICER
Tenant Satisfaction Measures	To receive details of the work progressing relation the Tenant Satisfaction Measures	Report to Panel	Richard Knott
Safer New Forest Partnership Plan / Strategic Assessment	To agree the plan and to receive an update from outcomes from actions in the current plan	Report to Panel	Brian Byrne/ Nikki Swift
Community Grants	To consider the recommendations for Community Grant allocation for 2024/25 from the Task and Finish Group	Report to Panel	Ryan Stevens/ Jamie Burton
20 MARCH 2024			
Housing Strategy/ HRA Property development and acquisition update	To receive an update on the progress of the Housing Strategy and HRA property development and acquisition	Update to Panel	Tim Davis
Homelessness Update	To receive an update on homelessness	Update to Panel	Richard Knott
Health and Wellbeing Action Plan	To receive an annual update	Report to Panel	Joanne McClay / Jamie Burton
Housing Maintenance Compliance Update	To receive an update on the progress made against the Council's compliance policies	Report to Panel	Ritchie Thomson