



New Forest
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Meeting Agenda

24 February 2025



SUMMONS

To All Members of the Council

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the District Council to be held in Council Chamber - Appletree Court, Beaulieu Road, Lyndhurst, SO43 7PA on Monday, 24 February 2025, at 6.30 pm



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.

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting. The seating capacity of our Council Chamber public gallery is limited under fire regulations to 22.

Members of the public can watch this meeting live, or the subsequent recording, on the [Council's website](#). Live-streaming and recording of meetings is not a statutory requirement and whilst every endeavour will be made to broadcast our meetings, this cannot be guaranteed. Recordings remain available to view for a minimum of 12 months.

Anyone wishing to attend the meeting should contact the name and number shown below.

Enquiries to: Matt Wisdom
Email: democratic@nfdc.gov.uk
Tel: 023 8028 5072

AGENDA

Apologies

1. MINUTES (Pages 7 - 26)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2024 as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

To note any declarations of interests made by members in connection with an agenda item. The nature of the interests must also be specified.

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

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

4. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

5. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2025/26 (Pages 27 - 62)

6. INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2025/26 (Pages 63 - 74)

7. TAXI POLICY REVIEW (Pages 75 - 226)

8. LICENSING FEES AND CHARGES 2025/26 (Pages 227 - 234)

9. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2025/26 (Pages 235 - 248)

10. REPORT OF CABINET - 5 FEBRUARY 2025 (Pages 249 - 416)

11. REPORT OF CABINET - 19 FEBRUARY 2025 (To Follow)

Ahead of the Supplementary Council Agenda publication, which will follow the Cabinet meeting, the background Cabinet reports relating to this meeting can be viewed on the Council's website at the following link:-

[Cabinet – Wednesday 19 February 2025](#)

12. COUNCIL TAX 2025/26 (Pages 417 - 432)

13. QUESTIONS (To Follow)

To ask questions under Standing Order 22. Questions received will be published ahead of the meeting. (Members are reminded that questions must be submitted to Democratic Services by no later than 12.00 noon, Wednesday 19 February 2025).

14. NOTICE OF MOTION - ELECTRONIC VOTING

In accordance with Standing Order 21, Cllr Cleary will move the following motion:-

"This Council notes that:-

- 1. The Council's Constitution allows for votes by show of hand, and discretionary recorded votes, to be taken by electronic means.*
- 2. The use of electronic voting has been successfully used at recent Council meetings.*

3. *In order to allow for recorded votes on key budget decisions to be taken electronically, a minor amendment to the Council's Standing Orders for Meetings is required.*

This Council resolves that:-

4. *The Council's Standing Orders for Meetings, as contained within the Constitution, be amended as follows with immediate effect:-*

52A.2 At the Chairman's discretion, the mode of voting on a matter under 52A.1 shall be by electronic means if available to the Council. The Chairman shall inform the Council if a recorded vote is to be taken electronically, immediately before the vote is taken. Alternatively, where a vote is taken on a matter under 52A.1, each member shall state whether they have voted for the proposition, or against the proposition, or have abstained from voting. The manner in which each member voted shall be recorded in the minutes."

Cllr M Wade will second the motion.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 42, the above motion, after being proposed and seconded (without speeches), should stand referred to the body within whose terms of reference the subject matter of the motions comes, or the Cabinet or such Committees or Panels that the Council may determine.

The Chairman may allow the motion to be dealt with at this meeting if they consider it urgent, convenient or conducive to the despatch of business.

15. NOTICE OF MOTION - CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS

In accordance with Standing Order 21, Cllr Rackham will move the following motion:-

"This Council resolves that:-

1. *Only those Members who do not belong to the ruling political group shall be eligible for nomination to the positions of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the ordinary committees and panels of the Council; and*
2. *The consequential amendment to the Council's Standing Orders for Meetings be made by the Monitoring Officer."*

Cllr J Davies will second the motion.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 42, the above motion, after being proposed and seconded (without speeches), should stand referred to the body within whose terms of reference the subject matter of the motions comes, or the Cabinet or such Committees or Panels that the Council may determine.

The Chairman may allow the motion to be dealt with at this meeting if they consider it urgent, convenient or conducive to the despatch of business.

16. ALLOCATION OF SEATS AND APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND PANELS (Pages 433 - 438)

17. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

Agenda Item 1

9 DECEMBER 2024

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held on Monday, 9 December 2024.

- * Cllr David Hawkins (Chairman)
- * Cllr John Sleep (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

- * John Adams
- * Alan Alvey
- * Peter Armstrong
- * Geoffrey Blunden
- * Hilary Brand
- * Mark Clark
- * Steve Clarke
- * Jill Cleary
- * Kate Crisell
- * Sean Cullen
- * Jack Davies
- * Steve Davies
- * Philip Dowd
- * Barry Dunning
- Jacqui England
- * Allan Glass
- * David Harrison
- Matthew Hartmann
- * John Haywood
- * Jeremy Heron
- * Nigel Linford
- * Patrick Mballa
- * Colm McCarthy

Councillors:

- * David Millar
- Neil Millington
- * Ian Murray
- Stephanie Osborne
- * Alan O'Sullivan
- * Adam Parker
- * Dave Penny
- * Neville Penman
- * Dan Poole
- * Caroline Rackham
- * Alvin Reid
- * Joe Reilly
- * Janet Richards
- * Barry Rickman
- * Steve Rippon-Swaine
- Michael Thierry
- * Derek Tipp
- * Neil Tungate
- * Alex Wade
- Malcolm Wade
- * Christine Ward
- * Phil Woods
- * Richard Young

*Present

Officers Attending:

Kate Ryan, Tanya Coulter, Alan Bethune, James Carpenter, Richard Knott, Daniel Reynafarje and Matt Wisdom.

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs England, Hartmann, Millington, Osborne, Thierry and Wade.

35 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2024, be confirmed.

36 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interests by Members.

37 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**New Councillor Welcome**

The Chairman extended a warm welcome and offered his congratulations to Councillor John Adams, who was attending his first Full Council meeting, following his election to the Barton and Becton Ward in October.

Remembrance

The Chairman reported that, alongside the Vice-Chairman, the Armed Forces Champion and the Leader, the Council was represented at a number of Remembrance Services during November.

A special mention was given for the attendance of the Armed Forces Champion at the Armistice Day Commemoration, held at the Regimental Headquarters of 17 Port and Maritime Regiment RLC, where the Armed Forces Champion was given the honour of assisting with the presentation of Coronation Medals to the Soldiers.

A commemoration took place at Appletree Court on 11 November, where the Leader and the Chairman both laid a wreath, alongside some of the Council's staff veterans.

St Georges Hall

On 29 October, the Council joined Fawley Parish Council to host a special showcase of the upgraded facilities at St George's Hall, which included a tour of the renovated spaces, live demonstrations of the new amenities, and a number of speeches. Those who attended saw how the hall and grounds had been transformed, and the Chairman was particularly thrilled that local young people had somewhere warm, safe, and fun to go on a regular basis.

The Chairman highlighted that this initiative had been a partnership approach from day one, with several NFDC teams, Members, officers, Fawley Parish Council officers and Members, Hampshire County Council public health, the youth club, 17 Port and Maritime Regiment in Marchwood, and community members all coming together to deliver the ideas, provide funding, and work on a refurbished hall that delivered for local residents.

Engagements

The Chairman reported on the following further engagements undertaken since the last Council meeting:-

18 October

The Chairman attended the AGM of Stop Domestic Abuse Charity at Hedge End, including a presentation from their Chief Executive highlighting support services delivered by the charity to victims and survivors of domestic abuse. The Chairman

had asked officers to look into how the charity might engage with NFDC as the Council's own Domestic Abuse Strategy was developed.

24 October

The Chairman was honoured to attend as His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire hosted the Award Ceremony for the South East Reserve Forces and Cadets Association at Lord Wandsworth College, Aldershot.

11 November

New Forest Mencap held its AGM, an organisation reaching out to communities to let them know they want to help make the UK the best place for people with a learning disability to live happy and healthy lives.

28 November

The Brilliance in Business Awards were held at Brockenhurst College. These awards acknowledged and celebrated individuals and businesses that demonstrated outstanding achievements.

4 December

The Chairman was delighted to host a reception for staff from across the Council with over 20 years' service. He was joined by the Leader, Chief Executive and the Executive Management Team, and by over 50 officers from across the workforce. Many of the attendees were nearing 40 years' service.

The Chairman expressed that Members really value this long service and commitment to the Council, and recognise the value of all the knowledge and input into the Council's services to local communities over these years. This was of course complimented by the experiences and ideas brought by the newer staff joining the Council in recent times.

Civic Service

The Chairman reported that he would be holding a Civic Service on Sunday 23 March 2025 at St Mary Magdalene Church, New Milton. He would be finalising the programme in the New Year and looked forward to sharing more details with Members soon.

Procedures

The Chairman thanked Members for taking part in the successful trial of the electronic voting system. He would ask officers to run a number of votes using the system and asked for Members' patience with the technology in the event of any issues.

He also reminded the Council that there would be a recorded vote on the setting of the tax base, as required by law.

38 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council made the following announcements:-

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

The Leader referred to the display banner at Appletree Court, outlining how the district had benefitted from its £1 million allocation from the UK Shared Prosperity fund. These funds had been directed towards projects that delivered real, measurable value to local communities, many delivered by the Council. Projects like new play equipment in Fordingbridge and Ringwood, flower and bulb planting in Marchwood, improved beach shelters at Hordle Cliff, Barton Cliffs and Milford Promenade, creative hubs for LGBTQ+ young people in New Milton and Sway, and a weekly park run at Gang Warily Leisure Centre. Case studies for ten of these impactful projects had been completed and were available to view on the Council's website.

Enhanced football facilities in Ringwood

It was reported that the Council had worked with partners to deliver enhanced football facilities in Ringwood and, this month, the Leader was delighted to attend Ringwood Community Hub's opening event for their two-storey pavilion with changing rooms, offices and a club house. Prior to this, a 3G Artificial Turf Pitch opened for football training in February last year. The Council gave £535,000 towards this project, and this facility would help to improve the health and wellbeing of local communities.

Bartley Park, Totton

The Council was informed that Bartley Park in Totton had been extended and improved to include a meadow with new dog training and activity equipment, and a timber boardwalk, which established a circular walking route throughout the wider park. This extension was part of the Council's Green Way recreational mitigation programme, which aimed to enhance existing green spaces in the district.

Budget consultation

Last week the Council launched its budget consultation to Business Rate Payers within the New Forest. The Leader encouraged all business owners to respond via the Council's website.

39 GAMBLING ACT 2005 POLICY REVIEW

Cllr Tungate introduced the report and moved the recommendations from the General Purposes and Licensing Committee meeting held on 1 November 2024. Cllr Young seconded the motion.

RESOLVED:

That the revised Statement of Principles in relation to the Gambling Act 2005, be approved.

40 POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW 2024

Cllr Tungate introduced the report and moved the recommendations from the General Purposes and Licensing Committee meeting held on 1 November 2024. Cllr Young seconded the motion.

RESOLVED:

That Council agree:-

1. There should be no changes to the polling districts; and
2. The changes to polling places as set out in the table at Appendix 1 of the report.

41 REPORT OF CABINET - 6 NOVEMBER 2024**PART I – ITEMS RESOLVED BY CABINET**

There were no speakers on the items resolved by Cabinet at its meeting on 6 November 2024.

PART II – RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL**Item 2 – Financial Monitoring Report (Based on Performance April to September 2024 inclusive)**

Cllr Heron introduced the item and moved the recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held on 6 November 2024. Cllr S Davies seconded the motion.

RESOLVED:

That Council approve the £375,000 supplementary budget for the Hardley Depot scheme as a result of abnormal groundworks.

42 REPORT OF CABINET - 4 DECEMBER 2024**PART I – ITEMS RESOLVED BY CABINET**

There were no speakers on the items resolved by Cabinet at its meeting on 4 December 2024.

PART II – RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL**Item 3 – Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025/26, Policy Review and Council Tax Premiums**

Cllr Heron introduced the item and moved the recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held on 4 December 2024. Cllr S Davies seconded the motion.

Cllr J Davies proposed an amendment to the recommendations, to remove the 10% minimum contribution from the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. Cllr Rackham seconded the amendment.

Members speaking for the amendment highlighted that the Task and Finish Group did recommend the removal of the 10% minimum contribution in view of income from empty homes premiums, and that it would save officer administration time. It was suggested that those with the least to spend, often spend what they have locally, supporting local businesses, therefore putting this income back into the area. Some Members expressed dissatisfaction that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel did not agree with the Task and Finish Group's recommendation on this subject.

Members speaking against the amendment highlighted the loss of nearly £300,000 of income across all precepting authorities, which presented challenges for the delivery of vital public services. It was noted that the most vulnerable of residents were already protected from this minimum contribution. Addressing administration, Members referred to the collection rate for council tax which was considered high performing.

In relation to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel's recommendations, it was highlighted that it was the Panel's remit to review the work of the Task and Finish Group and make onward recommendations to Cabinet.

The Leader of the Council highlighted some of the key priorities of the Council that would be impacted by this loss of income, including the homelessness assistance budget.

Put to the vote, the amendment was lost.

RESOLVED:

That the Council approve:-

1. The changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme from 1 April 2025:-
 - a. The removal of the Band D cap at an overall cost to precepting authorities of £33,000;
 - b. The increase of the de-minimus rule to £2 at no net cost; and
 - c. The alignment of childcare costs with universal credit for all claims at a saving of £3k to precepting authorities.
2. The Council Tax Reduction Scheme Sanctions and Prosecution Policy.

Item 4 – Council Tax 2025/26 – Setting the Tax Base

Cllr Heron introduced the item and moved the recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held on 4 December 2024. Cllr S Davies seconded the motion.

One Member highlighted a marked increase in a particular area and questioned the reasons for this. Following an initial response from the Portfolio Holder, the Chairman of the Council suggested that this technical information could be supplied to Members outside of the meeting.

The recommendations were put to a recorded vote, the outcome of which was as follows:-

Voting for:- Cllrs Adams, Alvey, Armstrong, Blunden, Brand, Clark, Clarke, Cleary, Crisell, Cullen, J Davies, S Davies, Dowd, Dunning, Glass, Harrison, Hawkins, Haywood, Heron, Linford, Mballa, McCarthy, Millar, Murray, O'Sullivan, Parker, Penman, Penny, Poole, Rackham, Reid, Reilly, Richards, Rickman, Rippon-Swaine, Sleep, Tipp, Tungate, A Wade, Ward, Woods and Young.

Voting against:- None.

Abstaining:- None.

The recommendations were carried unanimously, 42 in favour, 0 against, 0 abstaining.

RESOLVED:

That the Council approve:-

1. The calculation of the tax base for the year 2025/26 of £73,335.00; and
2. Pursuant to the report and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by this Council as its council tax base for the year 2025/26 as detailed in paragraph 13 of the report.

Item 5 – Leisure – Update and Proposed Fees and Charges 2025

Cllr Heron introduced the item and moved the recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held on 4 December 2024. Cllr S Davies seconded the motion.

One Member was concerned that the perceived value for money of the contract might represent value for money for the Council, but questioned what this meant for service users, and the level of service provided. It was questioned whether Freedom had undertaken consultation with customers and service users on price rises and standards of service to support their proposals. Some concerns were raised that there could be an adverse impact on the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy objectives if customers were priced out of health and leisure services.

The Portfolio Holder for Community, Safety and Wellbeing highlighted the financial pressures for the organisation in trying to deliver services and the Council's priority to support its partner.

In responding to the debate, Cllr Heron welcomed the partnership with Freedom Leisure and was confident that value for money was to the benefit of the Council and to residents; both customers and non-customers of the health and leisure centres.

RESOLVED:

That the Council approve the proposed increases in fees and charges as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

43 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUBSTITUTIONS PROTOCOL

Cllr Cleary introduced the report and moved the adoption of the recommendations, which set out proposals for a protocol in support of substitute Members for Overview and Scrutiny Panels. She thanked Group Leaders for their support in developing the proposals. Cllr S Davies seconded the motion.

Advice was provided to Members, that a proposed amendment in relation to the process for selecting the Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Panels was a separate substantive issue that could be brought forward for debate at a future meeting.

Members speaking in favour of the recommendations highlighted the ability to continue with meetings that represented the political makeup of the Council and that good scrutiny could be maintained.

Members speaking against the recommendations cited some concerns about the continuity of work by committees and panels where regular substitutions were taking place.

In responding to the debate, Cllr Cleary highlighted the expectations on substitute Members to stay engaged with the work of the Panels so that they could effectively engage as a voting Member when appointed.

RESOLVED:

That the Council:-

1. Approves the amendment to the Standing Orders of Meetings at paragraph of the report, to make provision for a Substitutions Protocol; and
2. Adopts the Substitutions Protocol, at Appendix 1 of the report.

44 ALLOCATION OF SEATS AND APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND PANELS

Cllr Cleary introduced the report and moved the adoption of the recommendations. Cllr S Davies seconded the motion.

RESOLVED:

That the Council:-

1. Having considered the allocation of seats to committees and panels in accordance with the principles set out in the report, agrees to maintain the Council's current position set out in the table at paragraph 12 of the report; and
2. Appoints councillors to individual committees and panels, as identified in Appendix 1 of the report, for the remainder of the four year period ending May 2027.

45 QUESTIONS

Questions were put and answered under Standing Order 22, as follows:-

- From Cllr Alvey to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy, Cllr Tipp, on planning applications within the Solent Freeport.
- From Cllr J Davies to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Blunden, on New Street public conveniences, Lymington.
- From Cllr Millar to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy, Cllr Tipp, on support for farmers through the local plan process.
- From Cllr Clark to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Cleary, on local government reorganisation.
- From Cllr Osborne to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Blunden, on solar panels in car parks.
- From Cllr Rackham to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Cleary, on Solent Freeport business rates.
- From Cllr Harrison to the Portfolio Holder for Community, Safety and Wellbeing, Cllr Poole, on support to local communities.
- From Cllr Brand to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Cleary, on transparency.
- From Cllr A Wade to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness, Cllr S Davies, on housing waiting lists.
- From Cllr M Clark to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy, Cllr Tipp, on Building Control.
- From Cllr A Wade to the Portfolio Holder for Community, Safety and Wellbeing Cllr Poole, on Freedom Leisure.

Note – a copy of the full questions and replies are attached to these minutes.

CHAIRMAN

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Council – 9 December 2024 – Questions Under Standing Order 22

First Questions

Question 1

From Cllr Alan Alvey to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy, Cllr Derek Tipp

At a recent Parish Council community consultation held to consider the recent revised planning application submitted for the Fawley Waterside site, it was clear that some residents believed that, because of the Freeport Zone status, NFDC would not be able to refuse the application.

Would the Portfolio Holder please confirm the situation with planning applications for sites within the Freeport Zone.

Reply:

I can confirm that the designation of the Fawley Waterside site as a Solent Freeport tax site does not alter the legal framework within which any planning application made to the District Council would need to be determined.

This legal framework provides for such applications to be determined against the policies of the Local Plan, unless there are material planning considerations which indicate otherwise. It is worth remembering that Fawley Waterside is a brownfield site and has in large part been used for historic and current commercial and industrial uses, not least as a power station with the associated levels of activity and vehicle movements.

Note – in response to a supplementary question on alleged breaches of planning conditions, the Portfolio Holder referenced the Council's adopted approach to planning enforcement.

Question 2

From Cllr Jack Davies to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Geoffrey Blunden

Residents are rightly dismayed at the state of the public toilets in New Street, Lymington. Lymington is the retail capital of the New Forest but the state of these toilets are an embarrassment. When will these toilets be refurbished to the same standard as other local public toilets?

Reply:

The Council has 23 public conveniences across the district, provided free of charge, for residents and visitors to use. We have a rolling programme of maintenance and upgrading. In the meantime, these facilities are cleaned and restocked daily, 364 days of the year. In addition, our Streetscene supervisors undertake regular checks of the standards of the works achieved by our cleaners, to ensure it meets the requirements of their role.

Unfortunately, the toilets are only as clean as the last user left them in and not every user respects keeping the facility in the condition the cleaner achieved.

More worryingly has been the recent spate of vandalism of our facilities, from graffiti to fire setting to the breaking of equipment specifically installed to support our disabled communities. It is a district wide issue.

We report this criminal damage to the police and submit the evidence available to us. Our teams turn around any damage caused by vandalism or anti-social behaviour as efficiently as possible, and I know councillors will be as dismayed as I am that our facilities are so often vandalised and put out of action in this way.

Turning to the concerns raised over New Street in Lymington. I am sure the Cllr is aware, as a local Ward Member, there have recently been times where homeless people have sought to occupy some of the cubicles at the facility and this has limited regular access for cleaning staff, and also the public.

Homelessness is something that concerns all of us in this chamber, and the fact that someone feels that one of our toilet cubicles is their best chance of a suitable shelter will be of concern to us all. I'm pleased to say that our Homelessness Team are working hard to support these individuals, and as a by-product of this support, enable us to bring the cubicles back into use.

Note – in response to a supplementary question on the refurbishment of the toilets, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that all public conveniences were reviewed annually as part of a priority list for appropriate refurbishment.

Question 3

From Cllr David Millar to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy, Cllr Derek Tipp

Farming is of strategic importance to the UK, providing food security for our nation, reducing food miles, and providing well-managed countryside for our communities to enjoy. However, the NFDC's current call for sites will mean developers encouraging farm owners to offer up their land for speculative development opportunities. Can you tell me how this Council balances the need to support our farmers whilst also looking to meet Government house-building targets?

Reply:

The Call for Site exercise currently underway is an opportunity for people to put forward land for consideration for development, or which they feel could be used more productively in the future. It's an important part of work to help inform our Local Plan Review including future decisions about how we deliver sustainable development in the New Forest.

As you will be aware from previous briefings, any such plan also needs to be prepared in the context of national planning policies as set out by the government.

It is very clear that this government is prioritising a significant increase in house building across the country. However, it is also clear that some areas of the country are far more capable of delivering significant housing growth than ours.

This very point was made by me in response to the government consultation on these proposals when I wrote a separate letter to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Angela Rayner on 24th September.

Your point about the possible loss of productive farmland is well made and is something we will have to balance in the round as we make our new Local Plan.

Note – in response to a supplementary question on monitoring the loss of farmland to development, the Portfolio Holder suggested that he might be able to supply this data outside of the meeting following consultation with officers.

Question 4

From Cllr Mark Clark to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Jill Cleary

With a Labour Government driving the push for larger Unitary Authorities, how will you ensure that the unique needs of the Community won't be overshadowed by the priorities of a much larger administrative body?

Reply:

Whilst there is much speculation as to the Labour Government's views on the future shape of local government we know that one size doesn't fit all – and that the New Forest is a unique place. With the National Park at the heart of our place we have communities that have connections west towards Christchurch, North towards Salisbury, and across the water. We have yet to see the much discussed Devolution White paper.

When this is eventually published we will be able to review what the range of proposals are and prepare our response as a Council accordingly. I also attend meetings of the leaders of Hampshire and Isle of Wight councils and we will within these forums look to represent the district's interests.

Note – in response to a supplementary question on the needs of residents as part of any developing proposals, the Leader reaffirmed her commitment to representing the district and its residents' interests as part of ongoing discussions.

Question 5

From Cllr Stephanie Osborne to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Geoffrey Blunden

Will the Council carry out a cost benefit analysis of constructing canopies with solar panels on District Council car parks?

Reply:

As Cllr Osborne will be aware, the Council is currently preparing a Parking Strategy for the District.

This strategy will create a vision for the future of our car parks and identify viable long-term options for the parking estate, look to support

new technologies, respond to the climate agenda, identify development opportunities and potentially generate more sustainable income levels.

I can confirm that an initial review of the viability of solar canopies will be considered as part of this strategy, which will come forward for consideration and approval in the spring next year.

Note – this question was dealt with in writing in the absence of Cllr Osborne.

Question 6

From Cllr Caroline Rackham to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Jill Cleary

Can the Leader confirm how much in business rates and net gain NFDC have received currently from the Solent Freeport sites?

Reply:

Given my previous responses in this Chamber, and the various member briefings on the Freeport in the past, I suspect Cllr Rackham knows the answer to this question already.

Retained business rates are only generated by new development on the tax sites and can only be collected when they are operational. These developments need to secure planning permission and be built and occupied, but the incentive of the tax breaks is there for businesses who seek to locate and develop there. Landowners have until 2031 to complete and occupy developments to gain business rate reliefs.

Note – in response to a supplementary question on competing with other local authorities, the Leader confirmed that the relevant business rates would be retained in the district.

Question 7

From Cllr David Harrison to the Portfolio Holder for Community, Safety and Wellbeing, Cllr Dan Poole

Following the excellent local campaign being run by the 'Waterside Changemakers' what is NFDC doing to help address the lack of reliable and affordable transport options, which is leaving many Residents isolated or reliant on cars? And is this not an opportunity to be proactive and

work with County, Town and Parish Councils on a genuine issue for our Residents?

Reply:

Thank you for raising this matter. I share Cllr Harrison's and fellow councillors' concerns about the accessibility of services and facilities for many of our residents. Particularly those who don't have access to cars. Officers are in regular discussion with both parish and county council officers on a range of current transport matters and are exploring how best to support those communities most recently affected by changes to public transport routes.

In the longer term, the Local Plan provides an opportunity to explore whether there are longer term and more strategic interventions that can be made to improve the sustainability and accessibility of our communities. Members will be aware that an initial consultation will be undertaken on the issues and scope of the Local Plan early next year.

Note – in response to a supplementary question on support for community transport, the Portfolio Holder reiterated that officers were in discussion with partners on the relevant issues raised.

Question 8

From Cllr Hilary Brand to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Jill Cleary

How does the Council plan to increase transparency and public engagement in its decision making process, particularly when major policies often seem to be decided behind closed doors?

Reply:

I must say I do not recognise the assertion being made in this question. The Council's Key Policy Framework governs those major policies and strategies that are required by law to be determined by Council, or that this Council has decided locally should be determined by Full Council.

Since the May 2023 elections, this Council has had lively debates and determined a number of key strategies and policies in an open and transparent manner, including our New Corporate Plan and Performance Management Framework, our Transformation Strategy, Customer Strategy, Tenant Engagement Strategy, and commencing a new Local Plan Review to name a few. Not only has the Council debated and determined these issues at this meeting, many of those subjects have had significant cross-party input through the work of Overview and Scrutiny Panels, and Task and Finish Groups.

Day to day executive decision making is made by the Council's Cabinet and my individual portfolio holders that have those delegated powers, as set out in our Constitution. This is entirely appropriate within our agreed Cabinet form of governance that provides strong accountable leadership and decision making.

Decision making is open and transparent and the accessibility provided by our high quality live streaming of public meetings is evidenced by the engagement of over 20,000 views on the Council's Youtube channel since the May 2023 elections.

Having said that as Leader I am always willing to follow up any specific concerns Members may have as best I can.

Note – in response to a supplementary question on levels of public engagement, particularly on Council run consultations, the Leader of the Council committed to looking at any further ways the Council could increase engagement in this area.

Question 9

From Cllr Alex Wade to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness, Cllr Steve Davies

Please can the portfolio holder update Council on the number of Families and Single people on the NFDC's housing waiting list? And how many have we successfully housed and provided suitable accommodation for since the last update?

Reply:

Out of a total of 2,008 households there are currently 980 families on the housing register who have at least one child aged under 18. There are 780 single person households. The balance is made up of other families and couples.

In the last two months 94 households have been housed in social housing. 39 of these households have at least one child aged under 18, and 42 are single people.

Note – in response to a supplementary question on the impact of planning targets on the supply of accommodation, the Portfolio Holder committed to an update on this to the next Housing and Communities O&S Panel, including where the demand for temporary accommodation was coming from.

Second Questions

Question 10

From Cllr Mark Clark to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy, Cllr Derek Tipp

Why, and to whom and for what benefit has NFDC outsourced building control?

Reply:

Post Grenfell and the subsequent inquiries, and recommendations, the importance of role of local government building control, in keeping our residents safe in their homes and buildings is paramount.

I was delighted that all the staff in our New Forest building control team met the new requirements placed on them by the Building Safety Act, demonstrating their competence with the required extra accreditations.

I'm sure all members of this chamber will join me in thanking them for their diligence and hard work in achieving this, on top of the day job.

Members will also be interested to note that our own Building Control Manager, Nick Ford has been working nationally to assess competence and accredit surveyors across the country, having himself been one of the first in the country to be accredited under the new competency requirements.

Whilst for many years it has been the case that some elements of building control can be delivered by the private sector, I can give you an absolute assurance that this Council has not outsourced its building control service, nor is it considering doing so.

I would be most interested to know where you heard any information to the contrary, as it seems so out of kilter with the national narrative around building control I have set out.

Note – in response to a supplementary question on the Council's influence over external building control, citing a specific example, the Portfolio Holder welcomed details of the specific incident, of which he would be happy to look into.

Question 11

From Cllr Alex Wade to the Portfolio Holder for Community, Safety and Wellbeing, Cllr Dan Poole

As the Portfolio Holder responsible for our 'partnership agreement' with Freedom Leisure, can he advise what feedback and engagement he undertakes on behalf of the Council, its Residents and Service Users with Freedom?

Reply:

I represent the Council on the Partnership Board. As a board, we meet quarterly and this involves senior employees of Freedom Leisure. At the meeting, key performance indicators are reviewed, including feedback from leisure centre users.

The Portfolio Holder also referenced support for the leisure centre Christmas collections, in support of Southampton's children's ward.

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Council – 24 February 2025

Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	The Treasury Management Strategy Statement sets out how the Council’s treasury service will support the capital expenditure and financing decisions taken over the three-year period from 2025/26 to 2027/28. The day-to-day treasury management function and the limitations on activity through treasury indicators are also set out in the statement.
Recommendations	<p>It is recommended that Council approve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26 to 2027/28 including the Annual Treasury Management Investment Strategy for 2025/26 (and the remainder of 2024/25), and the Treasury Indicators contained within, as provided in Appendix 1 be approved. 2) that authority is delegated to the Section 151 Officer, who in turn delegates to Hampshire County Council’s Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Operations, as agreed in the Service Level Agreement, to manage all Council investments and borrowing according to the Treasury Management Strategy Statement as appropriate.
Reasons for recommendation(s)	To comply with the statutory guidance issued by the Government in January 2018 and the CIPFA 2021 Prudential and Treasury Management Codes requiring all local authorities to approve a Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) before the start of each financial year.

	This report fulfils the Council's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Jeremy Heron – Finance and Corporate
Strategic Director(s)	Alan Bethune – Strategic Director Corporate Resources & Transformation & Section 151 Officer
Officer Contact	Gemma Farley Principal Accountant, Hampshire County Council 0370 779 4704 gemma.farley@hants.gov.uk

Introduction and background

1. The Treasury Management Strategy is a high-level document, giving an overview of how the Council manages and invests its surplus cash and its associated investment assets.
2. Treasury management is the management of the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Council has borrowed and invested sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Council's prudent financial management.
3. Treasury risk management at the Council is conducted within the framework of the CIPFA Code which requires the Council to approve a Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Council's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.
4. Investments held for service purposes or for commercial profit are considered in a different report, the Investment Strategy.

Policies and approvals required

Treasury Management Strategy Statement

5. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement sets out how the Council's treasury service will support the capital expenditure and financing decisions taken over the three-year period from 2025/26 to 2027/28. The day-to-day treasury management function and the limitations on activity through treasury indicators are also set out in the statement.
6. This report has been prepared prior to the adoption of the Capital Programme for 2025/26 and subsequent years. Therefore, the target indicators may be subject to minor variation. These indicators are targets only and minor adjustments will not be reported.
7. Any adjustments to the treasury management limits will be reported.

Treasury Management Investment Strategy

8. Treasury risk management at the Council is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in Public Services: Code of Practice (the CIPFA Code). This report fulfils the Council's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.
9. The Treasury Management investment strategy sets out the Council's criteria for choosing investment counterparties and limiting exposure to the risk of loss.
10. This strategy is shown in Appendix A in Section 5.
11. The policies and parameters included in this report provide an approved framework within which officers undertake the day-to-day treasury activities.
12. This strategy aims to strike a balance between allowing for current investment levels to continue, whilst also considering the Council's intention to directly invest in both commercial and residential property.

Corporate plan priorities

13. Management of the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks ensures we are being

financially responsible which underpins the delivery of all our priorities.

Options appraisal

14. The CIPFA Code does not prescribe any particular treasury management strategy for local authorities to adopt. The S151 Officer believes that the strategy represents an appropriate balance between risk management and cost effectiveness. Some alternative strategies, with their financial and risk management implications, are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Alternative strategies and their implications

Alternative	Impact on income and expenditure	Impact on risk management
Invest in a narrower range of counterparties and/or for shorter times	Interest income will be lower	Lower chance of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be greater
Invest in a wider range of counterparties and/or for longer times	Interest income will be higher	Increased risk of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be smaller
Borrow additional sums at long-term fixed interest rates	Debt interest costs will rise; this is unlikely to be offset by higher investment income	Higher investment balance leading to a higher impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be more certain
Borrow short-term or variable loans instead of long-term fixed rates	Debt interest costs will initially be lower	Increases in debt interest costs will be broadly offset by rising investment income in the medium term, but

Table 1: Alternative strategies and their implications

Alternative	Impact on income and expenditure	Impact on risk management
		long-term costs may be less certain
Reduce level of borrowing	Saving on debt interest is likely to exceed lost investment income	Reduced investment balance leading to a lower impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be less certain

Consultation undertaken

15. This report has been produced in consultation with Hampshire County council’s Investments & Borrowing team.
16. In November 2024, several members attended the annual treasury management briefing session provided by the Council’s treasury advisors Arlingclose.
17. The Audit Committee considered the Treasury Management Strategy Report 2025/26 at its meeting on 24 January 2025 and supported the recommendations set out in the report.

Financial and resource implications

18. Hampshire County Council’s Investments and Borrowing Team carry out the day-to-day management of the Council’s cash balances and investments. The council’s in-house finance team undertake the accounting, and the Section 151 Officer retains responsibility for strategic pooled fund investment and long-term borrowing decisions.
19. This is a financial report with any additional implications already detailed and considered in the main body of the report and appendices.

Legal implications

20. To comply with the statutory guidance issued by the Government in January 2018 and the CIPFA 2021 Prudential and Treasury Management Codes requiring all local authorities to approve a Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Council's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.
21. The Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement follows the latest codes of practice and the MHCLG and CIPFA guidance.
22. With effect from February 2014 Hampshire County Council (HCC) and New Forest District Council ("the Council") established arrangements for the joint discharge of functions under Section (101) (1) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 9EA and 9EB Local Government Act 2000. Under this arrangement, HCC's Investments and Borrowing Team provide a Treasury Service which includes the management of the Council's cash balances and investment of surplus cash or sourcing of borrowing in accordance with the agreed Treasury Management Strategy Statement.

Environmental / climate and nature implications

23. There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report.

Equalities implications

24. There are no equality implications arising directly from this report.

Crime and disorder implications

25. There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report.

Data protection / information governance / ICT implications

26. There are no data protection, information governance or ICT implications arising directly from this report.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Treasury
Management Strategy 2025/26 –
2027/28

Background Papers:

None

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2025/26 – 2027/28

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Treasury management is the management of the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Council has borrowed and invested sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Council's prudent financial management.
- 1.2. Treasury risk management at the Council is conducted within the framework of the CIPFA Code which requires the Council to approve a Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Council's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.
- 1.3. Investments held for service purposes or for commercial profit are considered in a different report, the Investment Strategy.

2. EXTERNAL CONTEXT

- 1.4. The following paragraphs explain the economic and financial background against which the TMSS is being set.

Economic background

- 1.5. The impact on the UK from the Government's Autumn Budget, slower interest rate cuts, modestly weaker economic growth over the medium term, together with the impact from President-elect Trump's second term in office and uncertainties around US domestic and foreign policy, will be major influences on the Council's treasury management strategy for 2025/26.
- 1.6. The Bank of England's (BoE) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) held Bank Rate at 4.75% at its December 2024 meeting, having reduced it to that level in November and

following a previous 0.25% cut from the 5.25% peak at the August MPC meeting.

Credit outlook

- 1.7. Credit Default Swap (CDS) prices are used as an indicator of credit risk, where higher premiums indicate higher perceived risks. CDS prices have typically followed a general trend downwards during 2024, reflecting a relatively more stable financial period compared to the previous year. Improved credit conditions in 2024 have also led to greater convergence in CDS prices between ringfenced (retail) and non-ringfenced (investment) banking entities again.
- 1.8. Higher interest rates can lead to a deterioration in banks' asset quality through increased loan defaults and volatility in the value of capital investments. Fortunately, the rapid interest rate hikes during this monetary tightening cycle, while putting some strain on households and corporate borrowers, has not caused a rise in defaults, and banks have fared better than expected to date, buoyed by strong capital positions. Low unemployment and robust wage growth have also limited the number of problem loans, all of which are positive in terms of creditworthiness.
- 1.9. Overall, the institutions on the counterparty list provided by the Council's treasury management adviser, Arlingclose, remain well-capitalised. Arlingclose's counterparty advice on both recommended institutions and maximum duration remain under constant review and will continue to reflect economic conditions and the credit outlook.

Interest rate forecast (December 2024)

- 1.10. Arlingclose forecasts that the Bank of England's MPC will continue reducing rates through 2025, taking the Bank Rate to around 3.75% by the end of the 2025/26 financial year. The effect from the Autumn Budget on economic growth and inflation has reduced previous expectations in terms of the pace of rate cuts as well as increasing the forecast terminal rate at the end of the cycle.
- 1.11. Arlingclose expects long-term gilt yields to remain broadly at current levels on average (amid continued

volatility), but to end the forecast period modestly lower compared to now. Yields will continue remain relatively higher than in the past, due to quantitative tightening and significant bond supply. As ever, there will be short-term volatility due to economic and (geo)political uncertainty and events.

1.12. A more detailed economic and interest rate forecast provided by Arlingclose is attached at Appendix A.

3. BALANCE SHEET SUMMARY AND FORECAST

1.13. On 31 December 2024, the Council held £132.0m of borrowing and £57.4m of investments. This is set out in further detail at Appendix B. Forecast changes in these sums are shown in the balance sheet analysis in Table 2.

Table 2: Balance Sheet Summary and Forecast	31/03/24 Actual £m	31/03/25 Estimate £m	31/03/26 Forecast £m	31/03/27 Forecast £m	31/03/28 Forecast £m
General Fund CFR	26.4	27.3	34.6	32.4	30.4
Housing Revenue Account CFR	19.8	30.0	43.8	55.9	71.5
HRA Settlement	114.0	109.9	105.8	101.7	97.6
Total CFR	160.2	167.2	184.2	190.0	199.5
Less: Other debt liabilities *					
- Leases	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Loans CFR					
Less: External borrowing ***	(124.0)	(132.9)	(115.8)	(111.7)	(107.6)
Internal borrowing	36.0	34.3	68.4	78.3	91.9
Less: Balance sheet resources	(67.5)	(45.2)	(40.2)	(36.9)	(32.6)
New borrowing or Treasury investments (-)	(31.5)	(10.9)	28.2	41.4	59.3

* Leases liabilities that form part of the Council's debt

** IFRS 16 requires the Council to change how it recognises its leases from 1 April 2024

*** shows only loans to which the Council is committed and excludes optional refinancing

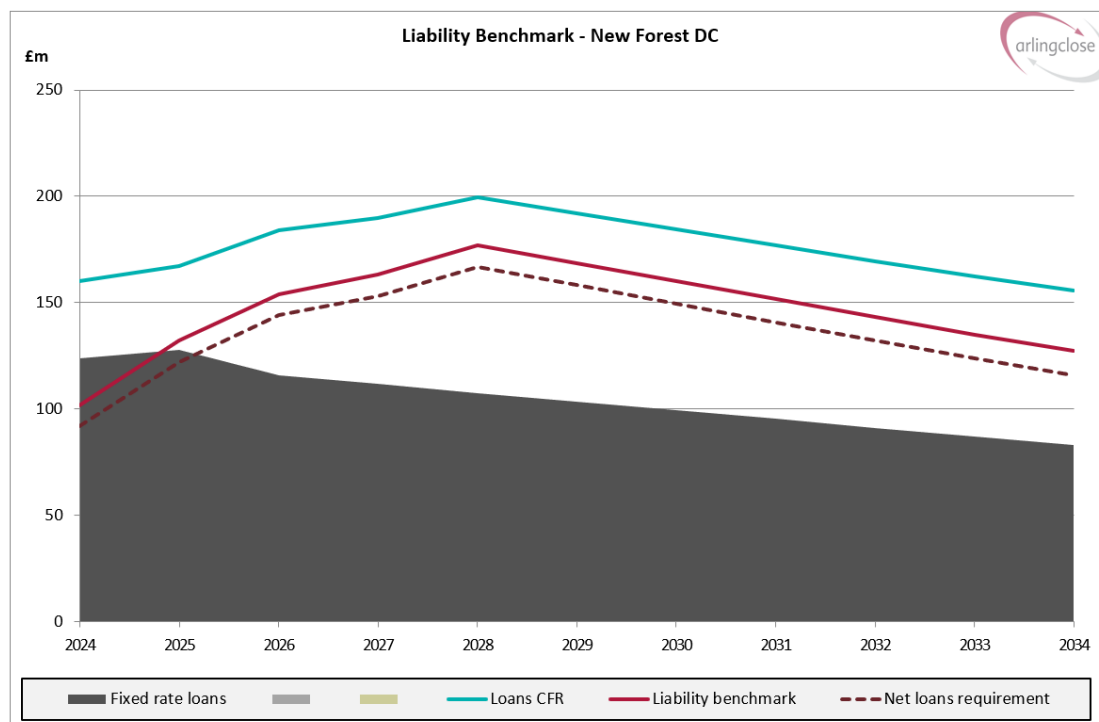
- 1.14. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. The Council's current strategy is to maintain borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing.
- 1.15. The General Fund CFR is showing an increase over the period as the Council implements the new Waste Strategy. New commercial and residential investment schemes have currently been put on hold due to the current interest rates making schemes less viable. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) CFR is also increasing as the Council looks to deliver the requirements arising from Decarbonisation, Planned Maintenance, and the current Housing Development Programme, as per the Housing Strategy to 2026. Table 1 demonstrates that the Council will be internally borrowed beyond the resources available for investment. At this point, an external borrowing position sets in. At the appropriate time the Council will consult with its treasury advisors on how best to service its borrowing requirements, including the possibility of renewing maturing loans on the HRA.
- 1.16. CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities recommends that the Council's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. Table 2 shows that the Council expects to comply with this recommendation.
- 1.17. **Liability benchmark**
- 1.18. To compare the Council's actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, CIPFA requires that a liability benchmark is calculated to show the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes the same forecasts as Table 2, but that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £10m at each year-end to maintain sufficient liquidity but minimise credit risk.

1.19. The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. The liability benchmark itself represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

Table 3: Liability benchmark	31/03/24 Actual £m	31/03/25 Estimate £m	31/03/26 Forecast £m	31/03/27 Forecast £m	31/03/28 Forecast £m
Total CFR	160.2	167.2	184.2	190.0	199.5
Less: Balance sheet resources	(67.5)	(45.2)	(40.2)	(36.9)	(32.6)
Net loans requirement	92.7	122.0	144.0	153.1	166.9
Plus: Liquidity allowance	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Liability benchmark	102.7	132.0	154.0	163.1	176.9

1.20. At the start of the period, 31 March 2024, the Council had a Total CFR of £160.2m, external borrowing of £124.0m, balance sheet resources of £67.5m and a liability benchmark of £102.7m. The difference of £36.2m between the CFR and external borrowing is internal borrowing which is where the Council has used its own resources to fund its borrowing requirement.

Graph 1: Liability Benchmark



The full liability benchmark is available at Appendix D to this report.

1.21. The liability benchmark is the lowest level of debt the Council could hold if it used all of its balances, reserves, and cash flow surpluses to fund its CFR. The liability benchmark graph is based on five years of data which explains why the Loans CFR line in Graph 1 continues to reduce past the initial five-year period – the diagram assumes that no new capital projects will begin after 2027/28, which is a very unlikely scenario but a reflection of the current horizon for capital expenditure forecasts.

1.22. The Council expects a positive liability benchmark across the forecast period, due to a rising CFR in combination with an expectation that balance sheet resources will drop, which generally means an authority is required to take external borrowing to fund the gap between its resources and the CFR.

1.23. The chart shows that it is expected that the external borrowing the Council has already arranged will not be sufficient, with it being below the minimum borrowing requirement, and so indicates that additional borrowing may be required to rectify this.

1.24. Unfortunately, a limitation of liability benchmarking is that the further out the forecast, the less it can be relied upon (particularly after 2027/28 after the end of the current capital expenditure forecast period) and so as time passes, the requirement to borrow may change and either may not be there for the whole period, or alternatively cash flow requirements that are not known about today may become present later which may require the Council to take additional external borrowing in the future.

4. BORROWING STRATEGY

1.25. The Council currently holds £137.0m of loans. The balance sheet forecast in Table 1 shows that the Council is forecast to maintain a net borrowing position and so may need to borrow to fund capital expenditure to maintain its long-term and minimum level of investments. The Council may also borrow to pre-fund future years' requirements, providing this does not exceed the authorised limit for borrowing of £230.5m.

Objectives

1.26. The Council's chief objective when borrowing money is to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving certainty of those costs over the period for which funds are required. The flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Council's long-term plans change is a secondary objective.

Strategy

1.27. Given the significant cuts to public expenditure and in particular to local government funding, the Council's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. Short-term interest rates are currently higher than in the recent past but are expected to fall in the coming year and it is therefore likely to be more cost effective over the medium term to either use internal resources, or to borrow short-term loans instead.

1.28. The benefits of internal and short-term borrowing will be monitored regularly against the potential for incurring

additional costs by deferring borrowing into future years when long-term borrowing rates are forecast to rise modestly. Arlingclose will assist the Council with this 'cost of carry' and breakeven analysis. Its output may determine whether the Council borrows additional sums at long-term fixed rates in 2025/26 with a view to keeping future costs low, even if this causes additional cost in the short-term.

- 1.29. The Council has previously raised all of its long-term borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) but will consider long-term loans from other sources including banks, pensions and local authorities, and will investigate the possibility of issuing bonds and similar instruments, in order to lower interest costs and reduce over-reliance on one source of funding in line with the CIPFA Code. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield; the Council intends to avoid this activity in order to retain its access to PWLB loans. The Council may take the decision to retain the level of current borrowing attributed to the Housing Revenue Account to meet forthcoming pressures related to maintenance and building requirements. The level of borrowing could be retained through rearranging PWLB loans on maturity.
- 1.30. The Council may also arrange forward starting loans during 2025/26, where the interest rate is fixed in advance, but the cash is received in later years. This would enable certainty of cost to be achieved without suffering a cost of carry in the intervening period. The council may, from time to time, borrow in advance of need, where this is expected to provide the best long-term value for money.
- 1.31. In addition, the Council may borrow short-term loans (normally for up to one month) to cover unplanned cash flow shortages.

Sources of borrowing

- 1.32. The approved sources of long-term and short-term borrowing are:
 - HM Treasury's PWLB lending facility (formerly the Public Works Loan Board)

- National Wealth Fund Ltd (formerly UK Infrastructure Bank Ltd)
- any institution approved for investments
- any other bank or building society authorised to operate in the UK
- any other UK public sector body
- UK public and private sector pension funds (except Hampshire Pension Fund)
- capital market bond investors
- retail investors via a regulated peer-to-peer platform
- UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc and other special purpose companies created to enable local authority bond issues

Other sources of debt finance

1.33. In addition, capital finance may be raised by the following methods that are not borrowing, but may be classed as other debt liabilities:

- leasing
- hire purchase
- Private Finance Initiative
- sale and leaseback
- similar asset-backed finance

Short-term and variable rate loans

1.34. These loans leave the Council exposed to the risk of short-term interest rate rises, which is monitored through the indicator on interest rate exposure in the treasury management indicators below.

Debt rescheduling

1.35. The PWLB allows authorities to repay loans before maturity and either pay a premium or receive a discount according to a set formula based on current interest rates. Other lenders may also be prepared to negotiate premature redemption terms. The Council may take advantage of this and replace some loans with new loans, or repay loans without replacement, where this is expected to lead to an overall cost saving or a reduction in risk. The recent rise in interest rates means that more favourable debt rescheduling opportunities could arise and the opportunity to reschedule is kept under review.

5. TREASURY INVESTMENT STRATEGY

1.36. The Council holds invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. In the past 12 months, the Council's treasury investment balance has ranged between £29.7m and £76.6m.

Objectives

1.37. The CIPFA Code requires the Council to invest its treasury funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Council's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income. The council aims to be a responsible investor and will consider environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues when investing.

Strategy

1.38. As demonstrated by the liability benchmark above, the council expects to be a long-term borrower and new treasury investments will therefore be made primarily to manage day-to-day cash flows using short-term low risk instruments.

1.39. Given the increasing risk the Council aims to continue to hold investments that provide diversification through greater security and/or higher yielding asset classes. This is especially the case for the estimated funds that are available for longer-term investment.

1.40. At 31 December 2024 approximately 42% of the Council's investment balances were invested so that they were not subject to bail-in risk, as they were invested in Government investments, pooled property and equity funds, and secured bank bonds. Of the 58% of investment balances that were subject to bail-in risk, 82% were held in overnight money market funds and cash plus funds which are subject to a reduced risk of bail-in due to the high level of diversification within these investments, and 18% were held in overnight bank call accounts for liquidity purposes.

1.41. Further detail is provided at Appendix B.

Environmental, social and governance factors

1.42. Environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations are increasingly a factor in global investors' decision making, but the framework for evaluating investment opportunities is still developing and therefore the Council does not currently include ESG scoring or other real-time ESG criteria at an individual investment level. When investing in strategic pooled funds, the Council will prioritise funds operated by managers that are signatories to the UN Principles for Responsible Investment, the Net Zero Asset Managers Alliance, and/or the UK Stewardship Code.

Business models

1.43. Under the new IFRS 9 standard, the accounting for certain investments depends on the 'business model' for managing them. The Council aims to achieve value from its internally managed treasury investments through a business model of collecting the contractual cash flows and therefore, where other criteria are also met, these investments will continue to be accounted for at amortised cost.

Investments in pooled funds

1.44. The Council continues to invest in pooled funds which enables it to achieve a greater degree of diversification than could effectively be achieved by directly owning individual assets. Pooled funds are managed by specialist external fund managers who are best placed to select and manage investments, for example with property

investments in selecting appropriate buildings and then managing the relationship with tenants and the maintenance of those buildings.

- 1.45. Diversification in itself does not guarantee positive outcomes. The selection of a pooled fund is carefully managed to target funds with a strong performance track record and objectives that are well aligned to the Council's income returns aims without putting its initial investment at undue risk over the longer term. The Council is therefore currently invested in a pooled fund that specialises in providing income returns to support the revenue budget. As a result of their income focus this fund may not achieve the same capital growth and therefore total return, as other more general investment funds, however it is likely to deliver good income returns for the longer term.
- 1.46. The investible universe for pooled funds is vast and part of the service provided by Arlingclose as treasury advisers is to conduct research and suitable due diligence on pooled funds prior to making recommendations to their clients.
- 1.47. Past performance does not guarantee that funds can replicate successful outcomes in future and knowing which funds will perform well is not an exact science. The Council will therefore continue to conduct its own ongoing review and scrutiny of the performance of its pooled fund investments. The Council will also discuss these investments regularly with Arlingclose, who provide advice based on regular meetings with representatives from the pooled funds and their own ongoing due diligence on areas such as performance and investment style, strategy, and process.
- 1.48. The Council is aware of the risks involved with investing in pooled funds that hold underlying investments in equities and property. When the Council began to specifically target higher returns from a proportion of its investments, it also established a Treasury Management Reserve to mitigate the risk of an irrecoverable fall in the value of these investments. The balance held in this reserve is currently £300,000.

1.49. At the current time, the Council's pooled fund investments are valued with an unrealised capital loss of £0.7m. To date, the statutory override in place of IFRS 9 for local authorities exempts the Council from taking this unrealised loss to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. This override is due to come to an end on 31 March 2025, following which the Council will be required to reflect any unrealised capital gains or losses on investments in the revenue account on an annual basis.

Investment limits

1.50. The maximum that will be lent to any one organisation (other than the UK Government) will be £7m. Over the longer term it is expected that the Council's cash balances will reduce, and new external borrowing will need to be taken. This limit allows the flexibility to ensure that all of the Council's cash can be invested in accordance with this TMSS.

1.51. A group of entities under the same ownership will be treated as a single organisation for limit purposes. Limits are also placed on fund managers as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Investment limits	Cash limit
Any single organisation, except the UK Central Government	£7m each
UK Central Government	Unlimited
Any group of pooled funds under the same management	£17.5m per manager

Approved counterparties

1.52. The Council may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparty types in Table 5, subject to the limits shown.

Table 5: Sector and counterparty limits			
Sector	Time limit	Counterparty limit	Sector limit
The UK Government	3 years	Unlimited	n/a

Local authorities & other government entities	3 years	£7m	Unlimited
Secured investments *	3 years	£7m	Unlimited
Banks (unsecured) *	13 months	£3.5m	Unlimited
Building societies (unsecured) *	13 months	£3.5m	£7m
Registered providers	3 years	£3.5m	£17.5m
Money market funds *	n/a	£7m	Unlimited
Strategic pooled funds	n/a	£7m	£35m
Real estate investment trusts	n/a	£7m	£17.5m
Other investments *	5 years	£3.5m	£7m

This table must be read in conjunction with the notes below

Time limit

1.53. Borrowing to invest primarily for financial return is in contravention of the CIPFA Treasury Management Code. To reflect the expectation that long-term borrowing will be a requirement for the Council, time limits for investment have therefore been shortened to a maximum of 3 years.

*** Minimum credit rating**

1.54. Treasury investments in the sectors marked with an asterisk will only be made with entities whose lowest published long-term credit rating is no lower than A-/A3. Where available, the credit rating relevant to the specific investment or class of investment is used, otherwise the counterparty credit rating is used. However, investment decisions are never made solely based on credit ratings, and all other relevant known factors including external advice will be taken into account.

1.55. For entities without published credit ratings, investments may be made where external advice indicates the entity to be of similar credit quality.

UK Government

- 1.56. Sterling-denominated investments with or explicitly guaranteed by the UK Government, including the Debt Management Account Deposit Facility, treasury bills and gilts. These are deemed to be zero credit risk due to the government's ability to create additional currency and therefore may be made in unlimited amounts for up to 3 years.

Local authorities and other government entities

- 1.57. Loans to, and bonds and bills issued or guaranteed by, national governments, regional and local authorities, and multilateral development banks. These investments are not subject to bail-in, and there is generally a lower risk of insolvency, although they are not zero risk.

Secured investments

- 1.58. Investments secured on the borrower's assets, which limits the potential losses in the event of insolvency. The amount and quality of the security will be a key factor in the investment decision. Covered bonds and reverse repurchase agreements with banks and building societies are exempt from bail-in. Where there is no investment specific credit rating, but the collateral upon which the investment is secured has a credit rating, the higher of the collateral credit rating and the counterparty credit rating will be used. The combined secured and unsecured investments with any one counterparty will not exceed the cash limit for secured investments.

Banks and building societies (unsecured)

- 1.59. Accounts, deposits, certificates of deposit and senior unsecured bonds with banks and building societies, other than multilateral development banks. These investments are subject to the risk of credit loss via a bail-in should the regulator determine that the bank is failing or likely to fail. See below for arrangements relating to operational bank accounts.

Registered providers (unsecured)

- 1.60. Loans and bonds issued by, guaranteed by, or secured on the assets of registered providers of social housing

and registered social landlords, formerly known as housing associations. These bodies are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (in England), the Scottish Housing Regulator, the Welsh Government, and the Department for Communities (in Northern Ireland). As providers of public services, they retain the likelihood of receiving government support if needed.

Money market funds

- 1.61. Pooled funds that offer same-day or short notice liquidity and very low or no price volatility by investing in short-term money markets. They have the advantage over bank accounts of providing wide diversification of investment risks, coupled with the services of a professional fund manager in return for a small fee. Although no sector limit applies to money market funds, the Council will take care to diversify its liquid investments over a variety of providers to ensure access to cash at all times.

Strategic pooled funds

- 1.62. Bond, equity and property funds, including exchange traded funds, that offer enhanced returns over the longer term but are more volatile in the short term. These allow the council to diversify into asset classes other than cash without the need to own and manage the underlying investments. Because these funds have no defined maturity date but can be either withdrawn after a notice period or sold on an exchange, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Council's investment objectives will be monitored regularly.

Other investments

- 1.63. This category covers treasury investments not listed above, for example unsecured corporate bonds and company loans. Non-bank companies cannot be bailed-in but can become insolvent placing the Council's investment at risk.

Operational bank accounts

- 1.64. The Council may incur operational exposures, for example through current accounts, to any UK bank with credit ratings no lower than BBB- and with assets greater

than £25 billion. These are not classed as investments but are still subject to the risk of a bank bail-in, and balances will therefore be kept low. The Council's operational bank account is with Lloyds and aims to keep the overnight balances held in current accounts as positive, and as close to £0 as possible. The Bank of England has stated that in the event of failure, banks with assets greater than £25 billion are more likely to be bailed-in than made insolvent, increasing the chance of the Council maintaining operational continuity.

Risk assessment and credit ratings

1.65. Credit ratings are obtained and monitored by the Council's treasury advisers, who will notify changes in ratings as they occur. Where an entity has its credit rating downgraded so that it fails to meet the approved investment criteria then:

- no new investments will be made,
- any existing investments that can be recalled or sold at no cost will be, and
- full consideration will be given to the recall or sale of all other existing investments with the affected counterparty.

1.66. Where a credit rating agency announces that a credit rating is on review for possible downgrade (also known as "negative watch") so that it may fall below the approved rating criteria, then only investments that can be withdrawn on the next working day will be made with that organisation until the outcome of the review is announced. This policy will not apply to negative outlooks, which indicate a long-term direction of travel rather than an imminent change of rating.

Other information on the security of investments

1.67. The Council understands that credit ratings are good, but not perfect, predictors of investment default. Full regard will therefore be given to other available information on the credit quality of the organisations in which it invests, including credit default swap prices, financial statements, information on potential government support and reports in the quality financial press and analysis and advice from

the Council's treasury management adviser. No investments will be made with an organisation if there are substantive doubts about its credit quality, even though it may otherwise meet the above criteria.

- 1.68. When deteriorating financial market conditions affect the creditworthiness of all organisations, as happened in 2008, 2020 and 2022 this is not generally reflected in credit ratings, but can be seen in other market measures. In these circumstances, the Council will restrict its investments to those organisations of higher credit quality and reduce the maximum duration of its investments to maintain the required level of security. The extent of these restrictions will be in line with prevailing financial market conditions. If these restrictions mean that insufficient commercial organisations of high credit quality are available to invest the Council's cash balances, then the surplus will be deposited with the UK Government, via the Debt Management Office or invested in government treasury bills for example, or with other local authorities. This will likely lead to investment returns falling but will protect the principal sum invested.

Liquidity management

- 1.69. The Council has due regard for its future cash flows when determining the maximum period for which funds may prudently be committed. Historic cash flows are analysed in addition to significant future cash movements, such as payroll, grant income and council tax precept. Limits on long-term investments are set by reference to the Council's medium term financial position (summarised in Table 1) and forecast short-term balances.
- 1.70. The Council will spread its liquid cash over at least four providers (e.g. bank accounts and money market funds), of which at least two will be UK domiciled, to ensure that access to cash is maintained in the event of operational difficulties at any one provider, except in cases of extreme market stress whereby the Council will be able to invest all of its liquid cash in one provider only, being the Debt Management Office.

6. TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

1.71. The Council measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators.

Interest rate exposures

1.72. The following table shows the sensitivity of the Council's current investments and borrowing to a change in interest rates. Fixed rate investments maturing during the year are assumed to be variable for the remainder of the year.

Table 6: Interest rate exposures	31 December 2024	Impact of +/- 1% interest rate change
	£m	£m
Sums subject to variable interest rates		
Investment	57.4	+/- 0.6
Borrowing	(12.1)	+/- (0.1)

Maturity structure of borrowing

1.73. This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of borrowing will be:

Table 7: Refinancing rate risk indicator	Upper	Lower
Under 12 months	25%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	25%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	25%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	35%	0%
10 years and above	100%	0%

1.74. Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

Principal sums invested for periods longer than a year

1.75. The purpose of this indicator is to control the Council's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early

repayment of its investments. The limits on the long-term principal sum invested to final maturities beyond the period end will be:

Table 8: Price risk indicator	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	No fixed date
Limit on principal invested beyond a year	£15m	£15m	£10m	£10m

1.76. Long-term investments with no fixed maturity date include strategic pooled funds but exclude money market funds and bank accounts with no fixed maturity date as these are considered short-term.

1.77. In effect, the annual limit and the no fixed date limit would be added together to reach the total limit on principal invested beyond year end, meaning that during 2025/26, for example, the Council could invest up to £25m for the long-term, subject to investment balances and cash flow requirements.

7. RELATED MATTERS

1.78. The CIPFA Code requires the Council to include the following in its TMSS.

Financial derivatives

1.79. Local authorities have previously made use of financial derivatives embedded into loans and investments both to reduce interest rate risk (e.g. interest rate collars and forward deals) and to reduce costs or increase income at the expense of greater risk (e.g. LOBO loans and callable deposits). The general power of competence in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 removes much of the uncertainty over local authorities' use of standalone financial derivatives (i.e. those that are not embedded into a loan or investment).

1.80. The Council will only use standalone financial derivatives (such as swaps, forwards, futures, and options) where they can be clearly demonstrated to reduce the overall level of the financial risks that the Council is exposed to. Additional risks presented, such as credit exposure to derivative counterparties, will be taken into account when determining the overall level of risk. Embedded

derivatives, including those present in pooled funds and forward starting transactions, will not be subject to this policy, although the risks they present will be managed in line with the overall treasury risk management strategy.

- 1.81. Financial derivative transactions may be arranged with any organisation that meets the approved investment criteria, assessed using the appropriate credit rating for derivative exposures. An allowance for credit risk calculated using the methodology in the Treasury Management Practices document will count against the counterparty credit limit and the relevant foreign country limit.
- 1.82. In line with the CIPFA Code, the Council will seek external advice and will consider that advice before entering into financial derivatives to ensure that it fully understands the implications.

Housing Revenue Account

- 1.83. On 1 April 2012, the Council notionally split each of its existing long-term loans into General Fund and HRA pools. In the future, new long-term loans borrowed will be assigned in their entirety to one pool or the other. Interest payable and other costs/income arising from long-term loans (e.g. premiums and discounts on early redemption) will be charged/credited to the respective revenue account. Differences between the value of the HRA loans pool and the HRA's underlying need to borrow (adjusted for HRA balance sheet resources available for investment) will result in a notional cash balance which may be positive or negative. This balance will be measured each month and interest transferred between the General Fund and HRA at the Bank of England base rate (Bank Rate).

Investment of money borrowed in advance of need

- 1.84. The Council may, from time to time, borrow in advance of need, where this is expected to provide the best long-term value for money. Since amounts borrowed will be invested until spent, the Council is aware that it will be exposed to the risk of loss of the borrowed sums, and the risk that investment and borrowing interest rates may change in the intervening period. These risks will be

managed as part of the Council's overall management of its treasury risks.

Markets in Financial Instruments Directive

1.85. The Council has opted up to professional client status with its providers of financial services, including advisers, banks, brokers, and fund managers, allowing it access to a greater range of services but without the greater regulatory protections afforded to individuals and small companies. Given the size and range of the Council's treasury management activities, the s151 Officer believes this is the most appropriate status.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

1.86. The budget for investment income in 2025/26 is £1.3m, whilst the budget for debt interest paid in 2025/26 is £5.5m, based on an average debt portfolio of £146m at an average interest rate of 3.8%. If actual levels of investments and borrowing, or actual interest rates, differ from those forecast, performance against budget will be correspondingly different. Interest paid on any new borrowing will depend on the actual level of borrowing necessary and the interest rates obtained on that borrowing.

Appendix A – Arlingclose Economic & Interest Rate Forecast – December 2024

Underlying assumptions:

- As expected, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) held Bank Rate at 4.75% in December, although, with a 6-3 voting split and obvious concerns about economic growth, presented a much more dovish stance than had been expected given recent inflationary data.
- The Budget measures remain a concern for policymakers, for both growth and inflation. Additional government spending will boost demand in a constrained supply environment, while pushing up direct costs for employers. The short to medium-term inflationary effects will promote caution amongst policymakers.
- UK GDP recovered well in H1 2024 from technical recession, but underlying growth has petered out as the year has progressed. While government spending should boost GDP growth in 2025, private sector activity appears to be waning, partly due to Budget measures.
- Private sector wage growth and services inflation remain elevated; wage growth picked up sharply in October. The increase in employers' NICs, minimum and public sector wage levels could have wide ranging impacts on private sector employment demand and costs, but the near-term impact will likely be inflationary as these additional costs get passed to consumers.
- CPI inflation rates have risen due to higher energy prices and less favourable base effects. The current CPI rate of 2.6% could rise further in Q1 2025. The Bank of England (BoE) estimates the CPI rate at 2.7% by year end 2025 and to remain over target in 2026.
- The MPC re-emphasised that monetary policy will be eased gradually. Despite recent inflation-related data moving upwards or surprising to the upside, the minutes suggested a significant minority of policymakers are at least as worried about the flatlining UK economy.

- US government bond yields have risen following strong US data and uncertainty about the effects of Donald Trump's policies on the US economy, particularly in terms of inflation and monetary policy. The Federal Reserve pared back its expectations for rate cuts in light of these issues. Higher US yields are also pushing up UK gilt yields, a relationship that will be maintained unless monetary policy in the UK and US diverges.

Forecast:

- In line with our forecast, Bank Rate was held at 4.75% in December.
- The MPC will reduce Bank Rate in a gradual manner. We see a rate cut in February 2025, followed by a cut alongside every Monetary Policy Report publication, to a low of 3.75%.
- Long-term gilt yields have risen to reflect both UK and US economic, monetary, and fiscal policy expectations, and increases in bond supply. Volatility will remain elevated as the market digests incoming data for clues around the impact of policy changes.
- This uncertainty may also necessitate more frequent changes to our forecast than has been the case recently.
- The risks around the forecasts lie to the upside over the next 12 months but are broadly balanced in the medium term.

Appendix A

	Current	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26	Mar-27	Jun-27	Sep-27	Dec-27
Official Bank Rate													
Upside risk	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
Central Case	4.75	4.50	4.25	4.00	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75
Downside risk	0.00	-0.25	-0.25	-0.50	-0.50	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75
3-month money market rate													
Upside risk	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
Central Case	4.90	4.60	4.35	4.10	3.90	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85
Downside risk	0.00	-0.25	-0.25	-0.50	-0.50	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75	-0.75
5yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.70	0.80	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90
Central Case	4.34	4.30	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.90	3.95	4.00	4.05	4.05	4.05	4.05
Downside risk	0.00	-0.50	-0.60	-0.65	-0.65	-0.70	-0.70	-0.75	-0.75	-0.80	-0.80	-0.80	-0.80
10yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.70	0.80	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90
Central Case	4.56	4.55	4.45	4.30	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25
Downside risk	0.00	-0.50	-0.60	-0.65	-0.65	-0.70	-0.70	-0.75	-0.75	-0.80	-0.80	-0.80	-0.80
20yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.70	0.80	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90
Central Case	5.05	5.00	4.90	4.80	4.70	4.65	4.65	4.65	4.65	4.65	4.65	4.65	4.65
Downside risk	0.00	-0.50	-0.60	-0.65	-0.65	-0.70	-0.70	-0.75	-0.75	-0.80	-0.80	-0.80	-0.80
50yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.70	0.80	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90
Central Case	4.52	4.70	4.60	4.50	4.40	4.35	4.35	4.35	4.35	4.35	4.35	4.35	4.35
Downside risk	0.00	-0.50	-0.60	-0.65	-0.65	-0.70	-0.70	-0.75	-0.75	-0.80	-0.80	-0.80	-0.80

PWLB Standard Rate = Gilt yield + 1.00%

PWLB Certainty Rate = Gilt yield + 0.80%

PWLB HRA Rate = Gilt yield + 0.40%

National Wealth Fund (NWF) Rate = Gilt yield + 0.40%

Appendix B – Existing Investment & Debt Portfolio Position at 31 December 2024

Treasury investment position

Investments	30/09/20 24 Balance	Net moveme nt	31/12/20 24 Balance	31/12/20 24 Income return	31/12/202 4 Weighted average maturity years
	£m	£m	£m	%	
Short term Investments					
Banks and building societies:					
- Unsecured	4.0	4.0	8.0	4.66	0.01
- High quality	2.0	(2.0)	0.0	N/A	N/A
Money Market Funds	13.7	11.6	25.3	4.76	0.00
Government:					
- Local authorities	1.5	(1.5)	0.0	N/A	N/A
- Supranational banks	1.5	(1.5)	0.0	N/A	N/A
- UK Treasury Bills	6.0	7.0	13.0	4.77	0.06
Cash plus funds	2.0	0.0	2.0	4.49	0.01
	30.7	17.6	48.3	3.99	0.02
Long term investments					
- Pooled property*	7.6	0.0	7.6	5.12	N/A
- Pooled equity*	1.5	0.0	1.5	7.36	N/A
	9.1	0.0	9.1	5.49	N/A
TOTAL INVESTMENTS	39.8	17.6	57.4	4.86	0.02

* The rates provided for pooled fund investments are reflective of annualised income returns over the year to 31 December 2024 based on the market value of investments 12 months earlier.

Treasury management position	31/12/2024 Balance £m	31/12/2024 Rate %
External borrowing		
- PWLB	(124.0)	3.48
- Other Local Authorities	(8.0)	5.50
Other long-term liabilities		
- Leases	0	
Investments		
- Investments	57.4	4.86
Net Debt	(74.6)	

Appendix C - Q3 2024/25 Treasury Management Indicators at 31 December 2024

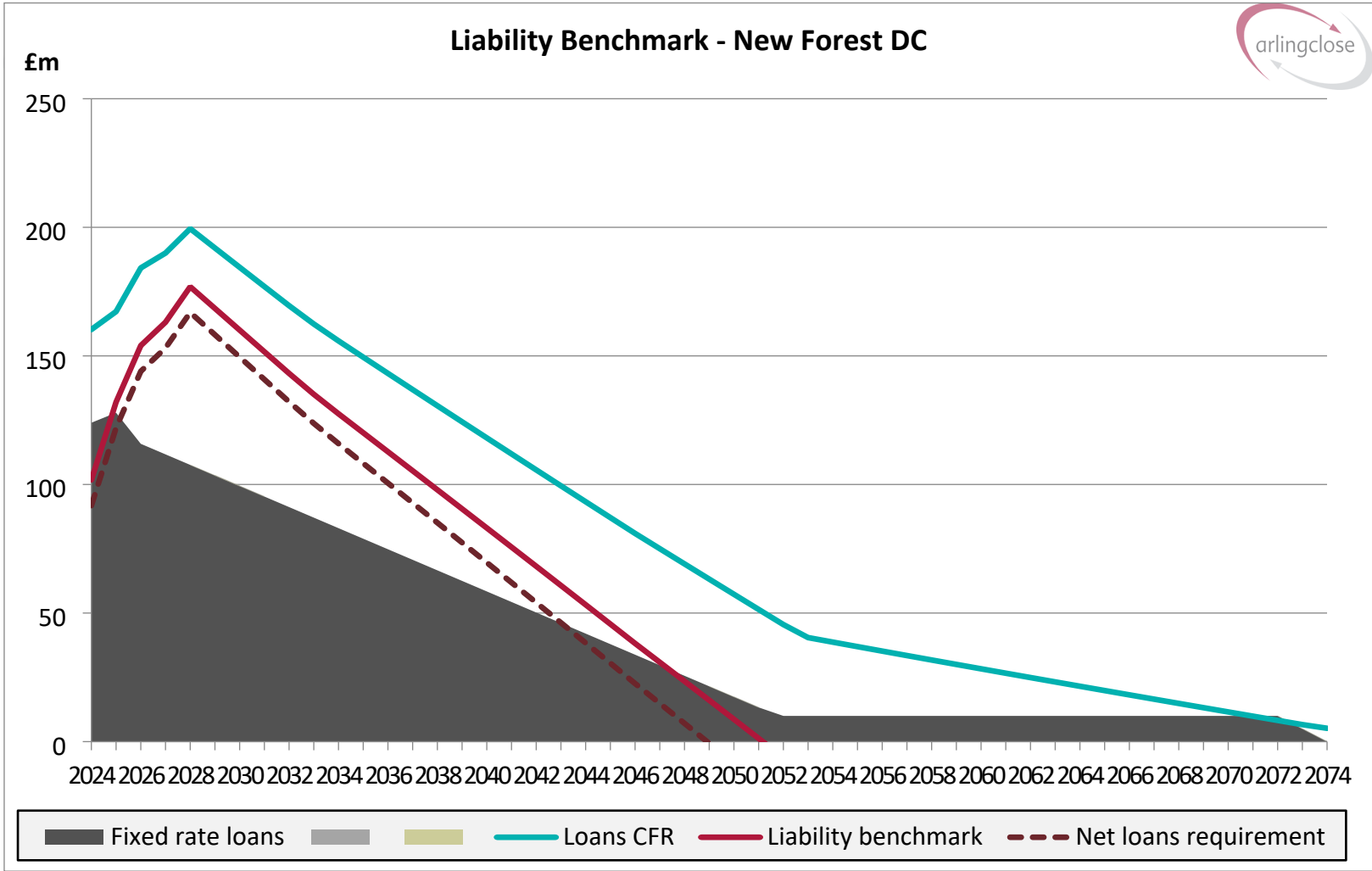
Debt limits	2024/25 Maximum £m	31/12/24 Actual £m	2024/25 Operational Boundary £m	2024/25 Authorised Limit £m	Complied
Total debt	(134.9)	(132.0)	(211.5)	(230.5)	✓

Refinancing rate risk indicator	31/12/24 Actual	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Complied
Under 12 months	9%	25%	0%	✓
12 months and within 24 months	3%	25%	0%	✓
24 months and within 5 years	9%	25%	0%	✓
5 years and within 10 years	16%	25%	0%	✓
10 years and above	63%	100%	0%	✓

Price risk indicator	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	No fixed date
Actual principal invested beyond a year	-	-	-	£9.1m
Limit on principal invested beyond a year	£20m	£15m	£15m	£10m
Complied	✓	✓	✓	✓

Appendix D – 50-year Liability Benchmark graph

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Council – 24 February 2025

Investment Strategy 2025/26

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>This report provides the council’s proposed investment strategy for 2025/26.</p> <p>It provides a high-level overview of how the Council manages and invests its surplus cash and its associated investment assets</p>
Recommendation(s)	<p>It is recommended that Council:</p> <p>1) approve the Investment Strategy 2025/26 provided in Appendix 1.</p>
Reasons for recommendation(s)	To comply with the statutory guidance issued by the Government in January 2018.
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Jeremy Heron – Finance and Corporate
Strategic Director(s)	Alan Bethune – Strategic Director Corporate Resources and Transformation (Section 151 Officer)
Officer Contact	<p>Paul Whittles</p> <p>Assistant Director - Finance</p> <p>02380 285766</p> <p>paul.whittles@nfdc.gov.uk</p>

Introduction and background

1. The Investment Strategy provided in Appendix 1 is a high-level document, giving an overview of how the Council manages and invests its surplus cash and its associated investment assets.
2. The Council currently holds and has approved strategy in place to increase its exposure in a variety of Investments held in part for the purpose of generating additional income to the Council.

3. By producing this overarching investment strategy report, the Council is following statutory guidance issued by the Government in January 2018.

Overview of the Investment Strategy contents

Treasury Management Investments

4. The Investment Strategy has regard to the Treasury Management Strategy, which sets out in detail how the Council's treasury service will invest surplus cash, taking into consideration the requirements of the Council's capital programme, and other financing needs.
5. The balance of treasury management investments fluctuates and can exceed £80m at given points during a fiscal period. However, it is worth noting that overall, the Council's cash balances have been reducing and the need to borrow in order to continue supporting the Council's priorities has increased.

Property Investments

6. The Property investments section of the strategy brings together properties which have been in NFDC ownership for several years, as well as the accumulation of property investment strategies that have been adopted more recently by this Council. Although the primary purpose of these adopted strategies is to support the economic sustainability and regeneration within the district and provide additional housing to support New Forest residents and communities, the strategies also generate a revenue return, hence being prevalent to this investment strategy.
7. The strategy considers the contribution made by these investments, the security, the risk assessment process, and liquidity.
8. The strategy sets out various performance indicators, designed to assist readers understand the implications of the Council's investing activities on the general fund, and the forecast yields expected from the differing investment categories.

Corporate plan priorities

9. Regular monitoring and reporting of our financial activity including adjusting budgets whilst maintaining a balanced medium term financial plan (MTFP), ensures we are being financially responsible and supports our Future New Forest transformation programme which underpins the delivery of all our priorities.

Options appraisal

10. None undertaken.

Consultation undertaken

11. Consultation between our external advisors and internal finance officers, service managers and budget holders has determined the forecast data presented in the report.

12. The Audit Committee considered the Investment Strategy 2025/26 at its meeting on 24 January 2025 and supported the recommendations as set out in the report.

Financial and resource implications

13. This is a financial report with budget implications already detailed and considered in the main body of the report.

Legal implications

14. There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

Risk assessment

15. None undertaken.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

16. There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report.

Equalities implications

17. There are no equality implications arising directly from this report.

Crime and disorder implications

18. There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

19. There are no data protection, information governance or ICT implications arising directly from this report.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Investment Strategy
2025/26

Background Papers:

Treasury Management Strategy
2025/26

Capital Strategy 2025/26

Investment Strategy 2025/26

Introduction

1. The Authority invests its money for two broad purposes:
 - a. because it has surplus cash, as a result of its day-to-day activities, for example when income is received in advance of expenditure (known as treasury management investments),
 - b. to invest in a sustainable and vibrant New Forest Economy, supporting employment and industry; investment income is also earned (known as property investments).
2. This investment strategy meets the requirements of statutory guidance issued by the Government in January 2018 and predominately focuses on the second of these categories.

Treasury Management Investments

3. The Authority typically receives its income in cash (e.g. from taxes and grants) before it pays for its expenditure in cash (e.g. through payroll and invoices). It also holds reserves for future expenditure and collects local taxes on behalf of other local authorities and central government. These activities, plus the timing of borrowing decisions, lead to a cash surplus which is invested in accordance with guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. The balance of treasury management investments fluctuates and in the past 12 months the Council's investment balance has ranged between £29.7 million and £76.6 million.
4. **Contribution:** The contribution that these investments make to the objectives of the Authority is to support effective treasury management activities.
5. **Further details:** Full details of the Authority's policies and its plan for 2025/26 for treasury management investments are covered in a separate document; the Treasury Management Strategy.

Property Investments

6. **Contribution:** The Council invests in commercial and residential property with the intention of supporting the New Forest economy and community and returning a net income that will be spent on local public services. The Council has established a £50 million fund for the purposes of investment in commercial property, inside or within areas immediately adjacent to, the District boundary, and a

£10 million fund exists for investment in residential property, inside or within areas immediately adjacent to the District boundary. Both funds have been established to support the local New Forest economy and community and both also generate an income return.

7. The Council can own commercial property directly and has established a wholly owned group of companies for the purposes of investment in residential property. The Council intends to make equity investments into the group of companies and issue loans, on the latter of which the Council will receive interest payments. Both strategies have socioeconomic benefits, such as stimulation of local economies through investment in commercial premises and growth in the supply of housing throughout the District.
8. **Security:** In accordance with government guidance, the Authority considers a property investment to be secure if its accounting valuation is at or higher than its purchase cost including taxes and transaction costs. Three out of the fourteen investment properties owned by this Council as at 31/03/24 have been in the Council’s ownership for well over a decade. The first acquisition under the Council Commercial Property Investment Strategy was completed in December 2017, and acquisitions and developments have increased thereafter.
9. The main risk when making loans is that the borrower will be unable to repay the principal lent and/or the interest due. In order to limit this risk, and ensure that total exposure to service loans remains proportionate to the size of the Authority, upper limits on the outstanding loans to each category of borrower have been set as follows:
10. Table 1: Loans in £millions

Category of borrower	31.3.2024 actual			2025/26
	Balance owing	Loss allowance	Net figure in accounts	Approved Limit
Subsidiaries	3.713	0.000	3.713	8.000
TOTAL	3.713	0.000	3.713	8.000

11. Table 2: Shares in £millions

Appendix 1

Category of company	31.3.2024 actual			2025/26
	Amounts invested	Gains or losses	Value in accounts	Approved Limit
Subsidiaries	1.388	-0.021	1.367	4.000
TOTAL	1.388	-0.021	1.367	4.000

12. The figures as included in tables 1 and 2 above are in relation to the wholly owned group of housing companies. The total initial investment made up of debt and equity is to total £10 million. The mix of debt and equity will be fluid, and so for the purposes of setting individual limits, the potential maximum in each instance has been shown hence equating to more than £10 million.

13. Table 3: Commercial Property held generating income in £millions

Property	31.3.23	31.3.2024 actual			2024/25
	Value in Accounts	Gains or (losses)	Additions or (Disposals)	Value in accounts	Additions to date
Hythe Marina	2.553	0.245	0.000	2.798	0.000
Hardley Industrial Estate	5.088	0.050	0.000	5.138	0.000
New Forest Enterprise Centre	1.089	0.000	0.000	1.089	0.000
New Milton Health Centre	2.629	-0.140	0.000	2.489	0.000
Platinum Jubilee Business Park	9.552	-1.002	0.000	8.550	0.000
Ampress Car Park, Lymington	2.030	0.111	0.000	2.141	0.000
The Parade, Salisbury Road Totton	1.599	-0.088	0.000	1.511	0.000
Queensway, New Milton	1.012	0.607	0.000	1.619	0.000
Unit 1 Nova Business Park, New Milton	0.560	-0.012	0.000	0.548	0.000
Drive-Thru Unit, Totton	1.382	-0.010	0.000	1.372	0.000
27 Salisbury Road, Totton	1.901	-0.001	0.000	1.900	0.000
Station Road, New Milton	5.000	0.000	0.000	5.000	0.000
1b Junction Road, Totton	0.208	-0.081	0.000	0.127	0.000
Unit 800 Ampress Park, Lymington	1.904	-0.001	0.000	1.903	0.000
TOTAL	36.507	-0.322	0.000	36.185	0.000

14. Note: The table above includes material properties denoted in the accounts as Other Land & Buildings (not used operationally by the Council) and Investment Properties, to reflect different statutory

accounting definitions of these assets which all have a wider socioeconomic purpose.

15. Risk assessment: The Authority assesses the risk of loss before entering into and whilst holding property investments. Market research is undertaken regularly, and potential opportunities objectively evaluated by the in-house estates team, utilising external expertise as and when necessary.
16. The Authority assesses the risk of loss in its residential holdings before entering into, and whilst holding loans through regular communication via the board of directors and the Council. The board has the freedom to engage with specialist consultants as and when required.
17. Purchases of properties and development opportunities are only completed once a full business case has been prepared and signed off by the investment panel, or board, or by the Council if above delegated financial parameters.
18. **Liquidity:** Compared with other investment types, property can be relatively difficult to sell and convert to cash at short notice and can take a considerable period to sell in certain market conditions. The Council will ensure to keep suitable minimum cash balances available, for example to repay capital borrowed.

Proportionality

19. The Council is expecting investment activity to assist in achieving a balanced revenue budget. Table 4 below shows the extent to which the expenditure planned to meet the service delivery objectives of the Authority is dependent on achieving the expected net profit from investments, excluding financing costs, over the lifecycle of the Medium -Term Financial Plan. Should it fail to achieve the expected net profit, the Council will continually review and evaluate its services, and their delivery models, ensuring the most efficient service is provided to the residents of the New Forest. Prudent use of reserves can also be considered as a suitable contingency plan for continuing to provide these services in the short term.
20. Table 4: Proportionality of non-treasury Investments (£millions)

	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Budget	2026/27 Budget	2027/28 Budget
Gross service expenditure	43.000	47.000	47.000	47.000	47.000
Investment income	1.859	2.084	2.210	2.320	2.320
Proportion	4.3%	4.4%	4.7%	4.9%	4.9%

Capacity, Skills and Culture

21. **Elected members and statutory officers:** Commercial Property investments are made pursuant to the Asset Investment Strategy approved by the Council in 2017, and refresh approved by the Council in 2022. An experienced team formed from the Council’s finance, estates and valuation and legal departments prepare initial assessments and recommendations concerning suitable properties. Prior to entry into a bidding process, approval must be secured from the Portfolio Holder: Finance & Corporate Services, the Monitoring Officer and the section 151 Officer. Prior to entry into binding legal agreements, final approval must be secured from the Chief Executive, the Monitoring Officer and the section 151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder: Finance & Corporate Services and the Chairman of the Resources and Transformation Overview and Scrutiny Panel for transactions up to £5 million, and the approval of Cabinet for transactions above £5 million. This detailed and clear process of scrutiny and decision making by key senior officers and members ensures the strategic objectives, risk profiles and overall risk exposure for the Council are considered and fully understood.
22. **Commercial deals:** The Council will take a prudent approach to the management of financial risk and the assessment of possible investments. The criteria for selecting investment assets set out in the Asset Investment Strategy and the steps for selecting assets set out above accord with prudent investment principles and the key decision makers, including the section 151 Officer, are involved in the process to ensure compliance.
23. **Corporate governance:** The Asset Investment Strategy originally created in 2017 and updated in 2022 makes express reference (at paragraph 2.1) to the Council’s Corporate Plan 2020-2024 and was prepared in the context of seeking to deliver on those priorities. The objectives remain valid in the context of the updated Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028 and the Council’s new priorities. The process for selecting assets is set out in the Asset Investment Strategy to ensure accountability, responsibility and authority for decision

making on investment activities within the context of the local authority's corporate values.

Investment Indicators

- 24. The Authority has set the following quantitative indicators to allow elected members and the public to assess the Authority's total risk exposure, as a result of its investment decisions.
- 25. **Total risk exposure:** The first indicator shows the Authority's total exposure to potential investment losses. This includes amounts the Authority is contractually committed to lend but have yet to be drawn down and guarantees the Authority has issued over third-party loans.
- 26. Table 5: Total investment exposure in £millions

Total investment exposure	31.03.2024 Actual	31.03.2025 Forecast	31.03.2026 Budget	31.03.2027 Budget	31.03.2028 Budget
Pooled Fund T M investments	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10	9.10
Other T M investments	22.20	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.90
Subsidiary investments: Loans	3.71	3.71	3.71	3.71	3.71
Subsidiary investments: Shares	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36
Commercial investments: Property	36.67	36.67	36.67	36.67	36.67
TOTAL INVESTMENTS	73.05	51.75	51.75	51.75	51.75
Commitments to lend	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Guarantees issued on loans	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL EXPOSURE	73.05	51.75	51.75	51.75	51.75

- 27. **How investments are funded:** Government guidance is that these indicators should include how investments are funded. Since the Authority does not normally associate particular assets with particular liabilities, this guidance is difficult to comply with. However, the following investments can be described as being funded by borrowing. The remainder of the Authority's investments are funded by usable reserves and income received in advance of expenditure.
- 28. All investments made to date are funded through internal borrowing. It is anticipated that external borrowing will be required to part fund the programme in the future, once new investment is reintroduced (currently paused as a result of the high interest rate environment).

29. Table 6: Investments funded by borrowing in £millions

Investments funded by borrowing	31.03.2024 Actual	31.03.2025 Forecast	31.03.2026 Budget	31.03.2027 Budget	31.03.2028 Budget
Subsidiary investments: Loans	3.71	3.71	3.71	3.71	3.71
Commercial investments: Property	22.31	22.31	22.31	22.31	22.31
TOTAL FUNDED BY BORROWING	26.02	26.02	26.02	26.02	26.02

30. **Rate of return received:** This indicator shows the investment income received less the associated costs, including the cost of external borrowing where appropriate, as a proportion of the sum initially invested.

31. Table 7: Investment rate of return (net of costs)

Investments net rate of return	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Budget	2026/27 Budget	2027/28 Budget
Treasury management investments	1.03%	2.92%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%
Subsidiary investments: Weighted Average	3.82%	3.82%	3.82%	3.82%	3.82%
Commercial investments: Property	4.54%	5.15%	5.49%	5.79%	5.79%

32. **Notes to table 7:** As cash balances reduce, the overall treasury management investment earnings in £000's will reduce. However, the funds that are held by the Council will represent required minimum balances and will continue to be placed within medium-longer term strategic funds, which are typically higher yielding.

33. The general increase in the rate of return for Commercial Property is due to the growth of expected rental income, principally at the Platinum Jubilee Business Park and Queensway following refurbishment and temporary use by the council. As already outlined, the authority does not associate direct borrowing with individual assets. Borrowing will be incurred in the overall context of the Capital Financing Requirement and cash balances.

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Council– 24 February 2025

Taxi Licensing Policy 2025 Review

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>The Taxi Licensing Policy has been drafted to provide a robust, fit for purpose policy, in line with current statutory guidance.</p> <p>Following a public consultation, a draft revised policy is recommended for adoption.</p>
Recommendations	That the revised Taxi Licensing Policy is approved
Reasons for recommendation(s)	Licensing Authorities are required to publish a Policy for applicants, licence holders, the public and decision makers.
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Dan Poole - Community, Safety and Wellbeing
Strategic Director(s)	Richard Knott – Strategic Director of Housing & Communities
Officer Contact	<p>Christa Ferguson Licensing Manager 023 8028 5352 Christa.ferguson@nfdc.gov.uk</p> <p>Joanne McClay Service Manager – Environmental and Regulation 02380 285325 joanne.mcclay@nfdc.gov.uk</p>

Introduction

1. A report launching a review of the existing Taxi Licensing Policy, was taken to the General Purposes and Licensing Committee on 5 January 2024. Members agreed approval to consult on the proposed changes in a draft Taxi Licensing Policy between 15 January 2024 and 15 April 2024.
2. The Council, as the Licensing Authority, consulted widely with all those who would be affected by the new policy. This included taxi

and private hire licence holders, neighbouring authorities, unions representing drivers, Councillors, Town and Parish Councils and the public.

3. A significant number of responses were received during the consultation period. These were fully considered when proposing the amendments to the draft policy.

Background

4. The proposed Taxi Licensing Policy provides a clear statement of how this Licensing Authority intends to carry out its statutory duty with regard to the licensing of drivers, vehicles and operators and providing transport to members of the public.
5. The proposed policy has been reviewed and updated following changes to legislation, best practice and statutory guidance. It is intended to promote public safety and protection of the vulnerable and provide an accessible taxi service, whilst taking steps to improve the environment and promoting the local economy.
6. The document sets out a framework of standards to which the Licensing Authority will have regard to when undertaking its regulatory duties.
7. The policy is an integral part of a Local Authority's decision-making process; informing and guiding officers and members to make decisions which are fair, clear and consistent.
8. In undertaking the review of the taxi licensing policy, officers gathered information across Hampshire and other neighbouring authorities to benchmark standards on ages of vehicle licensed, requirements for wheelchair accessible vehicles, assessments of vehicles and door signage. (Appendix 2 and 3)
9. This policy is dynamic and will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it reflects current best practice and recent case law, changes in technology, social climate, and vehicle specifications.

Summary of the fleet

10. NFDC, as the Licensing Authority currently license 620 drivers, 560 vehicles (hackney carriages and private hire vehicles) and 81 private hire operators.

11. The fuel types for vehicles on the licensed fleet are as follows;

Diesel	Hybrid	Petrol	Electric
358 (64%)	167 (30%)	26 (5%)	9 (2%)

12. The current age of the licensed fleet is as follows;

Age	Hackney carriages	Private hire vehicles	Total	Percentage
5 years and over	82	335	417	76
Under 5 years	25	118	143	26
Total	107	453	560	100

13. Drivers currently licensed are from the following locations:

30% are New Forest residents
43% are from Southampton and Eastleigh
Over 25% are from other areas including Bournemouth, Dorset, Portsmouth and further afield including Reading, Kent and Croydon

Consultation

14. The consultation was designed to gain feedback from the taxi trade, relevant agencies and organisations and the public on the changes in the draft Taxi Licensing Policy.
15. The consultation period ran for 12 weeks from 15 January 2024 to 15 April 2024 and involved an online and paper consultation survey, plus an option to comment directly by emailing the Licensing Team.
16. In total 73 responses were received, specifically 63 online submissions and 10 responses via email, as well as a face-to-face meeting with trade representatives.

Key findings

17. The consultation responses are reported verbatim in Appendix 4. There was broad agreement with many of the proposed changes to the draft Taxi Licensing Policy. Positive comments were received on the proposals to improve driver standards which included:

- The enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service update scheme
- Enhanced fit and proper checks for drivers and operators.
- A code of conduct for behaviour and appearance of drivers.

18. Respondents did not raise any concerns with many of the improvements to driver, vehicle and operator standards including safeguarding requirements, acceptable standards for vehicles and testing, the convictions policy, and revised licence conditions.

19. Some of the changes proposed in the draft policy were likely to have more significant impact on the licensed trade and the consultation response confirmed that there was strong feeling and objections to a few of the proposals. These proposed amendments are considered below.

Age of licensed vehicles new (replacement or new driver) to the fleet

20. Existing policy : no age limits for newly licensed vehicles.
 Proposed policy : petrol and diesel vehicles to be under 5 years of age.
 : hybrid vehicles to be under 7 years of age.

Number of responses in favour of the proposal	7
Number of responses not in favour of the proposal	22

20. Recommendation:
 All new vehicles must meet Euro 6 emission standards (Introduced in 2015, meaning newly licensed vehicles are likely to be 9 years old or younger)
 Amendments to policy: paragraph 2.3 and 3.0 of Appendix F

21. Reason:
 The recommended standard is an improvement on the existing requirements. It will increase fleet standards and reduce the impact of emissions from vehicles on air quality, whilst supporting comments from the trade that the proposal was too prohibitive economically as drivers told us they were not able to afford newer vehicles at the current time. The recommendation is in line with guidance on emission-based standards rather than age limits.

Age of vehicles on the existing (on licence renewal) fleet

22. Existing policy: No age restrictions on existing fleet.
 Proposed policy: From 1 January 2026 only those vehicles less than 10 years old will be renewed.

No age restrictions on fully electric vehicles.

Number of responses in favour of the proposal	2
Number of responses not in favour of the proposal	7

23. Recommendation:

All vehicles currently licensed are not subject to upper age limits or emission standards. However, any replacement vehicle for one already licensed, will become subject to the Euro 6 emission standard from 1st January 2026.

Amendments to the policy: 2.3 and 3.0 of Appendix F

24. Reason:

Concern was raised from the trade on the financial burden of replacing vehicles which had been regularly serviced, had replacement parts for key components and still passed annual MOTs. They stated that many vehicles would be purchased on financial agreements over 5-6 years and so ordinarily would not give them any pay back until years 12 to 15. The original proposal would impact them economically. Based on the nature of the district, it is essential that an accessible and viable taxi fleet is provided for our communities. Safety standards of vehicles will continue to be maintained through 6 monthly assessments of older vehicles.

Ages of wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) in the current fleet

25. Existing policy: No age restrictions on new and existing WAVs.
Proposed policy: Same age restrictions as proposals for new and existing vehicles on the fleet.

Number of responses in favour of the proposal	0
Number of responses not in favour of the proposal	7

26. Recommendation:

WAVs will not be subject to any emissions or age criteria.

Amendments to the policy: 2.3 and 3.0 of Appendix F

27. Reason:

Following a review of the consultation it is likely the WAV proposal would have a negative impact on the provision of WAVs in the fleet, based on the current age of vehicles and the expense to replace WAVs due to specialist suppliers required to fit the vehicles (particularly minibuses). There was also the potential negative impact on school transport, increasing cost and reducing availability. The recommendation meets the best practice guidance,

in supporting the wheelchair accessible provision within the Forest and may also incentivise drivers to purchase future WAVs based on their being no age restriction for new vehicles.

Mid Term Vehicle Assessments

28. Existing policy: Vehicles of 8 years and older to have 6 monthly assessments.
Annual assessments for all other vehicles.
Proposed policy: Vehicles 5 years and older to have 6 monthly assessments.

Number of responses in favour of the proposal	1
Number of responses not in favour of the proposal	8

29. Recommendation:
No change to existing policy. Vehicles that are 8 years and older from the date of first registration will require twice yearly testing.
Annual assessments for all other vehicles.
Policy: 2.4 and 2.1 and 3.2 of Appendix F.

30. Reason:
MOTs will ensure vehicle roadworthiness and safety is maintained and therefore the additional assessment is not considered necessary.
Annual tests whatever the vehicle age, are in line with current guidance and other compliance methods are available to address poor quality vehicles.

Door signage on private hire vehicles

31. Existing policy: no requirement for door signage on vehicles.
Proposed policy: self-adhesive NFDC identification signage to be affixed to each of the rear passenger door panels of a private hire vehicle (unless an individual exemption is granted for a vehicle) stating that the vehicle must be pre-booked and also makes clear the vehicle is licensed by NFDC.

Number of responses in favour of the proposal	4
Number of responses not in favour of the proposal	39
However, 7 comments refer to executive vehicles which would be exempt if they meet the Council's exemption criteria and carry out executive work only.	

<p>In addition, a number of responses (6) mention operator signage, but the proposal is only for signage that identifies the vehicle as being for pre-booked journey only and is licensed by NFDC.</p> <p>A large number did not offer reasons for an objection to the proposal whilst some respondents felt that the existing external and internal plates were sufficient to identify a vehicle.</p> <p>Others commented on the aesthetic effect on their vehicles.</p>	
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32. Recommendation:
 Door signage is affixed to each of the rear passenger door panels of a private hire vehicle. Executive vehicles are exempt from this requirement (example sign is shown at Appendix 5).
 Amendment to the policy: 2.7 and 9.15.2 of Appendix F.

33. Reason:
 Whilst there were many responses against the proposal (particularly from those operating via an app (uber etc.) or residing further afield and not operating in the district), it was considered that the safeguarding benefits outweigh the opposition to the change. During the consultation meeting a proposed sign example was shown to local non-app based operators who gave broad agreement. The signage assists in differentiating between private hire vehicles (must be pre-booked) and taxis (can be hailed). It improves identification for the public and any enforcement agencies, informs the public that a booking is required and ultimately improves safeguarding for the public. The signage further supports partnership working as the recommendation is in line with many neighbouring Licensing Authorities and does not limit a driver or vehicle from working for one or more operators, or outside of the district. It is also in line with best practice guidance which states that private hire vehicle signage requirements should be limited to the authority licence plate and a "pre-booked only" door sign.

CCTV provisions for licensed vehicles

34. There are no requirements in the draft policy for CCTV to be installed in licensed vehicles, and as such no consultation questions were posed. However, the Council is clear that the safeguarding of the public and drivers remains a priority so will keep the matter under review.

35. The installation of CCTV is required to be evidence led so further consideration will be given to the cost of the equipment for vehicle proprietors and implications on the control of data, in line with ICO requirements. Following the outcome of this future review, further consultation will be undertaken.

General Comments

36. It is recommended that general comments including those on tinted windows, driverless cars and safeguarding training providers are noted but no further amendments made to the policy.

Consultation General Purposes and Licensing Committee

37. The General Purposes and Licensing Committee at a meeting on 10 January 2025, considered and supported the approval of the updated Taxi Policy following a public consultation exercise. The Committee noted that the consultation responses received had been reviewed by officers and some amendments had been made as a result of this consultation, this included, the age of the vehicles and mid-term vehicle assessments. It was suggested that the wording within the policy in relation to the display of door signage be reviewed to ensure consistency of the language used. Members asked that the draft Policy be approved at Council once updated.

Corporate Plan Priorities

38. The adoption of the Taxi Licensing Policy is a statutory requirement and relates to the following corporate priorities.

Theme

39. Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives.

Corporate Plan Objectives

40. Protect and improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.

Service Objectives

41. Adoption and implementation of the Taxi Licensing Policy.

Option Appraisal

42. It is recommended that the draft Taxi Licensing Policy (version 02) attached as **Appendix 1** be approved and published.

Introduction of Policy requirements

43. All approved amendments will be introduced from the date of adoption of the policy. However, the requirement for door signage on private hire vehicles (non-exempt) will be implemented from 1 April 2025 for all new or renewed private hire vehicles. Information and the new policy will be provided on the Licensing web pages and private hire operators and proprietors notified of the key changes and where to refer to the new policy.

Financial and resource implications

44. Taxi licensing fees are required to be set to recover costs and fees are currently under review to reflect the impact of any approved amendments to the policy.

Legal implications

45. The policy has been updated to reflect Statutory Standards and best practice guidance. The policy states the way in which the Council will undertake its statutory duties with robust and consistent decision making, thus ensuring fairness and transparency for the trade and the public. Decisions on individual licensing matters determined under the policy are subject to appeal to the Magistrates' court applying the relevant law.

Crime and disorder implications

46. Taxi licensing is governed by legislation on criminal offences for illegal activities. The policy includes increased standards and further guidance on enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks, a code of conduct, fit and proper person checks and the convictions policy.

Environmental/Climate and nature implications

47. The requirement for new vehicles on the fleet to be Euro 6 compliant will have a positive effect on environmental and climate actions. Furthermore, the policy may encourage more electric vehicles on the fleet as there are no age restrictions on these vehicles.

Equalities implications

48. The policy has been updated in line with Statutory Guidance which the DfT will have completed its own impact assessment on. Accessibility for all social groups has been considered when revising the policy.

Data protection/Information governance/ICT implications

49. There are none.

Conclusion

50. The primary and overriding objective of the licensing policy is to protect the public, as well as the provision of an affordable and accessible service and consideration of local requirements to support the trade and help protect the environment.
51. The unique nature of the New Forest has been considered when drafting and reviewing amendments to the revised policy. The taxi trade plays an essential role in the transport network across the district, particularly with vulnerable members of the community and based on the rural nature of parts of the district.
52. A large number of comments were received during the consultation process and where concerns were raised, the council has taken these into consideration, when recommending further changes to the draft policy.
53. The proposed changes to the draft policy, following the consultation process, have considered the potential financial burdens for the trade and should provide confidence to them and the public that an accessible and safe service continues to operate across the New Forest.
54. The age of vehicles and emissions standards will be kept under review and revisited through consultation at an appropriate time in the future.

Documents referred to:

Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Standards.

July 2020 - updated November 2022

[Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards - GOV.UK](#)

Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Best Practice Guidance for Local Authorities in England- updated November 2023

[Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance for licensing authorities in England - GOV.UK](#)

Appendices:

Appendix 1- Draft Taxi Policy v02

Appendix 2- Benchmark document New vehicles in Hampshire

Appendix 3- Benchmark document existing licensed vehicles in Hampshire

Appendix 4- Overview of consultation responses

Appendix 5- Proposed sample of door signage

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Taxi Licensing Policy

2025

Private hire and hackney carriage vehicles, drivers and operators

Licensing Services

Document publish date 25 February 2025

Version number 2

Version	Author	Date	Changes made
1	Licensing Manager	28/11/2024	New Policy
2	Licensing Manager	25/02/2025	For publishing

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Introduction

New Forest District Council ('the Licensing Authority') is responsible for the regulation of the hackney carriage and private hire trade, which is administered through a series of licensing processes.

In exercising its responsibilities, the Licensing Authority recognises both the needs of residents and the public to have access to safe, convenient and effective taxi services and the importance of this provision to the taxi trade and local economy.

There are significant distinctions in law on how Hackney Carriage and a Private Hire vehicle (with both types often referred to as taxis) are allowed to operate.

The purpose of this policy, and its related procedures, is to guide the Licensing Authority in the way it carries out its functions. The policy explains how regulation is achieved and decisions taken. Separate sections within the policy deal with regulation of drivers, vehicles and operators.

In developing this policy, New Forest District Council, as the Licensing Authority, has consulted the public at large and the trade, and has had regard to Statutory Guidance and Best Practice documents. The list is provided as **Appendix Q** in the Policy.

The Policy sets out application requirements and standards that must be met. In exercising its regulatory functions, the Licensing Authority will have regard to this policy document, however each application or enforcement action will be considered on its own merits. Where it has been necessary to depart from the policy, clear and compelling reasons will be provided.

The Licensing Authority will formally review the policy statement every five years and informally re-evaluate it from time to time.

Licensing Aims and Objectives

The Licensing Authority will adopt and carry out its hackney carriage and private hire licensing functions with a view to promoting 5 key licensing objectives.

In promoting these licensing objectives, the Licensing Authority will expect to see licence holders and applicants continuously demonstrating that they meet or exceed the requirements set out in the five licensing objectives below.

These objectives will be taken into account by the Licensing Authority when making decisions. It is recognised that the licensing function is only one means of securing the delivery of the above objectives and the Licensing Authority will also continue to work in partnership with the trade, neighbouring authorities, the police and other agencies, in addition to local businesses and residents. These objectives are;

1. The safety and health of drivers and the public

- Consideration of the history of convictions and cautions
- Driver training, qualification and performance
- Knowledge of the New Forest district and the specific nature of driving conditions
- Health and fitness to fulfil the role of a licensed driver
- Vehicle specifications
- Regular proactive compliance inspections

2. Vehicle safety, comfort and access.

- Standards of vehicle comfort and appearance
- Space standards for vehicles
- Provision of disabled facilities
- Number of vehicles available
- Provision for the elderly and young

3. The prevention of crime and disorder and the protection of consumers.

- Operating rules, conditions and disciplinary processes
- Vetting, qualifications, training and monitoring licensees
- Measures to prevent noise and light nuisance from taxi activities
- Commitment to work with the police and other licensing authorities

4. Encouraging environmental sustainability.

Working with Central Government, council services, neighbouring local authorities and stakeholders in the trade, to find methods of reducing vehicle emissions.

5. Promoting the corporate objectives of New Forest District Council.

Promoting the Council's vision, values, priorities and commitments as set out in the corporate plan.

Legislation

In undertaking its licensing function, the Licensing Authority will have regard for a number of statutory guidance documents and legislation, as provided in **Appendix Q**.

Policies

The Licensing Authority will have regard to other strategies, policies and guidance in its decision making.

The Licensing Authority will also have regard to wider considerations affecting visitors, employers and the residential population of the New Forest. This includes the availability of transport, public nuisance, pollution, crime etc. The Licensing Authority will follow the principles laid out in the Regulatory Compliance Code.

Delegated Authority

In accordance with the Licensing Authority's constitution, the General Purposes and Licensing Committee (GP&L) are responsible for all matters relating to hackney carriages and private hire vehicles.

However, delegated authority is given to the Strategic Director - Housing and Communities, Service Manager and Licensing Manager to make decisions, where there is a need to respond quickly based on safety or statutory needs. These decisions will be made following consultation with the chairman or vice chairman of the General Purposes and Licensing Committee.

1 Drivers

1.1 Application Process (Appendix A)

This section applies to drivers of private hire and hackney carriages. Drivers must satisfy the Licensing Authority that they are fit and proper people to be licensed drivers and must remain so throughout the course of the licence.

The Licensing Authority aims to ensure that private hire and hackney carriage services delivered within the Forest are of a good standard. The application procedure is designed to ensure these standards are maintained and continually monitored for improvement.

To assess whether the applicant is a fit and proper person, the Licensing Authority will consider:

- criminality (whether the applicant has any criminal convictions or cautions)
- driving licence – length of time held, and penalty points endorsed.
- the Right to Work in the UK
- medical fitness
- general conduct/standards of behaviour
- conduct of the applicant during the application process
- previous licensing history
- knowledge of the New Forest District, the Highway Code and taxi law
- ability to communicate and understand English language
- the age of the applicant (21 or over)
- awareness of safeguarding issues
- intelligence from other agencies such as the police and the National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN).

1.2 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

New driver applicants are required to present an enhanced DBS certificate and all drivers/applicants must register for the DBS update service. Every licensed driver will be subject to six monthly DBS checks in line with Department for Transport guidance. The result of each disclosure will be used to assist the Licensing Authority in deciding the fitness and propriety of the applicant/driver.

As the DBS check is of an enhanced standard, all new applicants **must** declare all convictions, cautions or fixed penalty notices they have ever received. Should an applicant fail to disclose this information on the application, this may result in rejection of the application on the grounds of fitness and propriety of the applicant. All licence holders **must** notify the Licensing Authority of any conviction, caution, fixed penalty notice, or motoring offence received during their licence period. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in suspension or revocation of the driver licence.

Until all renewal applicants are signed up to the update service, drivers must apply in a timely manner to obtain a DBS certificate, as in some cases the DBS may take several weeks to issue a certificate. The Licensing Authority cannot assist with the progress of a DBS enquiry and a licence will not be issued unless the DBS information has been received.

Subscription to the update service (and continued annual payment) will ensure that there is no delay in the Licensing Authority accessing DBS information.

Licences will not be issued (either full or temporary) without receipt of a DBS certificate or information from the update service.

1.3 Residency periods outside the UK

The UK Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) can only provide background information on UK based criminality. If an applicant, has spent six continuous months or more living outside of the United Kingdom during the previous 5 years, they must provide evidence by way of a Certificate of Good Character/Conduct from the relevant country, or countries covering the period the applicant was overseas.

1.4 Right to work in the UK

All new applicants for a licence must provide documentary evidence to confirm that they may legally work in the UK. This is a requirement under The Immigration Act 2016. Please refer to **Appendix A** for full details.

A licence will not be issued for longer than the period that the applicant has permission to undertake paid employment in the UK.

On renewal, drivers may also be asked to present original identity documents to ensure they have a continued right to work in the UK.

1.5 Policy to determine the relevance of criminal convictions

The Licensing Authority has guidance in **Appendix B** which relates to the relevance of convictions, to determine if an applicant is a suitable person to hold a hackney or private hire driver's licence.

Licences for drivers of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles will only be granted where the Licensing Authority is satisfied that the applicant is a "fit and proper" person to hold such a licence.

The guidelines will also be taken into account when dealing with an application for renewal of an existing driver's licence when considering whether to renew, suspend or revoke a licence.

When submitting an application for a hackney carriage or private hire drivers licence, applicants must declare all previous convictions (traffic and criminal) that they may have, including convictions classed as spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Spent convictions will only be taken into consideration if they are relevant to the application.

Applicants are also required to declare any formal police cautions and all endorsable fixed penalty notices. An applicant must also provide details of any pending or criminal matters in which they are currently the subject of an investigation or prosecution.

Any applicant who is refused a driver's licence on the grounds that they are not a fit and proper person has a right of appeal to the Magistrates Court.

1.6 National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN) NR3S database

Details for all drivers that have been refused a licence or had a driver licence revoked or suspended will be held on the National Register of Revocations, Refusals and Suspensions (NR3S database). This information is shared, to protect the public and ensure that authorities have all the information required to make a decision on the fitness and propriety of a driver/applicant. It also prevents unsuitable drivers from obtaining licences with other authorities and withholding information.

Licensing authorities will retain the reasons for any refusal or revocation and provide those to other authorities as appropriate, under the terms and conditions of the database.

1.7 Knowledge test (stage 1)

The Licensing Authority issues dual licences which allow licence holders to drive private hire or hackney carriage vehicles. All new driver applicants must undertake and pass the Licensing Authority's driver knowledge test prior to being licensed.

The test involves a series of questions to ensure that the applicant has the required knowledge to undertake the role of a licensed driver.

Areas covered in the test are:

- the English language,
- the Highway Code,
- taxi and private hire law,
- geographic knowledge of the New Forest District.

Details of the knowledge test are set out in **Appendix C**.

1.8 Medical Fitness

Once the applicant has passed the knowledge test, they can progress to stage 2 of the application process, which includes the requirement to be medically fit to drive.

Licensed drivers are required to meet more stringent medical standards as they are professional drivers and are required to:

- transport members of the public safely,
- spend significant periods of time driving,
- assist disabled passengers and handle luggage.

The Licensing Authority requires applicants and drivers to meet the Group 2 Standard of Medical Fitness as applied by the DVSA to the licensing of lorry and bus drivers.

A driver's licence will not be granted until medical clearance has been established. This applies to new and renewal applicants.

Medical examinations must be carried out by the applicant's own general practitioner (GP). The medical examination will ensure that the applicant satisfies all the requirements to the DVLA Group 2 standard.

If applicants are unable to obtain a medical examination with their own GP, they should contact the Licensing Authority for further advice. All doctors who carry out a medical examination must have access to patient records.

All licence holders are required to inform the Licensing Authority of any illness or condition that affects their ability to drive, within seven days of the illness/incident.

In the case of a major medical event, the licence will be suspended.

Suspended drivers must undertake a Group 2 medical with their own GP before the licence can be reinstated. In addition, they must obtain a letter from his/her consultant to confirm fitness to drive.

Further details are contained in **Appendix D**, together with the policy for diabetic drivers/applicants.

1.9 Duration of a Licence

The Licensing Authority issues combined dual driver licences for up to three years, which permits the holder to drive a hackney carriage or a private hire vehicle. However, the Licensing Authority does have discretion to issue licences for a shorter duration, dependant on the individual circumstances.

1.10 Conditions

The Licensing Authority may attach conditions to the dual driver's licence as are considered necessary. These are set out in **Appendix G**. Failure to comply with conditions may result in disciplinary action.

1.11 Code of Conduct

As required by legislation, all drivers must wear their identifying driver badge on their person where it can be clearly seen by passengers at all times when driving a licensed vehicle. This does not apply to drivers of vehicles granted an exemption to display the licence plate (executive vehicles).

The purpose of the driver code of conduct is to seek a standard of service and appearance which promotes a professional and positive image of the New Forest District and to ensure that public and driver safety is not compromised.

The code also addresses acceptable behaviour with passengers and safeguarding for those passengers that are vulnerable.

The code of conduct and dress code is set out in **Appendix E**.

1.12 Driver duties for disabled passengers

The Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Act 2022 amends the applicable provisions in the Equality Act 2010.

Under this legislation drivers and operators of taxis and private hire vehicles have a duty to assist disabled passengers.

The amendments to the Equality Act 2010 intend to promote a positive impact on all disabled people, ensuring they are better informed about the accessibility of designated taxis and private hire vehicles in their area, and are confident of receiving the assistance they need to travel safely in vehicles that are recognised as wheelchair accessible in addition to those that are not designated as such.

There are certain duties required which are outlined below. Drivers may only be exempted from mobility assistance on medical grounds, but any exemption request is required to be accompanied by letter or report from a GP outlining and evidencing why the driver cannot carry out duties under the Act. Please refer to **Appendix D** for further details on exemptions.

Licensed drivers are under a legal duty to carry guide, hearing and other prescribed assistance dogs in their vehicle without additional charge, unless exempt. They must also allow the dog to remain with the passenger.

If a driver has been granted an exemption from these duties, only the exempted driver can display the notice when driving the vehicle. If a vehicle is used by multiple drivers, the driver who holds the exemption should remove the exemption notice from the windscreen when they are not driving the vehicle.

Requirements

Drivers should ask passengers if they need assistance and respond to any requests positively.

A driver may also be asked to provide assistance to the passenger to identify and locate their vehicle at no extra charge. This may include giving audio directions for a visually impaired passenger, pointing out the colour and style of the vehicle or providing visual directions for a hearing-impaired passenger. Information may also need to be repeated for some passengers.

Drivers must accept the carriage of any disabled person, provide them with reasonable mobility assistance and carry their mobility aids and/or wheelchair (in the boot of the vehicle) at no additional charge. The driver must assist with placing the wheelchair in the boot and open the door for the passenger.

Drivers should not carry any unessential items in the boot of the vehicle which could prevent a wheelchair or mobility aid from being stowed there.

Vehicles

The meter must not be engaged until the vehicle is ready to move and a meter should not be activated before, or left running, whilst the driver performs duties required by the Act.

Operators

Are required to accept a booking, for or on behalf of a disabled person, if they have a suitable vehicle available, with no additional charge for such a booking. When accepting the booking the operator should ask if there is any additional assistance required and if so, this information should be relayed to the driver.

No extra charges are permitted for the carriage of assistance dogs and the operator cannot refuse to take a booking where an assistance dog will accompany the owner.

1.13 Safeguarding

In order to protect the public and safeguard children and vulnerable adults whilst being transported within the district, there is a requirement that all new and renewal applicants undertake and pass an external safeguarding training course. By raising awareness with operators and drivers, provides knowledge on how to identify issues and therefore report any suspicion or concerns. Failure to report a safeguarding suspicion or concern may lead to action against a licence holder.

1.14 Renewal applications

The Licensing Authority will issue renewal documents approximately six weeks prior to expiry of the licence and drivers must provide all documentation as requested in the renewal pack.

Drivers **must** declare all convictions and cautions including motoring convictions, although they may be historical. Failure to declare relevant information may affect the progress of the application. However, for minor omissions, should the application be granted, a warning letter will be issued and held on the driver's file.

Any driver whose licence has expired will be treated as a new driver and must present all documents, in addition to undertaking a medical examination and passing the driver knowledge test and safeguarding assessment. An application must be received before the expiry date if the driver wishes to renew.

1.15 Revoked drivers or applicants that have been refused a licence

Where the Licensing Authority has refused to grant a driver licence to an applicant, or a driver has had a licence revoked or it has expired during a period of suspension; no new application will be considered for a minimum period of three years from the date of refusal, revocation or expiry.

Any application subsequently received, will be determined by Members of a Licensing Sub-Committee and all the applicant's history and background considered. Where the application is refused, medical and associated fees will not be refunded.

The NAFN NR3S register will be notified of any revocation, refusal or suspension.

1.16 Linked Private Hire Operators

If a licensed driver begins working for another operator, the driver must notify the Licensing Authority (in writing) within seven days of the change. It is essential that the Licensing Authority have all current details for the driver, should a complaint be received, or the driver be contacted for other reasons. If a driver works for more than one company, the Licensing Authority must be provided with the details for each operator.

1.17 Failure to declare all matters

Failure to declare all relevant information will cause the fitness of the applicant to be called into question. The declaration must be signed to confirm that the applicant has completed the form honestly. If reliable information is subsequently received to the contrary, this is likely to indicate that the applicant cannot be regarded as fit and proper and may lead to the application being refused.

Licence holders must also ensure that **all** convictions, cautions, pending actions/investigations and motoring convictions are declared including those that are historical.

1.18 Police investigation

Licensed drivers must report (in writing) any police investigations to the Licensing Authority within 48 hours of police contact and provide updates if required. This is to ensure that the driver remains fit and proper and suitable to continue to hold a NFDC driver licence whilst the investigation is on-going.

1.19 Notification of a change of address

Licensed drivers must report any change of their home address to the Licensing Authority, in writing, within seven days of the change.

2 Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Vehicles

The following provisions apply to both private hire and hackney carriage vehicles.

There are additional issues which relate only to private hire vehicles set out in 2.13 and for hackney carriages set out in 2.14.

2.1 Application process

The Licensing Authority will consider all applications for vehicle licences on their own merits.

The procedure for dealing with applications for private hire and hackney carriage vehicles is set out in **Appendix A**.

The applicant must satisfy the licensing authority on the following points:

- Completed vehicle application form,
- payment of the appropriate fee,
- original vehicle registration document (V5),
- successful valid vehicle inspection report from the authority's testing facility,
- valid policy of insurance,
- vehicle inspection report from the authority's inspection garage,
- valid MOT,
- basic DBS certificate (within last 3 months) if the proprietor is not a NFDC licensed driver.

2.2 Grant and renewal of licences

Private hire vehicle licences and hackney carriage vehicle licences will be issued for up to 12 months following production of all the necessary documents.

Vehicle licences will only be issued on the condition that the vehicle is not licensed by another licensing authority as either a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle.

If a vehicle has a licence with another authority, it must be surrendered before this Licensing Authority issues a vehicle licence. Proof of surrender from the previous authority will be required.

2.3 Vehicle age and exhaust emissions

The Licensing Authority aims to ensure that taxi and private hire vehicles are, and remain, of a good standard. It recognises that the high mileage and general wear and tear sustained by vehicles will have an impact on their continued serviceability over a period of time.

In the interests of public safety and comfort and in support of climate change action, the Licensing Authority (at the adoption of this policy) will introduce age restrictions for hackney carriages and private hire vehicles as part of the licensing process. These restrictions raise the standard of new vehicles to the fleet, ensuring that those licensed by the New Forest are of a consistent standard to neighbouring authorities.

The qualifying criterion are as follows:

All vehicles must meet Euro 6 emission standards, from the date of first registration, **at the time of initial licensing**.

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs) are not subject to any emission or age criteria.

All vehicles currently licensed by the Licensing Authority are not subject to upper age limits or emission standards. However, any replacement vehicle for one already licensed will become subject to the Euro 6 emission standard. This will be kept under annual review.

Euro 6 is the sixth and latest directive to help reduce the level of harmful pollutants produced by new vehicles.

The Euro 6 standard sets out the acceptable limits for these exhaust emissions and since September 2015, all new cars sold have had to comply with the Euro 6 standard.

Twice yearly testing will be required for vehicles that are eight (8) years and older.

2.4 Insurance

A valid certificate of insurance or cover note must be produced for the vehicle. It must provide the correct category of cover for the licensed use for the vehicle. A cover note will be accepted, and the licence issued, on the understanding that the proprietor will keep the vehicle insured throughout the licensed period.

2.5 Vehicle specification

The Licensing Authority publishes a series of specifications that a vehicle needs to comply with, prior to it being accepted as a licensed vehicle. The specification is set down in **Appendix F** and further information on the testing criteria is provided as **Appendix P**.

Where an officer does not consider a vehicle suitable to be licensed as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle, the matter may be determined by a Licensing Sub-Committee.

2.6 Conditions

The Licensing Authority may attach such conditions as it considers reasonably necessary in relation to the grant of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle licence.

The Licensing Authority has set standard conditions, and these are in **Appendix H** for private hire vehicles and **Appendix I** for hackney carriages. Where considered necessary (taking into account the licensing objectives) additional conditions may be imposed.

2.7 Identification of vehicles as private hire or hackney carriage

The Licensing Authority requires all hackney carriages and private hire vehicles to clearly indicate to the public that they are licensed vehicles. They must, therefore, be distinguishable from other vehicles and each other.

External licence plates

The external licence plate must be securely fixed to the outside of the rear of a licensed vehicle using the approved bracket. The printed plate must not be reproduced or altered in any way. Plates **MUST NOT** be attached to vehicles by the use of magnets, sticky tape or velcro. As a licensed vehicle it remains licensed at all times, the plate **MUST** not be removed under any circumstances, unless by an officer of the Council, for mechanical reasons.

Failure to attach a licence plate in the approved manner may result in a suspension of the vehicle, to allow the proprietor time to correctly fix the issue.

Internal licence plates

The internal plate **MUST** be fixed to the inside of the front windscreen using the clear pouch provided. The internal plate must be placed in the bottom left corner of the windscreen where it can be easily read by passengers and those outside the vehicle.

Failure to attach a licence plate in the approved manner may result in a suspension of the vehicle, to allow the proprietor time to correctly fix the issue.

Taxi roof signs

All hackney carriage vehicles must have securely fitted roof mounted taxi signs. The sign must be linked to the meter and illuminate when the taxi is available for hire.

Private hire vehicles are not permitted to carry any roof-mounted signs of any kind or any references to the word "taxi", "for hire", or "hackney".

Private hire vehicles-door stickers

Unless an individual exemption has been granted to the operator, for the vehicle (executive vehicles only working solely on contracts with specific conditions attached to the licence), self-adhesive identification signage must be attached to each of the rear passenger door panels of the vehicle. Only signage approved and supplied by the Licensing Authority may be used, as they identify the Licensing Authority and the legal requirement for all journeys undertaken in the vehicle to be pre-booked.

These must be displayed at all times and NOT altered in any way or removed at any time whilst the vehicle is licensed. These signs must not be fixed using magnets, Velcro or adhesive tape.

Failure to display the Licensing Authority door stickers in the approved manner will result in suspension of the vehicle until the matter is rectified.

Signage is detailed in **Appendix F**.

2.8 Advertising on licensed vehicles

Self and third-party advertising is permitted on hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, subject to the approval of the Licensing Manager. A proof of the proposed advertising must be provided for approval.

There is no restriction on the positioning of advertisements, providing that safety is not compromised.

2.9 Accidents

The driver of a licensed vehicle must report any accident involving their licensed vehicle to the Licensing Authority as soon as possible and no later than 72 hours after any incident which causes any of the following:

- damage materially affecting the safety, performance or appearance of the vehicle,
- damage affecting the comfort or convenience of persons using the vehicle,
- damage rendering the vehicle in contravention of the licensed vehicle conditions.

The vehicle must pass a mechanical vehicle inspection at the Council's garage, following repair, to ensure it is fit to be used as a licensed vehicle.

2.10 High visibility clothing

A high visibility vest or jacket must be kept in the passenger compartment of the vehicle at all times to assist in case of break down or emergency. Large sections of the New Forest district are unlit and night -time breakdowns pose a high risk in such areas. There are also high-speed roads and a motorway which pose a risk to any vehicle that is stopped on the verge, hard shoulder or inside lane.

In addition, high visibility vests or jackets must be worn by all visitors to the Council's garage facilities.

Failure to wear a high visibility vest/jacket when attending the garage facility for a vehicle test will result in a failed test and a re-test must be booked which will incur a further fee.

2.11 Vehicle examination and testing requirements

All vehicles aged under 8 years old are subject to an annual inspection at the Council's testing facility. All vehicles aged 8 years old and over are subject to a 6 monthly inspection at the Council testing facility.

This inspection is not a Certificate of Compliance and vehicle proprietors must also obtain a separate MOT certificate where required. All vehicles must have current road tax.

Vehicles that are eight years and older from the date of first registration must undertake an additional test, six months after the licence grant date.

Should the vehicle fail the six-monthly test, the Council's vehicle examiner may issue a notice to suspend the licence until the fault(s) has been rectified and the vehicle re-tested successfully.

Details on the vehicle assessment are in **Appendix F and Appendix P**.

Interim inspections

If a vehicle fails to meet the required standards, the licence may be suspended or revoked. If a vehicle is suspended and the reason for failure is not rectified within two months, this will result in automatic revocation of licence.

2.12 Card payments

It is advisable for all licensed vehicles to carry a device that is capable of accepting a payment for a journey by a credit or debit card. This assists all customers who may not carry cash on their person.

2.13 Additional provisions for private hire vehicles only

The Licensing Authority has no power to limit or otherwise restrict the number of private hire vehicles.

Private hire vehicles may set their own fare structure.

Ranking

Drivers of Private Hire Vehicles shall not stop on or near an appointed hackney carriage rank at any time in circumstances which could give the impression that the vehicle is being used to ply for hire.

Wheelchair accessibility

In addition to all other licensing conditions, any applicants seeking the grant of a private hire vehicle to carry passengers who are seated in a wheelchair must present a vehicle which has:

- M1 classification and comply in all respects to EC Whole Vehicle Type Approval,
- proper fittings for the securing of the wheelchair and any passengers seated in them,
- access and egress via side doors,
- a purpose designed tail lift, manufactured and installed in accordance with European standard (CE) PRENT 1756.

Limousines

Please refer to **Appendix J**.

Executive hire exemptions

Please refer to **Appendix K**.

2.14 Additional provisions for hackney carriages only

Since 2006, the Licensing Authority will only issue new hackney carriage licences to those vehicles that are fully wheelchair accessible (WAVs).

These wheelchair accessible vehicles **must** be accessible for the carriage of passengers in their **wheelchairs at all times**. The vehicle must be able to transport a passenger in a wheelchair immediately, upon request, whilst the vehicle is plying for hire or waiting at a rank and must carry the appropriate equipment to safely convey the person.

If a WAV is not carrying suitable equipment to allow the carriage of a wheelchair passenger, use of the vehicle may be suspended until the correct equipment is reinstated.

Existing hackney carriage vehicles licensed with a licence number of 1 to 88 (inclusive) were granted an exemption for the requirement to be wheelchair compliant.

Hackney carriage licences numbered 1-88, with grandfather rights, **MUST** remain licensed at all times. If a licence expires, the plate must be returned, the licence will lapse and may no longer be allocated to a vehicle.

Meters

All hackney carriages must be fitted with an approved taximeter. Meters must be installed and calibrated by a competent person approved by the taximeter company. The meter must be calibrated to the Licensing Authority's current table of tariffs.

Meters must be positioned in order that the fare must be clearly displayed to the passenger throughout the journey.

The Licensing Authority does not consider GPS devices as suitable replacements for taxi meters for use in Hackney Carriages.

Fares

The Licensing Authority sets the maximum rates that may be charged by hackney carriage vehicles (table of tariffs). Private hire vehicles may set their own fare structure.

The table of tariffs must be displayed in the vehicle where it may be seen by customers. Where the meter is set to a tariff lower than the Licensing Authority's maximum, a clear notice should be displayed in the vehicle.

The table of fares (taxi tariff) will be reviewed following a request for a review if it is supported by at least 70% of hackney carriage proprietors. Any review is subject to public consultation and will take into account feedback received.

Any review of fares will be subject to a 14-day consultation period, as required by the relevant legislation and approval by the Council's General Purposes and Licensing Committee.

The review of fares will take into account feedback from the public, trade and other bodies, review of motoring costs such as fuel prices, licensing fees, and a comparison with fares set by other local authorities.

3 Operators

3.1 Requirement for a licence

In order to ensure the safety of the public, any person who operates a private hire service must apply to the Licensing Authority for a Private Hire Operator's Licence.

The licence permits the operator to make provision for the invitation or acceptance of bookings for a private hire vehicle. The operator must ensure that every private hire vehicle working under their operator licence has a vehicle licence, insurance cover and is driven by a person who holds a driver's licence. All three licences must be issued by the same local authority.

All applicants for the grant or renewal of a private hire operator's licence must satisfy the Licensing Authority that they are a fit and proper person.

The applicant must submit a five-year business plan outlining the customer base, how they intend to operate, number of staff employed, likely number of vehicles that will operate under the licence and how the business will be carried out.

In addition, if the business intends to operate from an office where members of the public visit to book a journey or wait for a vehicle, the operator must provide evidence of their public liability insurance.

The planning authority will be consulted when an application is received and copies of all application documents will be forwarded, where they will consider the suitability of the premises that the operator intends to use as the operating base.

All new private hire operator applicants are required to provide relevant background information as outlined on the application form. Contact details for two referees must be provided, who can vouch for the applicant in a business capacity, have known the applicant for at least two years and can support the application.

During the one-month consultation period where background checks will be made, the applicant will also be required to attend Appletree Court for an interview with the Licensing Compliance Officer to discuss their application.

An operator's licence will normally be granted for a period of five years but may be issued for a lesser period. In such cases, full reasons will be given for departing from the standard policy award and standard rights of appeal will apply.

A renewal application must be received and processed before the expiry of the current licence.

3.2 Fitness and propriety

The Licensing Authority will have regard to the following to assess whether the applicant is a fit and proper person:

- criminal records including convictions, cautions, warnings and reprimands,
- demeanour, general character, non-criminal behaviour, honesty and integrity,
- previous conduct,
- business practices demonstrated by the applicant (record keeping, compliance with other regulatory requirements, financial practices).

Any applicant who is not a driver licenced by the Licensing Authority will be required to produce a Basic Disclosure from the DBS and undertake the Licensing Authority's approved Safeguarding Awareness Training.

3.3 Operating base

The Licensing Authority will not grant an operator's licence for an operator with an operating base outside of the New Forest District Council's area. This is to ensure that proper regulation and enforcement measures may be taken by the Licensing Authority and is in no way intended to be a restraint on trade.

Applicants must ensure that the property they intend to operate from has the correct planning permission.

If the operator moves their base to another location within the district, a new application must be submitted. The new application will be subject to a pro-rata fee and consultation with the planning authority, to ensure permission has been granted and the premises are suitable.

The operator must consider the location of their base and the nature of the operation, together with the number of vehicles that are likely to visit the premises. If this is a domestic premises this may cause nuisance to neighbours and therefore vehicle movements and the times vehicles visit the premises should be limited. Records should be produced at the location stated as the business address on the licence.

To meet the requirements of the Licensing Authority, the business address provided on the application form (which will subsequently form the licence address) must have recognised office facilities, a regular postal service and be widely acknowledged as a site that provides office space. The site must also be suitable for compliance inspections and meetings with officers. **A PO Box address is not acceptable.**

3.4 Operator conditions

The Licensing Authority can impose such conditions on an operator's licence, as it considers necessary to uphold the licensing objectives. Standard conditions are set out in **Appendix M**.

3.5 Insurance

If the public has access to the operator's premises, the applicant must produce evidence that they have appropriate public liability insurance prior to granting of a licence.

3.6 Transfer of a licence

The operator's licence is not transferrable to another person, nor does it authorise the licence holder(s) to operate from any address other than that specified on the licence. See 3.3 above for change of address.

3.7 Operator fleet

Licensed operators must ensure that all vehicles linked to the business are maintained and road-worthy at all times. It is expected that vehicles presented for tests have been given a visual check by the driver or operator prior to the test, to prevent test failures. Customers have a right to be carried in vehicles which are clean and well maintained and the operator responsible for the booking and despatch of the vehicle must bear a level of responsibility for this.

Operators are expected to ensure that drivers who fulfil journeys booked through them are always courteous and professional when carrying passengers. In addition, professional behaviour is always expected whilst communicating with authorised officers (Licensing, Police or Council mechanics).

3.8 Business name restrictions

The Licensing Authority will not licence a private hire operator with the same or similar name as another existing operator. This could cause confusion for the public and may have a safety impact. It also creates identity problems for each business.

Prior to submitting an application, please check the online public register for current operators and ask officers for advice.

In addition, you cannot use the same name that has previously been used in this area by an operator and has been registered with Companies House.

Unless your fleet has at least one NFDC licensed hackney carriage, the business cannot have the word 'taxi', 'cab' or any word of a similar meaning or appearance in the licensed name of the business.

Email addresses used by customers and this Licensing Authority must reflect the name of the New Forest operator to prevent confusion.

If the operator also holds an operator licence with another authority, all bookings, customers information and communications should be kept separate and easily identifiable.

3.9 Operator checks on employees.

Operators, those Directors named on a licence, employees that have access to customer records and those that despatch vehicles under the terms of the operator licence are privy to a significant amount of personal information including contact information for customers and holiday dates when properties are empty. It is important for employers to ensure that their staff are suitable to be in receipt of this information.

Operators should require their employees to obtain a basic DBS disclosure prior to employing them and consider the background of the proposed employee.

In addition, operators must keep records of all their drivers. Operators should be aware of the expiry date of each NFDC driver licence and check their DVLA status using the online check facility before employment and periodically throughout. This will ensure that the driver is properly licensed by the Licensing Authority and the DVLA. The operator should also provide a list of all employees when requested to do so.

The Licensing Authority requires that the operator holds a record of such checks.

3.10 Operator records

The conditions attached to the operator licence provided at **Appendix M**, outline the records that need to be kept and produced to an officer at any time.

If journeys are sub-contracted, these must only be forwarded to licensed operators, or drivers with their own operator licence. These journeys must be reflected on the operator booking records, together with details of who the sub-contracted journey has been allocated to. The passenger must also be informed.

3.11 Responsibilities for disabled passengers

Under the **Equalities Act 2010, as amended by the** Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Act 2022, drivers and operators of taxis and private hire vehicles have a duty to assist disabled passengers.

Operators are required to accept a booking, for or on behalf of, a disabled person if they have a suitable vehicle available with no additional charge for such a booking. When accepting the booking the operator should ask if there is any additional assistance required and if so, this information should be relayed to the driver.

The same criteria is required for the carriage of assistance dogs. No extra charges are permitted, and the operator cannot refuse to take a booking where an assistance dog will accompany the owner.

4 Fees

The Council will set fees for licences at a level that will recover the costs incurred by the Council for issue, administration, and compliance of each type of licence.

4.1 Review of fees

Fees are reviewed annually for implementation in April however the Council reserves the right to review fees at any time.

Current applicable fees can be found at [Taxi driver licence - New Forest District Council](#)

5 Compliance and Enforcement

5.1 Principles

The principal purpose of hackney carriage and private hire licensing is to protect the public and promote public safety. To achieve this, the Licensing Authority will provide an efficient, targeted and proportionate regulatory service to those it regulates.

The Licensing Authority will comply with the Regulator's Code which came into force in 2014. This sets out the following principles to enable the Licensing Authority to:

- carry out their activities in a way that supports those they regulate to comply and grow,
- provide simple and straightforward ways to engage with those they regulate and hear their views,
- base their regulatory activities on risk,
- share information about compliance and risk,
- ensure clear information guidance and advice is available to help those they regulate meet their responsibilities to comply,
- ensure that their approach to their regulatory activities is transparent.

Where appropriate, referrals will be made to other agencies including the Police, HM Customs and Excise, DVLA and the Children's and Adult Safeguarding teams.

The Licensing Authority will respond to complaints made by the public and referrals from other agencies and bodies. In addition, officers will undertake proactive inspections as part of programmed operations.

5.2 Warnings

Warnings may be issued for minor or first-time infringements. A warning letter will remain on file for a period of three years and will be referred to in the event that the licence holder is brought before the Sub-Committee for any other reason.

If a subsequent and similar incident/complaint is received, the driver will be invited to attend a Licensing Sub-Committee hearing to explain their actions and pattern of behaviour. Members will consider if they can be considered fit and proper and may continue to hold a driver licence.

5.3 Further training

Drivers may be required to undertake further training should their behaviour or driving skills be called into question, following a single or multiple complaints. A suitable course and timescale will be identified by the Licensing Authority which will be taken at the driver's own expense.

5.4 Suspension of a licence

Authorised officers are permitted to temporarily suspend the licence of a driver, vehicle or operator should they have reason to believe that the safety of the public warrants such action.

Where a licence holder is in breach of a licence condition, the licence may be suspended for a specified period of time, to rectify the issue, allow for the holder to undertake training or for any other reason.

5.5 Revocation of a licence

A driver licence can be suspended or revoked immediately in the interests of public safety under the provisions of section 61(2B) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

In the most serious cases, officers and decision makers have delegated powers to immediately revoke a driver licence. This is only considered where the safety of the public is at risk. However, the Licensing Authority will carefully consider all the facts before such a decision is made and the driver contacted in the first instance to establish if there is any other information that may be relevant, to be considered before any decision is made.

Vehicle, driver and operator licences may be revoked by the Licensing Sub-Committee.

If the seriousness of the case merits revocation, this course of action will be available to the Sub-Committee even if it is the first enforcement action taken against the licence holder.

The Licensing Authority is aware of the judgement in [Singh v Cardiff City Council](#) and will not suspend a licence and subsequently revoke it on the grounds of fitness and propriety. Where there are concerns regarding a person's fitness and propriety the Licensing Authority will generally revoke the licence. Should information subsequently come to light which alters the Licensing Authority's view, a new licence application may be submitted and dependant on the circumstances the fee may be waived by the Authority.

5.6 Hearing and Appeals

If the case does not compromise the immediate safety of the public, the fitness and propriety of the driver will be considered at a formal hearing of a Licensing Sub-Committee, where the licence holder (and any witnesses) will be given the opportunity to hear the evidence and present their case.

Licence holders may be referred to a Licensing Sub-Committee for a number of reasons including committing offences, failure to comply with any part of this policy, or for any other conduct which impacts on their fitness to be a licence holder.

The Sub-Committee will consider the impact of the offending/conduct on the individual's fitness to hold a licence and take such action as is appropriate in the circumstances.

This may include:

- A warning letter to be issued and held on file,
- Suspension of a driver licence for a specified period of time ,
- Revocation of the driver licence which may have immediate effect, or
- Other conditions or stipulations attached to the decision as Members see fit.

6 APPENDICES

Appendix A – Application Process

1.0 Drivers

The Licensing Authority has a responsibility to ensure that licensed drivers can be considered as fit and proper and suitable to hold such licences, given the circumstances of their employment. In order to assist in making these decisions, a variety of checks are made on the applicant as below.

1.1 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check

All applicants/licensees are required to obtain an enhanced DBS certificate to include a check on the barred lists. If an applicant has signed up to the update service with a certificate not previously issued by this Authority, we will need to see the certificate, prior to completing a check with the DBS Update Service. Full information on how to apply is available from Licensing Services or on the Council's website at [Taxi driver licence - New Forest District Council](#).

Drivers and applicants are required to sign up to the DBS update service. This is an annual subscription service that allows drivers to provide licensing officers with access to DBS records at any time.

Applicants must sign up to the update service within 28 days of their DBS certificate being issued. <https://www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service>.

All new applicants must subscribe to the DBS online update service before a licence is issued. Existing drivers must sign up to the update service when next required to produce a DBS certificate, in line with this policy.

Signing up to the update service will be required by condition on the driver licence. Licensees must also give consent to the Licensing Authority to check the status of their certificate online should we consider it necessary to do so, and routinely every six months, in line with statutory guidance.

The Licensing Authority will use the Update Service to monitor the criminal record of licence holders. The Update Service can be used when a licence is renewed, if there are no changes recorded on the DBS certificate. If there are changes, officers will need to see the full certificate before a licence is renewed.

All new applicants must subscribe and maintain a subscription to the DBS Update Service before the licence can be issued. Licensing officers will need to see the applicant's first DBS certificate prior to them joining the update service.

Existing drivers must sign up to the DBS Update Service when next required to produce an enhanced DBS certificate (i.e. their next licence renewal) **and this must be confirmed before the renewal application can be granted.**

A licence will not be granted in the absence of a current enhanced DBS certificate or renewed without either the same or a check completed via the Update Service. A licence will be suspended if a mid-term check cannot be completed when the Licensing Authority submits a request to the Update Service.

Applicants and licensees are responsible for the costs of obtaining the enhanced DBS certificate and any costs associated with maintaining the DBS Update Service subscription. The annual payment must be paid to enable continuation of access to the Update Service. It is important that the method of payment for the subscription is maintained to allow the DBS to take the annual payment when required.

This, however, does not negate the need for licensed drivers to inform the Licensing Authority of any new arrests, convictions cautions etc.

The Licensing Service does not take any responsibility for incorrectly completed DBS requests that incur an additional charge and a duplicate application.

In the interests of public safety, the Licensing Authority will not issue a licence to any individual that appears on the children and/or adult barred lists.

1.2 Overseas background check

The DBS cannot access criminal records held overseas; only foreign convictions that are held on the Police National Computer may be disclosed. Therefore, an enhanced DBS certificate may not provide a full picture of an individual's criminal record where there have been periods spent living or working overseas.

If a new applicant has spent six continuous months or more living outside of the United Kingdom during the previous 5 years, they must provide evidence of a Certificate of Good Character/Conduct from the relevant country or countries covering the period the applicant was overseas. This will be a summary of any overseas convictions from the Ministry of Justice, Embassy or Home Country Police Service.

Before renewing a drivers' licence, any applicant who has spent six continuous months or more living outside of the United Kingdom since their licence was previously renewed, will also be required to provide evidence of a Certificate of Good Character/Conduct from the relevant country or countries. This must be provided before their licence is renewed.

Ex service personnel are exempt from the requirement to provide a Certificate of Good Character/Conduct for their periods of military service. Proof of period of military service is required.

Should an applicant or licensee be unable to obtain a Certificate of Good Character/Conduct from the relevant country, the reasons for this must be discussed with the Licensing Authority.

1.3 Non-UK passport holders

A Certificate of Good Character/Conduct must be produced by any applicant who is not a UK citizen. The information provided must cover any country that they have lived in since the age of ten.

Asylum seekers who hold a Home Office issued application registration document together with a positive verification letter from the Home Office's Employer Checking Service stating that the named individual is permitted to work in the UK, will be exempt from the requirement to submit a recent Certificate of Good Character/Conduct. The Licensing Authority will require sight of any Certificate of Good Character/Conduct that the applicant may have, regardless of the age of the document.

Applicants who produce a Certificate of Good Character/Conduct in a language other than English are required to produce a verified translated version at their own expense by an independent translation service.

For advice on obtaining Certificates of Good Character/Conduct follow the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants>

1.4 Statutory declarations

In certain cases, the Licensing Authority will allow applicants who cannot obtain a Certificate of Good Character/Conduct to complete a statutory declaration authorised by a solicitor. The solicitor will normally charge a fee for this service. The solicitor will need to establish proof of identity and the applicant must swear on oath that the facts they are providing are correct.

The applicant must declare their full conviction history and any information relevant to the application for a driver licence in this document.

The Licensing Authority will only allow an applicant to do this in strict circumstances such as:

- If the Country is one which is unable to provide such certificates as there are no records held; and
- Where an applicant can provide written documentary proof (letters or emails) that they have been unsuccessful in their attempts to obtain a certificate over a period of 4 months, or
- For reasons of Asylum, the applicant cannot contact the country.

1.5 Right to work policy

This is applicable for all drivers, operators and vehicle proprietors.

The Licensing Authority requires all applicants for new licences to provide documentary evidence to confirm that they may legally work in the UK. Examples of documents that may be provided include (but are not limited to):

- A UK passport confirming that the holder is a British Citizen (or citizen of another EEA country),
- A passport or other travel document endorsed to show that the holder is allowed to stay in the UK and undertake paid employment,
- A full UK birth/adoption certificate,
- An immigration document issued by the Border and Immigration Agency to the holder which indicates that the person named in it can stay in the UK and undertake paid employment,
- A work permit or other approval to take undertake employment, issued by the Home Office or the Border and Immigration Agency, when produced in combination with either a passport or another travel document endorsed to show the holder is allowed to stay in the UK and is allowed to undertake paid employment.

When an applicant is subject to immigration controls, a licence will not be issued for longer than the period that the applicant has permission to undertake paid employment in the UK.

Where the licence has been issued for the shorter period, renewal applications will be accepted only if full and complete applications are submitted, prior to the expiry of the licence and provided the application shows, to the satisfaction of the Licensing Authority, a right to work in the UK. If this cannot be demonstrated prior to the expiry of the licence, applicants will be required to apply for a new licence as if they were a first-time applicant. In these circumstances, a licence will not be granted until such time as all the necessary licensing requirements have been fulfilled.

If a licensee loses the right to remain in the UK during the currency of their licence, the licence will cease to have effect. In this case, the licence must be surrendered by the licence holder within seven days of the licence ceasing to have effect.

In accordance with the requirement of the Immigration Act 2016, the Licensing Authority will also conduct “right to work” checks for renewal driver applications.

1.6 National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN) NR3S Register

This register holds information on any driver or applicant that has had a driver licence revoked, or has had an application refused, or a licence suspended.

Every new and renewal driver applicant will be checked against the database and if the applicant's name appears, the corresponding authority will be contacted, and further information requested on the background of the refusal/revocation.

This information will be considered as part of the fit and proper person checks by the Licensing Authority.

1.7 Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency checks and requirements.

Driver applicants must be aged 21 years or older. Applicants who are 70 years of age or above are required to undertake a driving assessment, which will be repeated annually. This will be carried out at the applicant's own expense.

Applicants must hold a full Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) licence (not provisional) for at least 2 years prior to the date of application.

It is a legal requirement for the holder of a DVLA driver licence to provide the DVLA with their current address. Failure to do so may result in a fine of up to £1,000. If the DVLA licence shows an incorrect name or address, the driver must apply to the DVLA immediately to have details amended. The NFDC driver application will not progress if the details on the DVLA driver licence are incorrect.

If an applicant holds a non-UK driving licence, this must be registered with the DVLA.

Applicants and drivers are required to sign up for the DVLA online check service and submit the check code with their driver application.

For both new and renewal applicants, licensing officers will verify the driving entitlement and note any penalty points awarded. Applicants are required to sign a mandate to permit such checks to take place.

1.8 HMRC Tax Conditionality

The Licensing Authority is required to check that renewal drivers or those new applicants that hold driver licences with other authorities are registered with HM Revenues and Customs (HMRC) to ensure that drivers are registered to pay tax on earnings. The Stage 2 application pack contains information to assist drivers in registering.

2.0 Vehicles

2.1 New applications

An application for a new hackney carriage or private hire vehicle licence shall be submitted using the Council's prescribed application form. Applications shall be accompanied by the following documents:

- i) The V5C registration document (logbook) for the relevant vehicle. Where the vehicle has been recently purchased and the V5C has not yet been received, a sales invoice or proof of ownership must be provided.
- ii) A valid MOT certificate (for all hackney carriages exceeding 12 months old and for any private hire vehicle exceeding three years old). The MOT certificate must be valid for the date that the licence is due to commence.
- iii) A valid certificate of motor insurance (or temporary cover note) for the vehicle, covering the appropriate licence type (hackney carriage or private hire vehicle)
- iv) Evidence that the vehicle has been appropriately taxed.
- v) A basic DBS certificate less than 1 month old for each proprietor to be named on the vehicle licence, except where they are already a licensed driver by New Forest District Council. This is required annually.
- vi) The prescribed fee.

2.2 Vehicle test

Once received the applicant will be contacted to book a vehicle test at a council testing facility and take the payment. The licence will only be issued upon receipt of a pass certificate from the garage.

2.3 Applicants

An application for a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle may be submitted by either an individual, partnership or registered company. Where the applicant is a partnership or registered company, section (v) above applies to all partners and/or company directors.

2.4 Changes

Where a licence is held by a partnership or registered company, the licence holder shall notify the Licensing Authority of any changes to partners or company directors within 7 days, and a basic DBS certificate will be required for each new partner or company director. Should this occur during the period of licence, the Licensing Authority may suspend the licence, pending receipt of satisfactory basic DBS certificates.

Where any hackney carriage and private hire driver ceases to hold such a licence but continues to hold a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Vehicle Licence, a basic DBS certificate will be required immediately, and the Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Vehicle Licence may be suspended until this is received by the Licensing Authority.

2.5 Renewals

An application to renew a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle licence must be submitted prior to the current licence expiring. No grace period will be given. In the event that the licence expires, a new application must be made, and the vehicle must comply with the requirements for new vehicles.

An application to renew a vehicle licence shall be submitted using the Council's prescribed application form. Applications shall be accompanied by the same documents required for a new vehicle licence application. Payment of the prescribed fee is due before a licence application is processed.

A vehicle licence will not be renewed unless all the information required to support the renewal application has been provided and the vehicle has successfully passed the mechanical inspection.

Appendix B – Convictions’ Policy

1.0 Introduction

This policy provides guidance on the criteria taken into account by New Forest District Council (‘the Licensing Authority’) when determining whether or not an applicant or an existing licence holder is a fit and proper person to hold a dual driver licence or operator licence.

The decision maker will consider all relevant factors when determining applications, including previous convictions, cautions and complaints and the time that has elapsed since these were committed.

The overriding aim of the Licensing Authority is to protect the safety of the public and they will aim to ensure that any person licensed to drive a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle or an operator:

- is a fit and proper person; and
- does not pose a threat to the public.

It will also aim to ensure that the public, in particular, children, young persons and vulnerable adults are adequately safeguarded.

The term “fit and proper person” for the purposes of licensing is not legally defined and in assessing whether someone is “fit and proper” the Licensing Authority will consider enhanced conviction history, driving history and any offences, Right to Work in the UK and medical fitness, together with any other relevant information.

Where licensing officers have delegated powers to grant licences, they will use these guidelines when making a decision to grant a licence. In certain circumstances applications for licences will be referred to the Licensing Sub-Committee. Whilst officers and Elected Members will have regard to the guidelines contained in the policy, each case will be considered on its individual merits and where the circumstances demand, the committee/officer may depart from the guidelines.

The type of offence, pattern of behaviour and overall history should be taken into consideration when determining an application.

In addition, these factors will also be taken into account when action against a licence holder is being considered.

2.0 Appeals

Any applicant who is refused a driver or operator licence on the grounds that the Licensing Authority is not satisfied he/she is not a fit and proper person to hold such a licence has a right to appeal to the Magistrates' Court within 21 days of the notice of refusal.

Any driver or operator who has his/her licence revoked on the same grounds also has the right to appeal to the Magistrates' Court within 21 days of the notice of revocation.

3.0 Powers

Sections 61 and 62 of the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976 allow the licensing authority to suspend, revoke or refuse to renew a driver's or operator's licence respectively if the applicant/licence holder has been convicted of an offence involving dishonesty, indecency, violence; or an offence related to immigration; failure to comply with the provisions of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847; failure to comply with the provisions of Part II of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976; or any other reasonable cause. The commission of an offence or a serious allegation which falls within this policy and brings into question whether a licensed driver or operator is a fit and proper person to continue to hold a licence may lead the Licensing Authority to conclude that there is a "reasonable cause" to suspend, revoke or refuse to renew their licence.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975, as amended, allows the Licensing Authority to take into account all convictions recorded against an applicant or the holder of a driver licence, whether spent or not. Therefore, the Licensing Authority will have regard to all relevant convictions or cautions, particularly where there is a long history of offending or a recent pattern of repeat offending.

4.0 Consideration of disclosed criminal history

Under the provisions of Sections 51, 55, and 59 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the Licensing Authority is required to ensure that any applicant for the grant or renewal of a hackney carriage and/or a private hire vehicle driver licence and/or private hire operator licence is a 'fit and proper' person to hold such a licence. However, if an applicant has any convictions, warnings, cautions or charges awaiting trial, the Licensing Authority will investigate all matters disclosed and any other matters that may be relevant.

Licensed drivers and operators are required to notify the Licensing Authority in writing within 48 hours of an arrest and release, charge or conviction of any sexual offence, any offence involving dishonesty or violence or any motoring offence or receipt of a police caution. Failure to do so will call into question the fitness and propriety of the licensee.

The Licensing Authority requires an enhanced disclosure certificate from the DBS for any new or renewal driver licence application. Applicants for an operator licence will be required to obtain a basic DBS check at their own expense (unless they are the holder of a current hackney carriage or private hire driver's licence issued by NFDC).

The Licensing Authority is also entitled to use other records and information that may be available to it in determining applications or an entitlement to continue holding a licence. This may include information held by the Licensing Authority or other licensing authorities and information disclosed by the police or any other third party.

It is an offence for any person knowingly or recklessly to make a false declaration or to omit any material particular in giving information required by the application for a licence. Where an applicant has made a false statement or a false declaration on their application for the grant or renewal of a licence, the licence will normally be refused.

For renewal applications and current licence holders, the policy will not be applied retrospectively where there are no new concerns or convictions. The policy will be applied to existing licence holders if any additional convictions are incurred, or they are otherwise brought to the attention of the Licensing Authority for conduct that would call into question a person's suitability to hold a licence.

Offences not covered by this policy will be considered by the Licensing Authority when determining whether the applicant/licensed driver or operator is a fit and proper person.

5.0 Conviction guidelines

The following guidance is based on the Institute of Licensing document: "Guidance on determining the suitability of applicants and licensees in the hackney and private hire trades", together with the "Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Standards" document published by the Department for Transport in July 2020.

These documents have been widely adopted by Licensing Authorities in the UK and has been produced to promote consistency, raise standards and assist in the protection of the public.

5.1 Offences resulting in death

Where an applicant or licensee has been convicted of a crime which resulted in the death of another person or was intended to cause the death or serious injury of another person they will not be licensed.

5.2 Offences involving exploitation and criminal harassment

Where an applicant or licensee has been convicted of a crime involving, related to, or has any connection with abuse, exploitation, use or treatment of another individual irrespective of whether the victim or victims were adults or children, they will not be licensed. This includes slavery, child sexual exploitation, grooming, psychological, emotional or financial abuse, but this is not an exhaustive list.

5.3 Offences involving violence

Where an applicant has a conviction for an offence of violence, or connected with any offence of violence, a licence will not be granted until at least 10 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

5.4 Offences involving Possession of a weapon

Where an applicant has a conviction for possession of a weapon or any other weapon related offence, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

5.5 Offences involving Sex, indecency or obscene materials

Where an applicant has a conviction for any offence involving or connected with illegal sexual activity or any form of indecency, a licence will not be granted. In addition to the above, the licensing authority will not grant a licence to any applicant who is currently on the Sex Offenders Register or on any 'barred' list.

5.6 Offences involving Dishonesty

Where an applicant has a conviction for any offence of dishonesty, or any offence where dishonesty is an element of the offence, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

5.7 Offences involving the use, possession or supply of Drugs

Where an applicant has any conviction for, or related to, the supply of drugs, or possession with intent to supply or connected with possession with intent to supply, a licence will not be granted until at least 10 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Where an applicant has a conviction for possession of drugs, or related to the possession of drugs, a licence will not be granted until at least 5 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

5.8 Offences involving Discrimination

Where an applicant has a conviction involving or connected with discrimination in any form, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

5.9 Motoring convictions

Drivers of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles are professional drivers charged with the responsibility of carrying the public. Any motoring conviction demonstrates a lack of professionalism and will be considered seriously. It is

accepted that offences can be committed unintentionally, and a single occurrence of a minor traffic offence would not normally prohibit the grant of a licence or may not result in action against an existing licence. Any subsequent convictions reinforce the fact that the licensee does not take their professional responsibilities seriously and is therefore not a safe and suitable person to be granted or retain a licence.

5.10 Offences involving Drink driving or driving under the influence of drugs

Where an applicant has a conviction for drink driving or driving under the influence of drugs, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence or driving ban imposed, whichever is the later.

5.11 Using a hand-held telephone or handheld device whilst driving

Where an applicant has a conviction for using a hand-held mobile telephone or a hand-held device whilst driving, a licence will not be granted until at least 5 years have elapsed since the conviction or completion of any sentence or driving ban imposed, whichever is the later.

5.12 Other motoring offences

A minor traffic or vehicle related offence is one which does not involve loss of life, driving under the influence of drink or drugs, driving whilst using a mobile phone, and has not resulted in injury to any person or damage to any property (including vehicles).

A driver licence will not be granted to any new driver applicant who has 9 or more points for minor motoring convictions showing on their driving licence.

Existing licence holders reaching seven or more points for minor motoring convictions will receive a warning and will be required to attend appropriate training, as defined by the authority, at their own expense.

Existing licence holders reaching nine points or more for minor motoring convictions and who have previously attended training under this policy may have their licence refused or revoked dependent on the individual circumstances of the driver concerned and offences omitted. In considering such action, the intention of the policy will be to only refuse or revoke a licence where there are very clear concerns for public safety.

5.13 Hackney carriage and private hire offences

Where an applicant has a conviction for an offence concerned with or connected to hackney carriage or private hire activity, including use of a licensed vehicle, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

6.0 Outstanding charges or summonses

If an applicant is the subject of an outstanding charge or summons their application will be held and not progressed until the outcome of the proceedings has been determined.

7.0 Non-conviction information

If an applicant has been arrested or charged, but not convicted, for a serious offence which falls within the policy which suggests they could be a danger to the public, consideration will be given, under the Council's scheme of delegation to refusing the application.

In assessing the action to take, the safety of the travelling public must be the paramount concern.

8.0 Cautions

An admission of guilt is required before a caution can be issued; therefore cautions are treated the same as a conviction and applied as above pertinent to the type of offence. Every case will be considered on its own merits including the details and nature of the offence.

9.0 Licences issued by other licensing authorities

Applicants who hold a licence with one licensing authority should not automatically assume that their application will be granted by another. Each case will be decided on its own merits.

Licensees who are licensed by multiple authorities are expected to inform all such authorities of the authorities that they are licensed by and to advise each authority of any changes in this respect. They should expect those authorities to share information regarding their conduct and to take it into account as appropriate.

One of the background checks carried out for new and renewal drivers, involves a review of the National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN) NR3S database. Officers will check the applicant's name against the NR3S Register held by NAFN to determine if another Licensing Authority has taken action against the applicant/driver. If a positive match is found, background information will be obtained and considered by the Licensing Authority.

The register provides names of all those drivers/applicants who have had a licence application refused, revoked or suspended.

This is to protect the public and ensure that any driver who has been revoked or refused a licence does not obtain a licence with another authority, by simply failing to supply previous licence history. The database provides the opportunity for every Local Authority to properly consider applicants and the background to a previously refused or revoked licence, by another authority.

Licensing authorities will retain the reasons for any refusal, revocation or suspension and provide those to other authorities as appropriate under the terms and conditions of the database.

Where this Licensing Authority has refused to grant a driver licence to an applicant or has had a licence revoked or suspended, or it has expired during a period of suspension, no new application will be considered for a at least three years (in line with the time periods above) from the date of refusal, revocation or expiry.

Any application subsequently received, will be determined by members of a Licensing Sub-Committee who will consider the applicant's history and background.

10.0 Summary

It is vital that passengers, other road users and society have confidence in the licensing regime and can rely on the suitability of all those involved in providing licensed vehicles. Careful consideration must be given to all applications and a thorough vetting of applicants must be undertaken.

This Appendix is intended to assist the Licensing Authority in determining the suitability of applicants and licensees. It also provides clear guidance for applicants and licence holders with regard to the standards expected by the Authority.

Appendix C - Driver knowledge tests

All new driver applicants are required to undertake and pass a Driver Knowledge Test before their application may be progressed.

1.0 What to bring

On the day of the test, applicants must bring in their DVLA driving licence and proof of their Right to Work in the UK. Applicants who fail to produce these documents will not be permitted to take the test. Applicants should ensure that the photo-card driving licence has not expired and that all details are current.

2.0 Test information

The test consists of several questions with knowledge required in areas of:

- the English language,
- the Highway Code,
- taxi and private hire law,
- geographic knowledge of the New Forest District.

The test material will be reviewed regularly and will state the pass rate that must be achieved for each section. Information is available on the Council's website to assist applicants prior to taking the test.

Tests are undertaken at the Council Offices in Lyndhurst. If an applicant has literacy difficulties, then the test may be conducted verbally for that person, however this must be communicated at the time of booking the test, to provide any officer to support the request.

Questions will be provided in English only and no translation or interpretation or other such matter associated with the test shall be permitted and/or accepted.

An officer will ensure that the test is conducted in a fair and secure manner. Access to a mobile phone will be prevented for the duration of the test. No other communication or electronic equipment will be permitted. All mobile phones must be switched off.

Should an applicant feel unwell or unable to continue the test, the officer must be informed, and arrangements will be made to re-take the test at a future date.

Should the applicant fail the test they will be notified of the failed module(s).

Applicants are not permitted to be accompanied during the test by friends, family members, children or pets.

3.0 Cancellation

Applicants wishing to cancel a driver knowledge test date and change it to another date must give at least 2 clear working days notice, otherwise they will lose the booking fee. The driver knowledge test booking fee is non-refundable.

4.0 Failures and re-tests

If an applicant fails three successive knowledge tests, their application will be rejected and a period of 12 months must elapse before a new application is submitted.

Payment must be made for each test booked and there is no discount for re-tests.

The applicant's file will be closed six months after the date of the last driver knowledge test (whether a negative or positive result) if no communication or application has been received by the Licensing Authority during this time.

Appendix D - Medical assessment policy

1.0 Why medical assessments are required

The Licensing Authority recognises that licensed drivers should meet more stringent medical standards as they are professional drivers and are required to:

- transport members of the public safely,
- spend significant periods of time driving,
- assist disabled passengers and handle luggage.

Therefore, the Licensing Authority requires the Group 2 Standards of Medical Fitness as applied by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) to the licensing of lorry and bus drivers, as the standard for all drivers.

For new applicants, once the applicant has passed the knowledge test, they can progress to stage 2 of the application process, which includes the requirement to be medically fit to drive. A new driver licence will not be granted until medical clearance has been established.

Applicants and licence holders are required to undergo a medical assessment on first application, on reaching 45 years of age and then every 5 years thereafter until the age of 65 when annual examinations will be required.

The medical assessment form must be signed by the applicant's own GP or another doctor who has had access to the applicant's medical records and prescription history.

The medical examination will ensure that the applicant satisfies all the requirements to the DVLA Group 2 standard.

If applicants are unable to obtain a medical examination with their own GP, they should contact the Licensing Authority for further advice. All licensed drivers must pass a medical examination periodically, whilst holding a driver licence. All doctors who carry out a medical examination must have access to patient records.

A suitable medical assessment is only valid for a period of 3 months up to submission to the Licensing Authority.

Holders of current Public Service Vehicle or Heavy Goods Vehicle driver licences, where the holder is able to produce proof of a current medical examination equal to or over the requirements as set out above are not required to undergo further assessment.

Where there is any doubt to the medical fitness of the applicant, the Licensing Authority may require the applicant to undergo and pay for a further medical examination by a doctor appointed by the Licensing Authority.

2.0 Change in medical fitness

Licence holders must notify the Licensing Authority of any deterioration or other change in their health that may affect their driving capability, within seven days of the change. This includes any accident-related injury.

A list of conditions which must be notified to the DVLA is provided on the DVLA website at <https://www.gov.uk/driving-medical-conditions>. However, if a driver is in any doubt, they should contact the Licensing Authority for advice.

Drivers who have a major medical event or diagnosis that may impact on their medical fitness to drive professionally, will have their licence suspended. To have a licence re-instated, drivers must undergo a Group 2 medical with their doctor, to ensure that they are fit to drive in a licensed capacity. In most circumstances, the Licensing Authority will also request a letter and/or further information from their consultant.

3.0 Policy for those drivers/applicants with diabetes

This is a specific policy in respect of diabetic applicants whose treatment carries a risk of inducing hypoglycaemia, such as insulin treatment or certain types of tablets.

In addition to a medical certificate confirming that the applicant satisfies the Group 2 standards (which make specific provisions for various types of diabetes treatment), additional documents will be required as set out below.

In all such cases, a signed declaration is required from the driver, confirming that they will:

- comply with the directions for treatment given by the Doctor supervising treatment.
- immediately report to the Licensing Authority, in writing, any change in diabetic condition.
- be fully aware of the symptoms of hypoglycaemia and what action to take if required.
- understand the risks of hypoglycaemia.
- carry out blood glucose monitoring at least twice daily at times relevant to driving a licensed vehicle.
- have no other condition which would present a danger when driving a licensed vehicle.
- confirm that they have not had any hypoglycaemic events requiring the help of another person in the last 12 months, and
- will always keep fast acting carbohydrates in the licensed vehicle when driving.

In the case of applicants undergoing insulin treatment, a letter from a Consultant Diabetologist will be required, confirming that the driver has been undergoing insulin treatment for a minimum of four weeks. The driver licence may be

suspended until the above can be satisfied, as the Licensing Authority must ensure that drivers are medically fit and not likely to suffer any sort of episode whilst driving in a professional capacity.

Where drivers are being treated with insulin for the first time, initially the driver licence will be suspended from the date insulin treatment begins. Providing that treatment goes as planned, to unsuspend the NFDC driver licence, the driver must undergo a Group 2 medical assessment no earlier than 2 months from the date of suspension. When the doctor agrees that the driver is fit to work in a licensed capacity, the licence will be unsuspended. The assessment should be sent to Licensing Authority together with related documents from the consultant or diabetic clinic.

Drivers are required to undertake annual Group 2 medicals assessments.

The policy above is additional to the requirements of the DVLA.

4.0 Medical exemptions to carry wheelchair passengers and/or assistance dogs

Licensed drivers may apply for an exemption certificate and notice on medical grounds or where their physical condition prevents them from performing the mobility assistance duties at sections 164a and 165 of the Equality Act 2010 (as added/amended by the Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Act 2022) or with the requirement to carry assistance dogs.

An application form to apply for an exemption certificate (issued under Sections 166 and/or Section 169 of the Equality Act 2010) is available on request from the Licensing Authority. This should be completed in full and submitted with accompanying documents from an appropriate medical professional involved in diagnosis or treatment of the relevant condition, setting out the effect of the condition, the long-term prognosis, and the risk to public safety if an exemption is not granted to the driver. Evidence from a medical professional with no involvement in the diagnosis or treatment of the condition, or from a medical professional with a separate relationship to a driver, is unlikely to be considered acceptable.

Where an allergy or phobia to dogs is cited as grounds for an exemption, the Licensing Authority will expect to see medical evidence of allergen testing results, clinical history, psychological screening results, or similar with an application for exemption. A simple statement that the driver has declared such an allergy or phobia is not considered sufficient justification of a medical condition which would warrant the issue of an exemption. A minor allergic reaction which does not affect the driver's ability to safely drive a vehicle, or their overall welfare, does not warrant an exemption.

If the Licensing Manager has any concerns regarding granting the exemption, the matter will be referred to a Licensing Sub-Committee to be determined by Elected Members.

If the exemption is granted, the driver will be issued with a Notice of Exemption which must be displayed inside the vehicle, where it can be seen by passengers. This can either be in the internal plate pouch or on the dashboard and confirms that the driver is exempt from certain duties.

The exemption is granted to an individual driver. If a vehicle is used by multiple drivers, the driver who holds the exemption must remove it from the vehicle when they are not driving.

The exemption will expire on the same date as the dual driver licence. If the driver wishes the exemption to continue on renewal, up to date evidence must be provided before the exemption can be re-issued.

5.0 Assistance Dogs

Every licensed taxi and private hire vehicle is required to carry assistance dogs with their owner, and it is a criminal offence for a driver to refuse to do so. It is also an offence for a private hire operator to refuse to take a booking because it involves carrying an assistance dog, or for drivers or operators to charge a higher fare for carrying an assistance dog.

This duty applies to assistance dogs trained by charities affiliated to **Assistance Dogs UK**, or other similar UK or overseas organisations. It also applies to dogs that have been trained by their owners to carry out this role.

Appendix E – Code of conduct

1.0 The Code

The purpose of this code is to seek a standard which portrays a professional image of drivers licensed by the authority.

Licence holders shall endeavour to promote the image of the hackney carriage and private hire trade by:

- complying with the Code of Conduct, and
- complying with all the conditions of the licences they hold and the NFDC Taxi Licensing Policy

1.1 Drivers shall:

- behave in a civil, orderly and responsible manner at all times,
- treat all customers with dignity and respect,
- drive with due care and consideration for other road users and pedestrians,
- obey all traffic order and directions at all times,
- not consume alcohol whilst working or prior to working,
- not use illegal drugs at any time,
- comply with any direction given to them by an authorised officer of the Council, Police or other agency and treat all officers with respect.

1.2 Drivers shall:

- maintain their vehicles in a safe and satisfactory condition at all times,
- keep their vehicles clean and suitable for hire to the public at all times,
- attend punctually when undertaking a pre-booked hiring,
- assist, where necessary, passengers into and out of vehicles,
- offer passengers reasonable assistance with luggage,
- Comply with the authority's signage requirements.

To avoid nuisance to residents when picking up or waiting for a fare, a driver shall:

- not sound the vehicle horn illegally as per The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 and Highway code 112,
- keep the volume of radio/music to a minimum,
- switch off the engine if required to wait.

At taxi ranks and other places where hackney carriages ply for hire by forming queues, drivers shall:

- rank in an orderly manner and proceed along the rank in order, moving along promptly,
- remain in or near to the vehicle.

This Council operates a zero-tolerance approach to the abuse of council officers, garage mechanics, administration staff, compliance officers, police officers and any other professionals involved in safeguarding and will consider taking action against any individual who is abusive. This applies to drivers licensed by New Forest District Council who operate in other council areas.

Licensed drivers must not smoke cigarettes, e-cigarettes or vaping devices in their vehicles at any time or allow passengers to do so. This applies whether the vehicle is carrying passengers or not.

2.0 Idling engines

Idling engines contribute to air pollution problems and running the engine whilst a vehicle is stationary pollutes the environment. It is also illegal on a public road.

When a vehicle's engine is idling it can produce nearly twice as much exhaust emissions as it does whilst moving. This affects the quality of the air that we breathe.

2.1 Engine idling and the law

It is illegal to leave your engine running when stationary and you could also risk a fixed penalty notice, under the Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (England) Regulations 2002.

It is not illegal to have an idling vehicle engine if you are:

- waiting at traffic lights,
- moving slowly through congestion,
- getting a repair or defrosting a windscreen.

Our compliance officers regularly advise drivers of idling taxi or private hire vehicles to move on or switch off their engine.

2.2 What to do

- if stationary and waiting more than a couple of minutes for a customer, switch your engine off to avoid idling.
- restarting an engine causes less pollution and uses less fuel than keeping the engine idling. Modern batteries don't need as much engine time to remain charged.
- avoid an idling engine and you'll help to lower air pollution, improve air quality and save yourself money on fuel.

3.0 Dress Code

3.1 Acceptable standards of dress:

- shirts, blouses, polo shirts, tops and sweat tops should cover the shoulders and be capable of being worn inside trousers or shorts or a skirt.
- shirts or blouses may be worn with a tie or open necked.

3.2 Trousers, shorts and skirts

- trousers or smart tailored shorts may be worn.
- skirts shall be knee length.
- footwear for all drivers shall fit around the heel of the foot.

All of the above must be of smart appearance and in good condition and both upper and lower body must be covered.

3.3 Unacceptable standards of dress

- clothing not being kept in a clean condition and those which have holes or rips.
- words or graphics on any clothing that is of an offensive or suggestive nature.
- sportswear e.g., football or rugby kits, track suits, beach wear, etc.
- sandals with no heel straps, flip flops or any other form of footwear not secured around the heel. This includes crocs, clogs or similar footwear.
- baseball caps.

4.0 Vulnerable passengers

A vulnerable passenger is a person whose protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 e.g. age or disability, means that they are more susceptible to harm than a typical passenger. For example, this may be a child, elderly person or someone with learning difficulties. It can also include someone who is vulnerable due to an excessive level of intoxication.

4.1 Drivers must:

- carry their driver badge and display it on their person whilst in the vehicle or assisting passengers.
- confirm that appropriate provision has been made for the vulnerable person prior to accepting the booking or commencing the journey. (this does not mean that the driver is responsible for the provision of appropriate measures).
- produce photo identification to the carer responsible for the vulnerable person. If there is no chaperone, they should obtain a record of the carer's contact details.
- If a vulnerable passenger is refused service inform a responsible person so that alternative arrangements can be made. The driver should remain with the passenger until the journey is undertaken.

4.2 Drivers should remain professional at all times and should not:

- touch a vulnerable person inappropriately,
- behave in a way that may make a vulnerable passenger feel intimidated or threatened,
- attempt to misuse personal details obtained via the business about a vulnerable person.

A log should be maintained by drivers where a service has been provided to a vulnerable passenger including any incidents occurring/actions taken or refusals of service.

If a driver is concerned about the safety, welfare or behaviour of a vulnerable person who is being carried, the driver should report this to the Police and Licensing Authority.

5.0 Behaviour with Passengers

It is important that customers feel safe and secure whilst travelling in licensed vehicles.

Drivers should be clear in their communications with passengers to avoid any misinterpretation of motives or inappropriate behaviour.

5.1 This means drivers must not:

- make any discriminatory remarks about the customer relating, but not limited to, age, gender, sexuality, disability, race, religion.
- share personal information with their passengers or request or respond to any information shared by the passenger.
- share/exchange telephone numbers with passengers or communicate through chat functions, social media or text.
- use foul or inappropriate language in front of any passenger.
- use their position of power to force or indoctrinate passengers into following a political, spiritual or religious belief. This could be seen as a form of 'radicalisation' and will be treated as a safeguarding issue.

If you think a passenger, you are transporting may be showing signs of being 'radicalised' please contact the Police or the Licensing Authority.

- take photographs of passengers, even if it is at their request.
- at no time provide any form of gift, no matter how small or invaluable.
- have sexual relationships with passengers or attempt to engage in a relationship with a passenger.
- have any form of communication with a passenger which could be misinterpreted as sexually suggestive.
- make sexual remarks to a passenger.
- discuss their own sexual relationships with a passenger or question the passenger about such things.
- look after/keep safe a passenger's personal belongings e.g., mobile phone, iPod or money.
- lock the front or rear passenger doors. Where the doors lock automatically when travelling, they must be released by the driver at the point of stopping and termination of the journey or this functions switched off whilst carrying a passenger if possible.
- make any unauthorised stops on your journey, unless there is an emergency.

If you are transporting a single passenger, they should be directed to sit in the back of the vehicle.

Appendix F - Vehicle specifications and testing criteria

General specifications

Applications to licence or renew a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle must satisfy the following criteria and the Licensing Authority vehicle inspection test.

You should also refer to **Appendix P** - Mechanical Inspection Guidance.

1.0 General

- 1.1 Vehicles may be powered by an internal combustion engine, a hybrid combustion engine, a combined electrically powered motor or an electrically powered engine.
- 1.2 Vehicles must be capable of carrying 4-8 passengers in comfort. However, if a vehicle is to be used for executive work, providing luxury travel and comfort for less passengers, these will be considered on an individual basis. If acceptable, additional conditions may be added to the licence to assist with passenger safety when entering and alighting from the vehicle.
- 1.3 Vehicles must be of a family saloon, estate car or mini-bus type design.
- 1.4 It is recommended that vehicles with Euro NCAP star ratings of 4 or more should be considered when purchasing a new vehicle.
- 1.5 All vehicles shall be right hand drive (unless satisfying the additional conditions relating to limousines).
- 1.6 A private hire vehicle shall not be of the London Taxi type.
- 1.7 Vehicles should have no damage affecting the structural safety of the vehicle and must not have been written off for insurance purposes at any time.
- 1.8 Sufficient means shall be provided by which any person in the vehicle may communicate with the driver.
- 1.9 Vehicles shall at all times, be maintained in sound and roadworthy condition and serviced according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
- 1.10 No material alteration or change in the specification, design, condition or appearance of the vehicle may be made without first complying with road traffic and insurance legislation and secondly the approval of the Licensing Authority (where an inspection may be required.) It is unlikely that anything other than a change of vehicle colour will be authorised.
- 1.11 MOT examinations are required for private hire vehicles over three years old and hackney carriages over one year old.

1.12 For reasons of public safety, the Licensing Authority will not licence or re-licence any vehicle that has been written off by an insurance company regardless of the category of write-off.

2.0 Vehicle Testing

Vehicles must be MOT tested and also undertake and pass the vehicle test, carried out at the Council's testing station.

Vehicles that are eight years and older, from date of first registration will be required to be tested every 6 months. The Licensing Authority reserves the right to increase this to a maximum of three times per year if the quality of a vehicle is causing concern.

Should a vehicle fail the test, the Council's vehicle examiner may issue a notice to suspend the licence until the fault(s) has been rectified and the vehicle re-tested successfully. A fee will be applied to re-test the vehicle. If a vehicle is suspended and the reason for failure is not rectified within two months, this will result in automatic revocation of licence.

3.0 Age of vehicles

All vehicles must meet Euro 6 emission standards from the date of first registration, **at the time of initial licensing**.

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs) are not subject to any emission or age criteria.

All vehicles currently licensed by the Licensing Authority are not subject to upper age limit or emission standards. However, any replacement vehicle for one already licensed, will become subject to the Euro 6 emission standard. This will be kept under annual review.

Euro 6 is the sixth and latest directive to help reduce the level of harmful pollutants produced by new vehicles.

The Euro 6 standard sets out the acceptable limits for these exhaust emissions and since September 2015, all new cars sold have had to comply with the Euro 6 standard.

Vehicles that are eight (8) years and older from date of first registration will require twice yearly testing.

4.0 Doors

All saloons, hatchbacks, estates or purpose-built taxi vehicles shall have at least 4 side opening doors, which may be opened from the inside and the outside. Minibuses, transits and people carrier type vehicles shall have at least 3 doors not including any tailgate or rear doors.

5.0 Accident reporting

Any accident involving a licensed vehicle must be reported to the Licensing Authority as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event within 72 hours of the accident.

Where, following an accident or damage to a licensed vehicle, it is the intention of the owner or operator to continue licensed use, the vehicle may be required to be inspected by the Council's testing facility (at the owner's or operator's expense) to determine its fitness for continued use.

A licensed vehicle which has suffered major accident damage or requires substantial mechanical repair may be replaced by a hire vehicle, provided:

- (i) the damage to, or defect in, the vehicle has been reported,
- (ii) application is made in the usual way for a change of vehicle, (albeit temporarily),
- (iii) the replacement vehicle meets the licensing criteria and is suitable to be used for hire purposes,
- (iv) the hiring of the hire vehicle is organised and paid for by the affected licensed owner or operator.

Following appropriate repairs to the vehicle, it must undergo and pass a mechanical inspection by the Council testing facility before it may be permitted to be used as a licensed vehicle. The appropriate fee for a new vehicle licence and test will be charged.

6.0 Seats

The vehicle must have sufficient seating capacity to carry not less than four and not more than eight passengers in addition to the driver. (The seating capacity is determined on the assumption that allowance is made for a rear seating width of approximately 400mm(16") per passenger measured laterally along the widest part of the seat and where arm rests are positioned over such seats the measurement shall be taken between arm rests).

Access to every passenger seat must be unobstructed and be easily accessible to passengers and without the need for more than one passenger to move.

Head rests must be fitted to all forward or rear facing seats.

Seats must be properly and securely bolted in place, on smoothly operating runners as applicable. Coverings should be clean and not worn, damaged or split.

Side facing seating is not permitted.

7.0 Seat belts

All vehicles must be fitted with fully operational seat belts, one for each passenger and the driver, fully compliant with British Standards except where the law specifically provides an exemption. They must be clean, not stretched, ripped, torn or worn with fully functioning locks and buckles that operate smoothly and effectively, correctly fixed to allowable anchorage points.

In relation to the carriage of child passengers under 3 years of age in the front seat, an appropriate child restraint **MUST** be worn. If a child restraint is not available, children under three must travel in the rear and may be unrestrained. Children of three years or over, up to 135mm tall must sit in the rear and use an adult seat belt. Children aged twelve years or more, or over 135mm tall, may travel in the front but must wear a seat belt.

8.0 Overall presentation of the vehicle

Every vehicle represented for testing must be clean and fit for passengers to be carried in. The following will be checked during the inspection and is the standard expected for daily use for passengers.

- the upholstery, carpets, seats, trims and other interior fittings should be free from damage (including stains and burns) and significant wear.
- the floor of the vehicle must be covered with a suitable carpet, mat or other covering which can be readily cleaned.
- all plastic fascia, door linings, roof linings and trim to be kept free from marks, stains and damage.
- all interior lights and fascia illumination to be maintained in good condition.
- all windows must be free of dirt, grime and marks.
- all door locks, levers and window winders to be operating efficiently.

Vehicle trim must be clean, properly fixed in place with no rough or jagged edges.

Good quality seat covers may be used, providing that each is a matching set, in keeping with the colour of the vehicle. They shall be properly fixed to the seat so as not to become loose during use and kept clean and devoid of any kind of damage. They must not interfere with the mechanism of seat belts or airbags.

9.0 Technical specifications considered during the vehicle examination

9.1 Electrical equipment and accessories

Obligatory front lights – working with constant, appropriate and even brightness. Lenses and reflectors to be clean with no rust and no cracks or holes in the lenses. White light to be shown at front.

Headlamps dipped – working and properly adjusted with constant, appropriate

and even brightness. Lenses and reflectors to be clean with no rust and no cracks or holes in the lenses.

Headlamps main – working with constant, appropriate and even brightness. Lenses and reflectors to be clean with no rust and no cracks or holes in the lenses.

Indicators front – working with constant, appropriate and even brightness. Lenses and reflectors to be clean with no rust and no cracks or holes in the lenses. Amber light to be shown with a flashing rate of approximately 1-2 flashes per second.

Horn – must function and be audible to another road user. The horn control must be accessible to the driver.

Screen washers – delivers sufficient water to the windscreen to enable the windscreen to be cleared in conjunction with the windscreen wipers. All jets to be operative. Where rear washers are fitted the same requirements will apply.

Screen wipers – must work on demand and move over an adequate area of the windscreen. The rubbers must cover the whole length of the blade and not be cracked, perished or have solidified.

Instrument controls etc – must all work to manufacturer's specification.

Obligatory rear lights – working with constant, appropriate and even brightness. Lenses and reflectors to be clean with no rust and no cracks or holes in the lenses. Red lights to be shown at rear with no white light to be visible.

Brake lights – work when footbrake applied with ignition switched on. With a constant, appropriate and even brightness. Red light to be showing with no white light visible.

Indicators rear – working with constant, appropriate and even brightness. Lenses and reflectors to be clean with no rust and no cracks or holes in the lenses. Amber lights to be shown with a flashing rate of approximately 1-2 flashes per second. No white light to be visible.

Reversing lights – working with a constant, appropriate and even brightness. Lenses and reflectors to be clean with no rust and no cracks or holes in the lenses. Lights to work only when ignition is switched on and reverse gear selected.

High density rear fog lamps – working with constant, appropriate and even brightness. Lenses and reflectors to be clean with no rust and no cracks or holes in the lenses. To be wired so as to operate only when dipped headlights or main beam selected. Red light to be showing with no white light visible.

Number plate illumination – working with constant, appropriate and even brightness. Lenses and reflectors to be clean with no rust and no cracks or holes in the lenses.

Warning lights- The dashboard will not display any warning light, such as engine management system or other sensor indication.

9.2 Engine

Performance – should be such that the vehicle is able to perform to manufacturer's specification on pulling power, whilst carrying a full complement of passengers.

Excess wear – components of the engine should not be excessively worn, causing knocks, rattles etc.

Oil burning – must not be smoking from exhaust.

Leaks- No visible fluid leaks from the engine or related components.

Emissions – must be discharging a clear emission.

9.3 Steering

Racks – units should be securely mounted to the chassis frame or body shell with no free play or oil leaks.

Power assisted steering – units should be securely mounted to the chassis frame or body shell with no free play or oil leaks. Hydraulic lines and unions should be free from leaks and generally be in good condition.

Joints and couplings – should be secure with no excessive play.

Swivel assemblies – should be secure with no excessive play.

Gaiters – must be fitted as appropriate and in good condition. Not split, cracked, perished or rendered inoperative by some other method.

Radius arms and tie rods – should be in good, sound condition and not excessively worn. Rubbers and seals should not be oil contaminated, split, perished or badly cracked.

Steering wheel – should be in good sound condition and securely mounted to the steering column with no free play.

Steering column – there should be no movement whatsoever, in any direction, other than that due to the design of the mechanism.

Wheel bearings – there should be no excessive wear or play.

Bias (Left/Right) – the vehicle should drive in a straight line and not pull or veer to the left or to the right.

9.4 Exhaust system

Silencer – the exhaust system should be complete and in good, sound condition. It should be effective so as to reduce the exhaust noise to a level considered to be average for the vehicle and should not be modified to enhance exhaust sound.

Mounting points – should be secure and in good condition so as to fully support the exhaust system.

Leaks – there must be no sign of exhaust leaks from any part of the system.

9.5 Bodywork

Cleanliness and condition – the exterior should be clean and polished. It must not have visible dents, tears, holes, flaking paint, rust or significant scratches. Number plates, vehicle licence plates and the internal windscreen plate must be securely and correctly fixed to the vehicle.

Chassis – must be of sound condition with no undue corrosion or visible distortions.

9.6 Suspension

Coil springs – should be complete and not fractured or with a cross section so reduced by wear or corrosion that its strength is seriously reduced. They should be properly seated giving adequate clearance of the axle or suspension with the bump stop or chassis.

Damper struts – should be securely fixed and show no damage or corrosion of the casing to the extent that the unit does not function. Should have an adequate damping effect on the suspension and not give excessive bounce.

Mounting rubbers – should be in place and in good condition, not cracked, distorted or perished. Should not show signs of excessive wear.

Anti-roll bushes – should be in place and in good condition, not cracked, distorted or perished. Should not show signs of excessive wear.

Trailing arms – should be in place and in good condition, not cracked, distorted or perished. Should not show signs of excessive wear.

Trapezoidal Links – should be in place and in good condition, not cracked, distorted or perished. Should not show signs of excessive wear.

Elliptical springs and shackles – should be securely fixed and in good serviceable condition with no broken or cracked spring leaves. Shackles, pins and bushes should not show signs of excessive wear.

Hydro-elastic units – should be securely fixed and in good serviceable condition, functioning normally and with no fluid leaks or cracked, perished pipes.

9.7 Gearbox and transmission

Clutch – should be well-adjusted with no judder or slipping. Pedal rubber must be in place and not excessively worn.

Gearbox selection – all gears attainable at first attempt with smooth changes.

Transmission noise – must not be excessive.

Synchromesh – must work on all gears, where fitted, with no crunching.

Prop shaft universal joints – must be in good condition with no play in either the universal joints or the central bearing.

Front wheel drive shafts – must be in good condition with no play or excessive wear, with no knocking on full lock.

Final drive – must not be excessively noisy or suffer from oil leaks.

Automatic transmission inhibitor switch – must only be able to start vehicle when Park or Neutral has been selected.

9.8 Braking System

Hydraulic fluid – should be filled to correct level and with no air bubbles when the footbrake operated.

Master cylinder – should be firmly fixed to vehicle and in good working order with no leaks or excessive corrosion.

Pipelines and unions – should be properly fixed to vehicle with correct clips and hangers. Should be soundly constructed with no corrosion or leaks.

Flexible hoses – should be correctly fitted and protected as appropriate, be in good condition with no sign of perishing, cracking, bulging or leaking.

Discs and callipers – discs should not be excessively worn or contaminated by oil, brake fluid or grease. Callipers to be securely mounted and in good working order.

Wheel cylinders – should be firmly mounted and in good working condition. Seals and rubbers should not be perished, cracked or split. There should be no leaks and the pistons should not be seized.

Foot pedal – the fulcrum and clevis pin must not show signs of undue wear or play and the pedal rubber must be in place and not badly worn. The pedal travel should not be excessive. It must have adequate reserve travel and not be subject to creep under sustained pressure.

Handbrake adjustment – must be securely mounted and not be subject to excessive travel. As a general rule, three notches to full on covers the majority of vehicles.

Servo equipment – should be securely fixed to the vehicle and be in good working condition.

Mechanical linkages – should be in good condition, not suffer from excessive wear or intermittent operation and be properly lubricated as necessary.

Primary brake efficiency % - minimum acceptable level is 65%.

Secondary brake efficiency % - minimum acceptable level is 25%.

Brake bias left – should not pull to left when brakes operate.

Brake bias right – should not pull to right when brakes operate.

Brake straight – when brakes are applied, vehicle should brake in a straight line.

9.9 Tyres

Due to the considerable mileage licensed vehicles accrue, the maintenance of tyres is paramount to the safety of the vehicle. Therefore, all tyres must be of the correct size, in good condition with no bulges, cracks, cuts or steel showing. All tyres fitted to the vehicle must have at least 2 mm tread depth throughout a continuous band in the centre 3/4 of the tread and around the entire circumference of the tyre.

All tyres must be 'first life'. Re-treaded, re-moulded or second-hand tyres must not be fitted to a licensed vehicle.

Should a vehicle be presented at the Council's testing facility with a tyre over 6 years old, on any axle, it will fail the vehicle test. In addition, any tyre not displaying a date code will also fail.

All vehicles must be equipped with one of the provisions below, **as provided by the manufacturer.**

- a spare wheel of full or space saver design above the legal tread requirement, inflated to the correct pressure and the tools required to change a wheel, or
- an emergency puncture repair kit (with compressor / inflation pack), or
- run flat tyres.

In the event of a space saver tyre, run flat tyres (when punctured) or a puncture repair kit, these must only be used in an emergency to complete a short passenger journey and must comply and be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Any such defective wheel should be replaced before taking another fare to ensure passenger safety.

Wheels - The vehicle must be right-hand drive and have a minimum of four approved road wheels and spare tyre provision as provided at vehicle manufacture stage. Replacement alloy wheels are not acceptable.

Wheels should be correctly aligned, joints and bearings free from abnormal wear. All mounting points should be in a sound condition with no undue wear in any associated bushes.

9.10 General

Door locks and handles – should all operate to specification and be secure. Hinge pins not to be excessively worn and there should not be any cracks around hinges, locks or striker plates.

Windows – should operate to specification. Windscreens should not be cracked, starred, or have any visual deformity, so as to impair driver vision.

Oil leaks – the vehicle must not suffer from an oil leak.

Mirrors – the minimum requirement is for one centrally mounted interior mirror and an exterior mirror on both off and near side. They must be in good condition with no cracks in the glass nor have reflectors badly corroded.

High Visibility clothing A high vis vest or jacket must be kept in the vehicle at all times to assist in the case of break down or emergency. High-vis wear is also required to be worn by all visitors to the Council's garage facilities.

9.11 Luggage

The boot or luggage compartment must be of sufficient size to carry a reasonable amount of luggage relative to the seating capacity.

The boot or luggage compartment must be separated from the passenger compartment by a suitable barrier without obstructing any emergency exit

9.12 Maintenance and condition of the vehicle

Vehicles shall be liable to be inspected and tested at any time. If upon inspection it is discovered that a vehicle is not being properly maintained, or kept in good order, a notice may be served on the owner to this effect, setting out the defects to be remedied.

If public safety is compromised by the defects, then further use of the vehicle may be prohibited until the defects have been addressed and the vehicle has successfully undergone a further inspection.

9.13 CCTV

The Licensing Authority recognises that there are benefits to the trade (as well as passengers) where CCTV is installed in licensed vehicles.

Proprietors of licensed vehicles are responsible for ensuring that installed CCTV conforms to relevant legislation. See **Appendix O** for CCTV Policy

9.14 Meters

All hackney carriages must be fitted with an approved taximeter. Meters must be installed and calibrated by a competent person approved by the taximeter company. The meter must be calibrated to the Council's current table of tariffs, set by the Licensing Authority.

Meters must be maintained in a proper order and condition and it is the responsibility of each proprietor to ensure that the meter is set to the current tariff. The proprietor is also responsible for ensuring that the meter is re-calibrated to reflect the change.

Any seal placed on a meter must not be tampered with.

Private hire vehicles may be fitted with a meter but this is not a requirement of licence. If a private hire vehicle is fitted with a meter, it should not display the words "for hire" unless this wording cannot be viewed from outside of the vehicle.

The Licensing Authority do not consider GPS devices as suitable replacements for taxi meters for use in Hackney Carriages

9.15 Licence plates (internal and external)

Unless an individual vehicle exemption has been granted for a private hire vehicle, Council licence plates must be securely attached to the licensed vehicle using Council supplied brackets at all times. Magnetic, adhesive or Velcro fittings must not be used.

The internal plate MUST also be fixed to the inside of the front windscreen using the clear pouch provided. The internal plate must be placed in the bottom left corner of the windscreen where it can be easily read by passengers and those outside the vehicle.

Failure to attach the licence plates in the approved manner may result in suspension of the vehicle, to allow the proprietor to correctly fix the issue.

A sign must also be displayed on the vehicle indicating that smoking is not permitted in the vehicle.

9.16 Door signage - private hire vehicles only

Unless an individual exemption has been granted for the vehicle (executive vehicles only, working solely on contracts with specific conditions attached to the licence), self-adhesive identification signage must be attached to each of the rear passenger door panels of the vehicle. Only signage approved and supplied by the Licensing Authority may be used, as they identify the licensing authority and the legal requirement for all journeys undertaken in the vehicle to be pre-booked.

These must attached at all times and NOT altered in any way or removed at any time whilst the vehicle is licensed. These signs must not be fixed using magnets, Velcro or adhesive tape.

Failure to display the Licensing Authority door stickers in the approved manner may result in suspension of the vehicle until the matter is rectified, and failure of a vehicle test.

9.17 Executive chauffeured vehicles

Provided that they have received written consent from the Licensing Authority, professionally chauffeured vehicles may, in certain circumstances, not be required to display the external vehicle licence plates but must comply with the display of the internal plate, as above. See **Appendix K** for executive hire vehicle specification and conditions. There are also specifications and conditions that are attached to any vehicle that is classed as a limousine which are provided at **Appendix J**. Such vehicles are not required to display the door signage.

9.18 Roof signs

Hackney carriage vehicles must be fitted with an illuminated external sign positioned on the roof of the vehicle. It must display the word "TAXI" to the front and may have the company name/phone number/TAXI on the rearward facing side. The roof sign and lettering shall be of an appropriate size to enable it to be read clearly from a distance of 5 metres.

The roof sign must be adequately secured either directly to the roof by suitable magnets or other means, or by mounting on a single roof bar and secured by bolts, straps, or clamps.

A Minibus, MPV or transit style vehicle not able to be fitted with an appropriate roof sign, shall have the word "Taxi" displayed on the front and rear of the vehicle so that they can be clearly identified as a hackney carriage.

At all times that the Licensed Hackney Carriage is available for hire, the roof sign will always be illuminated with an internal light source so that it is clearly visible to customers. The light must comply with the requirements of vehicle lighting regulations when illuminated.

Roof signs must not be fitted to any Private Hire Vehicles.

9.19 Disability access

Where a vehicle is utilised for the carriage of passengers in a wheelchair, the following conditions shall apply:

- (i) Access to and exit from the wheelchair position must not be obstructed in any manner at any time except by wheelchair loading apparatus.
- (ii) Wheelchair internal anchorage must be of the manufacturer's design and construction and secured in such a position as not to obstruct any emergency exit.
- (iii) A suitable restraint must be available for the occupant of a wheelchair.
- (iv) Access ramps or lifts to the vehicle must be securely fixed prior to use, and be able to support the wheelchair, occupant and helper.

- (v) Ramps and lifts must be securely stored in the vehicle before it may move off.

Any equipment fitted to the vehicle for the purpose of lifting a wheelchair into the vehicle must have been tested in accordance with the requirements of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (S.I. 1998/2307). Any such equipment must be maintained in good working order and be available for use at all times when the vehicle is operating.

Where a vehicle is designated and licensed as a wheelchair accessible vehicle, the proprietor shall ensure that any driver of that vehicle has received sufficient training to load and convey wheelchair passengers. The driver of such vehicle must pass the accredited course identified by NFDC. An enhanced driver badge will then be issued to confirm that they have received the required training.

9.20 Vehicles powered by liquid petroleum gas (LPG)

An applicant who applies for a licence for a vehicle that has been converted to run on LPG is required to produce, prior to a licence being issued, a certificate issued by a member of the LPG Association. This should confirm satisfactory installation, examination and testing of the vehicle in accordance with LPG Association Code of Practice; and that the vehicle is therefore considered safe.

If an LPG conversion involves installation of an LPG fuel tank in a vehicle's boot space (and possible relocation of the spare wheel) it shall be a requirement that an amount of space shall remain free for the stowage of a reasonable amount of luggage. Any spare wheel displaced as a result must be stowed in a location that does not impinge on the passenger carrying area of a vehicle.

9.21 Tinted windows

Only windows tinted during the build of the vehicle (factory fitted) are permitted to be used on a licensed vehicle. Film added post manufacturer must be removed.

Any window tint must comply with relevant UK legislation ([Tinted vehicle windows: the law - GOV.UK](#)).

9.22 Changes

Any change affecting a licensed vehicle must be notified to the Licensing Authority within 14 days of the change.

When the holder of a vehicle licence wishes to transfer the licence to another person, he must notify the Licensing Authority in writing before such change takes place. Failure to do so is likely to result in the refusal to renew the licence.

Appendix G - Licence conditions-dual driver

1.0 Driver badge and licence

- 1.1 A licensed driver must always wear the Licensing Authority's driver identity badge, when working in a licensed vehicle. It should be clearly visible to passengers.
- 1.2 Loss of a driver's badge must be reported to the Licensing Authority as soon as reasonably practicable and in any case within 48 hours. The driver must immediately obtain a new driver's badge for which a fee will be charged. If the original badge is then found, it must be returned to the Licensing Authority.
- 1.3 If the Licensing Authority has suspended or revoked the driver's licence, the badge must be returned to the Licensing Authority within seven days of receipt of the written notification.

2.0 Change of details/circumstances

- 2.1 Upon ceasing employment as a licensed driver, the licence holder must notify the Licensing Authority in writing, within seven days. (notification by email is accepted). The driver badge must be returned to the Licensing Authority when surrendered.
- 2.2 Any change of address must be notified in writing (email is acceptable) within seven days of the change.
- 2.3 The driver shall notify the Licensing Authority within 48 hours of an arrest, charge, receipt of a summons or fixed penalty notice, ASBO, conviction or police caution for any offence.

In addition, all motoring convictions must be reported to the Licensing Authority within 48 hours of receiving written notification of the penalty.

- 2.4 The licence holder must notify the Licensing Authority within seven days if they change private hire operator.
- 2.5 The driver must report to the Licensing Authority any accident or incident involving a licensed vehicle under their control as soon as is practicable. However, where the vehicle has suffered accident damage that materially affects the performance or appearance of the vehicle, or the comfort or convenience of fare paying passengers, the driver must notify all parties as soon as possible and no later than 72 hours after the accident or incident.

3.0 Health of the driver

- 3.1 Drivers must inform the Licensing Authority without delay about the onset or worsening of any health condition likely to cause him/her to be a source of danger to the public when driving either now or in the future.
- 3.2 Drivers who are in doubt about whether their health condition is one which should be reported, should consult their doctor.

4.0 Animals

- 4.1 A driver must not carry any animal, which belongs to or is in their care in the licensed vehicle whilst carrying passengers.
- 4.2 Unless in receipt of an exemption certificate, a driver must carry assistance dogs without additional charge. Assistance dogs include guide dogs, hearing dogs for the hard of hearing, and other dogs which assist disabled people with an impairment or medical condition.
- 4.3 Other animals in the custody of passengers may be carried, at the driver's discretion, provided they are restrained in a safe manner.

5.0 Lost property

- 5.1 The Licence holder shall immediately after the termination of any hiring of a licensed vehicle, or as soon as practicable thereafter, search the vehicle for any property which may have been accidentally left.
- 5.2 Any property accidentally left in a licensed vehicle must (within 48 hours) be handed in to the private hire operator if the journey is booked through an operator, or handed in at a Police Station. If the proprietor is an independent hackney proprietor, a record of the property should be kept, prior to handing into the police.

6.0 Passengers

- 6.1 Where a passenger has cause to complain to a driver about any aspect of the service provided, a driver is encouraged to advise the passenger of their right to make a complaint to the relevant private hire operator (if applicable). They must also make it clear to the passenger that they may refer any complaint directly to the Licensing Authority.
- 6.2 The driver must not carry or permit to be carried in a vehicle, more passengers than the vehicle is licensed to carry.
- 6.3 Where a driver has concerns that could relate to the safety of children and vulnerable persons, they must report those concerns to the relevant authority. If the authority is not known, it can be reported to the Licensing Manager or the Police

- 6.4 The licence holder is required to provide disabled passengers with reasonable mobility assistance and carry their mobility aids at no extra charge.
- 6.5 Drivers must assist with identification of the vehicle, if this is requested by the disabled passenger, be this verbally or visually.
- 6.6 Drivers shall assist passengers with their luggage.
- 6.7 The driver must, if requested by a fare paying passenger, provide a written receipt for any fare paid.

7.0 Meters

- 7.1 Licensed vehicles equipped with a taximeter (compulsory for a hackney carriage but optional for a private hire vehicle) shall operate the taximeter in accordance with the requirements of the conditions. For hackney carriages the taximeter must be used even if it is a pre-booked journey. A lesser fee than the metered fare may be charged. If the journey is undertaken through a service contract or out of the county and the fee is quoted to be less than the metered fare, the hackney carriage would not be required to use the taximeter.
- 7.2 The driver shall not charge more than the metered fare or the additional fees permitted by the agreed tariffs.
- 7.3 Where taximeters are fitted to vehicles, the driver must not cause the fare recorded to be cancelled or concealed, until the hirer has had an opportunity to examine the meter and has paid the fare (or credit has been given).
- 7.4 The driver must ensure that:
 - the meter is sufficiently illuminated so that when it is in use it is visible to all passengers.
 - the fare or charge is calculated from the point at which the hirer commences the journey and does not exceed that displayed on the meter on the completion of such journey.
 - the correct tariff for that journey is displayed.

8.0 Fares

- 8.1 The driver must not demand from the hirer a fare in excess of any fare previously agreed between the operator and the hirer, or if the vehicle is fitted with a taximeter and no previous agreement as to the fare, the fare shown on the face of the taximeter.

9.0 Vehicles

- 9.1 Drivers must not cause any internal or external vehicle licence plate to be concealed from public view whilst the vehicle is licensed.
- 9.2 Drivers must ensure that the vehicle is clean and suitable for hire at all times.
- 9.3 A driver must not drive a licensed vehicle if they have reason to believe that the vehicle is in an unsafe, dangerous or in an illegal condition. They must inform the operator or proprietor of the vehicle immediately of any defect arising in the vehicle whilst under his control.
- 9.4 The driver must ensure that the correct motor insurance is in place before the vehicle is driven.

10.0 Conduct of the driver.

The driver shall:

- 10.1 At all times be clean and respectable in dress and person.
- 10.2 Take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of passengers conveyed in, entering or alighting from the vehicle driven by the licence holder.
- 10.3 Not drink or eat in the vehicle whilst passengers are being carried and only when the vehicle is stationary.
- 10.4 Behave in a civil and orderly manner towards all persons including other road users, pedestrians, customers, the general public, other licensed operators and drivers of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, police officers, licensing officers, Council employees and elected members of the Council.
- 10.5 Not use a hand-held mobile phone whilst driving.
- 10.6 Not smoke or permit passengers to smoke in their vehicle (this includes the use of electronic cigarettes / vaporisers).
- 10.7 At no time cause or permit noise emitted by any radio or other device in the vehicle, to be a source of nuisance or annoyance to any person, whether inside or outside the vehicle.
- 10.8 Be punctual and on time for bookings unless delayed/prevented from doing so by some sufficient/reasonable cause.
- 10.9 Drivers must cooperate fully with requests from Police Officers, authorised officers and authorised Officers from other Licensing areas.

Additional conditions to be observed when driving a Hackney Carriage Vehicle

11.0 The driver of a hackney vehicle shall:

- 11.1 Ensure that the “for hire” sign is visible and switched on when standing or plying for hire.
- 11.2 At the commencement of the journey ensure the sign is not illuminated and the taximeter is activated for the length of the journey.
- 11.3 The driver of the hackney carriage vehicle shall not demand a fare in excess of that shown on the taximeter.

Additional conditions to be observed when driving a Private Hire Vehicle

12.0 The driver of a private hire vehicle shall not:

- 12.1 a) Wait in a private hire vehicle at any public place, other than in connection with a pre-arranged booking.

b) tout or solicit on a road or any other public

“Road” means any highway, or any other road to which the public have access, including bridges over which a road passes.

“Public place” includes car parks attached to public houses, clubs, night clubs, restaurants and any other places of entertainment.

- 12.2 Demand from any hirer of a Private Hire Vehicle a fare in excess of any previously agreed for that hiring between the hirer and the operator or, if the vehicle is fitted with a taximeter and there has been no previous agreement as to the fare, the fare shown on the face of the taximeter.

Appendix H – Licence conditions- Private hire vehicle

1. The vehicle must not be licensed as either a hackney carriage or a private hire vehicle by any other Licensing Authority.
2. The maximum number of passengers as stated on the licence and vehicle plate must not be exceeded.
3. The external licence plate issued by the Council must be fixed to the rear of the vehicle at all times. External plates must be securely attached to the rear of the vehicle using only the Council approved bracket and fixings supplied.
4. The internal licence plate, which identifies the vehicle as a private hire vehicle must be attached to the inside of the windscreen using the adhesive pouch provided and must be visible to passengers inside the vehicle and those outside.
5. A pair of door stickers issued by the Council must be fixed on the upper part of each rear passenger door panel. The door stickers indicate that the vehicle may only accept pre-booked journeys and illustrate the issuing authority. The positioning of the sign shall not obstruct the opening of the door.
6. The licensed vehicle must display no-smoking signs in accordance with the Health Act 2006.
7. All signs and licence plates issued remain the property of the Council. On surrender, suspension or revocation of the vehicle licence, the licence holder must return the external and internal plates and door stickers within seven days to the Council. In addition, any expired plate must be returned to the Council, within seven days of expiry.
8. The use of electronic communications equipment in the vehicle, other than is necessary for communication between the vehicle and its control/operations centre is prohibited.
9. No material alteration or change in the specification, design, condition or appearance of the vehicle shall be made without the written approval of the Council at any time whilst the licence is in force.
10. The proprietor of a private hire vehicle shall not allow the vehicle to be driven by any person who does not hold a current dual driver licence issued by New Forest District Council.

11. There shall be a policy of insurance, or such security as complies with the requirements of Part IV of the Road Traffic Act 1972 during the currency of the hackney carriage vehicle licence. This must be produced to an authorised officer if requested.
12. The vehicle licence and conditions must be available for inspection at all times on request by any authorised officer of the Council or any Police Officer.
13. If required by an Officer, the proprietor shall present the private hire vehicle for inspection and testing at the Council's authorised facility.
14. The vehicle and all its fittings and equipment shall be kept in an efficient, safe, tidy and clean condition. All relevant statutory requirements and regulations shall be fully complied with.
15. All licensed vehicles shall comply in all respects with the vehicle specifications as outlined in the vehicle specification in the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy.
16. Any proprietor of a private hire vehicle shall report to the Council as soon as reasonably practicable and in any case within 72 hours of the occurrence of any accident to such private hire vehicle which causes damage or materially affects the appearance or comfort of passengers.
17. The proprietor(s) shall inform the Licensing Authority in writing of any change of address, name, or contact details within seven days.
18. The proprietor(s) must inform the Licensing Authority in writing of any conviction or caution imposed within seven days of receiving it.
19. No material alteration or change in the specification, design, condition, or appearance of the vehicle shall be made without the approval of the Council at any time while the licence is in force.
20. Advertisements for both self and third parties is permitted on hackney carriage vehicles, subject to approval by the Licensing Manager.
21. The proprietor shall not display or permit to be displayed on or from a private hire vehicle any sign or notice which consists of or includes the word "taxi" or "cab" whether in singular or plural or "for hire" or any word of similar meaning or appearance to any of these words.
22. A private hire vehicle must not be used to ply for hire from a taxi rank, or in any other such manner which may give members of the public the impression that it is a hackney carriage.

23. The licensed vehicle must not be a London type taxi or any other type of vehicle constructed solely or primarily for use as a hackney carriage or be of such design or appearance as to be able to lead any person to reasonably believe that the vehicle is a hackney carriage.
24. The proprietor shall not cause or procure any other person to tout or solicit on a road or other public place, any person to hire or be carried for hire in a private hire vehicle.

"Road" means any highway, or any other road to which the public have access, including bridges over which a road passes.

"Public place" includes car parks attached to public houses, clubs, night clubs, restaurants and any other places of entertainment.
25. Any passenger wishing to be accompanied by their assistance dog must not be refused unless the driver holds an exemption, issued by the Licensing Authority. No additional fee may be charged for the carrying of an assistance dog.
26. The Licensing Authority must be notified of a transfer of the vehicle within 14 days.
27. At all times the licensed vehicle may only be driven by a person who holds a New Forest District Council driver licence.
28. Any vehicle designated as a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) may only be driven by a NFDC driver designated as a WAV licensed driver, when carrying passengers.

The Licensing Authority may suspend, revoke or refuse any licence in respect of a private hire vehicle for any reasonable cause, including that the vehicle is unfit for use as a licensed private hire vehicle.

Appendix I – Licence conditions-Hackney carriage vehicle

1. The vehicle must not be licensed as either a hackney carriage or a private hire vehicle by any other Licensing Authority.
2. The maximum number of passengers as stated on the licence and vehicle plate must not be exceeded.
3. The external licence plate issued by the Council must be fixed to the rear of the vehicle at all times. External plates must be securely attached to the rear of the vehicle using only the Council approved bracket and fixings supplied.
4. The internal licence plate, which identifies the vehicle as a hackney carriage vehicle must be attached to the inside of the windscreen using the adhesive pouch provided and must be visible to passengers inside the vehicle and those outside.
5. The licensed vehicle must display no-smoking signs in accordance with the Health Act 2006.
6. All signs and licence plates issued remain the property of the Council. On surrender, suspension or revocation of the vehicle licence, the licence holder must return the external and internal plates within seven days. In addition, any expired plate must also be returned to the Council, within seven days of expiry.
7. The use of electronic communications equipment in the vehicle, other than is necessary for communication between the vehicle and its control/operations centre is prohibited.
8. No material alteration or change in the specification, design, condition or appearance of the vehicle shall be made without the written approval of the Council at any time whilst the licence is in force.
9. The proprietor of a hackney carriage vehicle shall not allow the vehicle to be driven by any person who does not hold a current dual driver licence issued by New Forest District Council.
10. There shall be a policy of insurance, or such security as complies with the requirements of Part IV of the Road Traffic Act 1972 during the currency of the hackney carriage vehicle licence. This must be produced to an authorised officer if requested.

11. The vehicle licence and conditions must be available for inspection at all times on request by any authorised officer of the Council or any Police Officer.
12. If required by an officer, the proprietor shall present the hackney carriage vehicle, for inspection and testing at the Council's authorised facility.
13. The vehicle and all its fittings and equipment shall be kept in an efficient, safe, tidy and clean condition. All relevant statutory requirements and regulations shall be fully complied with.
14. All licensed vehicles shall comply in all respects with the vehicle specifications as outlined in the vehicle specification in the NFDC Taxi Licensing Policy.
15. Any proprietor of a hackney carriage vehicle shall report to the Council as soon as reasonably practicable and in any case within 72 hours of the occurrence of any accident to such private hire vehicle which causes damage or materially affects the appearance or comfort of passengers.
16. The proprietor(s) shall inform the Licensing Authority in writing of any change of address, name, or contact details within seven days.
17. The proprietor(s) must inform the Licensing Authority in writing of any conviction or caution imposed within seven days of receiving it.
18. No material alteration or change in the specification, design, condition or appearance of the vehicle shall be made without the approval of the Council at any time while the licence is in force.
19. The proprietor shall fix and maintain on the vehicle a sign which bears the words "FOR HIRE" in plain letters at least 1.5 inches in height together with the word "TAXI". The sign should clearly indicate whether or not the carriage is for hire.
20. The proprietor shall ensure that any roof sign fitted to the vehicle which is capable of being illuminated is wired through the taxi meter so that the illumination of the roof sign is controlled by the taxi meter and by no other method.
21. The roof sign must not be illuminated when the vehicle is outside the New Forest District boundary.

22. All hackney vehicles must clearly display the current tariff of fares, set by the Licensing Authority, inside the hackney carriage where it can be read by passengers.
23. A calendar-controlled taximeter must be fitted and must be correctly calibrated, sealed and fully functional and easily visible to passengers.
24. Where a meter is set lower than the Council maximum, a notice shall be displayed in the vehicle clearly displaying the tariff the meter is set to.
25. Any passenger wishing to be accompanied by their assistance dog must not be refused or charged an additional fee.
26. This licence cannot be transferred without the consent of the Licensing Authority.
27. At all times the licensed vehicle may only be driven by a person who holds a New Forest District Council driver licence.
28. Any vehicle designated as a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) may only be driven by a NFDC driver designated as a WAV licensed driver, when carrying passengers.

The Licensing Authority may suspend, revoke or refuse any licence in respect of a private hire vehicle for any reasonable cause, including that the vehicle is unfit for use as a licensed hackney carriage vehicle.

Appendix J - Additional conditions relating to stretched limousines

1.0 Definition

A stretch limousine is defined as a motor vehicle that has been lengthened by the insertion of an additional body section and modified by a coachbuilder to contain luxury facilities and fixtures that is capable of carrying up to but not exceeding 8 passengers.

This will apply to authentic Ford and Cadillac stretch limousines only converted by an authorised company. All other specialist vehicles will be individually considered against the policies of New Forest District Council.

The general conditions imposed by New Forest District Council for PHV Operators, PHV Drivers, and PHV Vehicles will be applicable to the PHV licensing of stretched limousines unless amended by the below provisions.

1. Any person driving a stretch limousine for PHV work will be required to be licensed as a PHV driver with New Forest District Council and all journeys must be booked through a private hire operator licensed by this Council.
2. Once licensed as a private hire vehicle, the limousine will be subject to any other statutory requirements imposed by Part II of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
3. Stretch limousines will be regarded as luxury vehicles used for special events. The use of such vehicles for standard PHV work is not considered to be appropriate. Therefore, the type of work undertaken by a licensed private hire stretch limousine will differ **significantly** from that of regular private hire work in that the vehicle will only be licensed for the carriage of passengers for special events. Examples (this list is not exhaustive) of special events are:
 - prom nights
 - theatre trips,
 - hen nights,
 - stag nights,
 - party trips,
 - race days.

Or any other similar event considered by NFDC to be special by its nature.

4. A stretched limousine vehicle will be subject to twice-yearly mechanical examination at intervals to be specified by the licensing authority and at

its authorised testing station(s) to determine its safety and suitability for the type of work for which it is licensed. This will apply to all stretch limousines regardless of age, date of import or date of registration.

Full proof of Department for Transport (DfT) Single Vehicle Type Approval (SVA) will be required at the time of testing.

5. Where applicable, the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) plate shall display '1L1' to confirm conversion completed by an authorised dealer.
6. Where applicable, the applicant shall confirm, by a badge or other appropriate documentation the conversion dealer.
7. A plate on the door pillar shall confirm the total weight of the vehicle.
8. DVLA V5 or equivalent shall be produced to authenticate registration.
9. Given the increased weight of the vehicle, tyres of the correct weight and size rating must be used at all times. The limousine must be fitted with tyres that meet the appropriate specification for both the size and weight of the vehicle, such as 235/75R-15 108D (BF Load) or 225/70R-16 107T Town Car Limo Tyre (Reinforced).
10. Vehicles may either be left or right-hand drive and fitted with at least 4 doors.
11. The limousine's seating capacity must have been reduced where necessary to a maximum of 8 passengers.
12. The vehicle must not carry more than 8 passengers at any time and for this purpose a babe in arms will be classed as a passenger no matter what their age.
13. There shall be no passengers carried in the front compartment.
14. Lap and diagonal seatbelts must be fitted to all forward and rear facing seats and must be worn at all times by passengers whilst the vehicle is in motion.
15. Every other seat e.g. sideways facing seats shall have fitted a suitable seat belt or restraint and must be worn at all times by passengers whilst the vehicle is in motion.

16. Stretched limousines with heavily tinted glass in the windows behind the driver's cockpit will be considered for licensing. Glass in the driver cockpit must satisfy the current legal requirements. Tinted glass shall conform to the legal requirements as laid down by the Vehicle Operators Services Agency (VOSA).
17. An appropriate insurance policy must be in place which covers use of the vehicle for hire and reward.
18. Alcohol shall not be provided in the vehicle unless the operator holds an appropriate licence under the Licensing Act 2003 permitting the sale or supply of the same.

Alcohol shall only be served whilst the vehicle is stationary and afterwards, all bottles shall be placed in a secure receptacle.

If any passenger is below the age of 18, there shall be no alcohol on the vehicle.
19. The driver shall not play or permit the performance of any media which, because of its age restricted classification or its content, is unsuitable for the age of the passengers in the vehicle (based on the age of the youngest passenger).
20. No signs, notices or any other markings will be displayed on or in the vehicle without the written permission of the Licensing Authority.
21. In any advertisement publicising their limousine service, the operator must state that the vehicle is only licensed to carry 8 passengers and such a sign must be displayed within the passenger compartment of the vehicle.

Appendix K - Executive hire plate exemption

Section 75(3) Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976-exemption from displaying plates notice.

1.0 Statement

The aim of this policy is to ensure public safety whilst taking a balanced approach to licensing requirements. Its objective is the provision of an exemption to allow 'executive vehicles' to operate without displaying external identification plates.

2.0 Introduction

The displaying of the external identification plate on a licensed vehicle and a driver's badge is important in terms of public safety and reassurance. They indicate to the travelling public that prior to being licensed both the vehicle and the driver have been subjected to checks to ensure the safety of the public.

However, there are occasions when the requirement to display an external identification plate may have the opposite effect in terms of customer safety and could have commercial implications for the operating business. The display of Licensing Authority licence plates externally may also deter some corporate customers from using the service; and in some circumstances the identification of the vehicle as a licensed vehicle may allow "high risk" passengers, such as public figures, to be more readily targeted putting both them and the driver at risk.

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 requires that private hire vehicles display an identification plate (licence plate) and drivers of those vehicles wear a driver's badge. The same legislation also allows New Forest District Council to exempt vehicles from the need to display a licence plate and, where that exemption applies, the requirement for the driver of that vehicle to wear a driver's badge.

It is not intended that all private hire vehicles licensed by New Forest District Council should be exempt from the Council's requirement to display an external identification plate and rear door sign, however the Council recognises that there may be circumstances when it would be appropriate for vehicles operating the type of service to be considered suitable for such an exemption.

The type of work undertaken must be exclusively "executive style" in nature i.e.:

- Contracts with senior personnel of large companies to carry Managing Directors or their clients.
- Contracts with national or local government, or similar agencies, to carry senior personnel and guests on official business.
- The carriage of well-known personalities such as sports or 'pop' stars.

The above list is indicative, but not exhaustive.

Evidence must be produced to confirm the nature of the bookings undertaken.

3.0 Applications

Application to exempt the display of external vehicle licence plates, may be in respect of individual vehicles only. Applications for exemptions relating to a fleet of vehicles are not permitted.

Each application will be assessed on its own merit by the Licensing Manager and each vehicle will be inspected by an authorised officer, to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

Applications may only be made by a person holding a private hire operator's licence issued by New Forest District Council.

Where a proprietor wishes to make an application for a vehicle to be exempt from displaying an external identification plate a separate application form will be required.

The Licensing Authority requires applicants to provide additional documentation, such as contracts with clients or correspondence where clients have expressly wished to hire un-plated vehicles. This documentation will form part of the decision. Where such documentation is not provided to the satisfaction of the Licensing Authority, the application will be refused.

The exemption notice will expire on the same day as the expiration of the private hire licence, unless it is otherwise surrendered or revoked.

Exemption notices may be renewed annually subject to an inspection by a Licensing Officer, to ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose and within policy.

The Licensing Authority will determine any application for an exemption notice by virtue of this policy delegated to the Council's Licensing Officers.

In the event of an applicant being dissatisfied with the decision of the officer, the applicant may make a written application for a review of the decision by a Licensing Sub Committee.

All vehicles granted an exemption notice must, comply with the requirements for private hire vehicle, in addition to the requirements of this policy.

4.0 Vehicles

In creating this policy, New Forest District Council does not seek to provide a definitive list of vehicles it considers to be suitable (subject to use) for exemption from the requirement to display external identification plates.

This policy provides guidance to potential applicants on the standards of vehicle comfort and equipment that the Authority considers should be the minimum standard of comfort and vehicle type before such application would be considered.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the policy relating to private hire vehicles and establishes additional criteria that the Council (and its officers) will consider when determining applications for a private hire vehicle to be exempt from displaying external identification plates.

Applications for exemptions will be considered where the following vehicle requirements are met:

- The vehicle must be of a high quality both in terms of age, brand and condition.
- Vehicles will be larger than the Ford Mondeo class vehicles and will normally be the accepted luxury brands such as Mercedes Benz, BMW, Jaguar, Rolls Royce, Bentley, Lexus, high specification Range Rovers and Audis. The highest specification executive type cars from other manufacturers may also be considered.
- The vehicle will be in an immaculate condition with no visible defects, dents or blemishes to the external bodywork or internal trim.

5.0 Conditions

The below conditions apply to all private hire vehicles granted an exemption by New Forest District Council from the requirement to display an external identification plate and rear door sign are in addition to the criteria and conditions set out in the private hire conditions.

Additional conditions attached to any private hire vehicle licence which has been granted an exemption to display the licence plate.

- a) The proprietor shall not use the vehicle for private hire purposes other than for executive use (i.e. not for 'normal' airport journeys or daily private hire use).
- b) The licence plate, exemption notice and internal windscreen licence provided by the Council pursuant to requirements of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 shall remain the property of the Council.
- c) The exemption notice, private hire vehicle plate and the vehicle licence conditions must be carried in the vehicle, at all times and must be produced upon request to an authorised officer of the Council or a police officer.
- d) The internal vehicle identification badge must be displayed at the nearside of the front window of the vehicle, at all times.
- e) A taximeter will not be installed in the vehicle.

- f) The proprietor will not display in, on or from the vehicle any advertisement, signage, logos or insignia advertising the operating company or the vehicle's status as a private hire vehicle.
- g) The vehicle will not be required to display the Licensing Authority's private hire door signage.
- h) In the event of loss or damage rendering such plate or notice unserviceable the proprietor shall make immediate application for a replacement.
- i) The proprietor shall within one working day notify the Council of any change in the use of the vehicle.
- j) The exemption will cease to have effect on the sale or transfer of the vehicle to another party. The person to whom the exemption is granted must inform the council of the sale/transfer of ownership immediately, in writing, and return the exemption notice to Licensing Services.
- k) The driver of the exempted vehicle whilst engaged on private hire work will be smartly dressed in either a formal chauffeur's uniform, business suit or jacket and with collar and tie.
- l) The driver of an exempted vehicle is not required to wear their driver's identification badge but must carry it with them at all times.

Appendix L – Wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs)

1.0 Register

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, a list of WAVs (Hackney Carriage and PHVs) licensed by this Authority is published on the Council's website. This is to assist customers who may be looking for an adapted vehicle, so that they may travel in their wheelchair if they choose.

The list of wheelchair accessible vehicles designated for the purpose of Section 165 of the Act is provided at :

<http://www.newforest.gov.uk/licensing>

2.0 Requirements

In a designated WAV, the driver should not carry any unessential items in the passenger seating area which could prevent a passenger in their wheelchair from travelling while seated in their wheelchair.

Designated WAV drivers must also take necessary steps to carry the passenger in safety and reasonable comfort and provide reasonable mobility assistance when required. No additional charges must be made for carrying out these duties. If the passenger chooses to sit in a passenger seat, the wheelchair and any mobility aids must be safely stored in the vehicle.

3.0 Hackney vehicles

Hackney vehicles that hold licence numbers 1-88 have been granted grandfather rights and do not need to be wheelchair accessible, however all new hackney carriage vehicles must be wheelchair accessible.

Hackney carriage licences numbered 1-88, with grandfather rights, MUST remain licensed at all times. If a licence expires, the plate must be returned, the licence will lapse and may no longer be allocated to a vehicle.

4.0 Drivers of WAVs

Drivers are not permitted to charge an additional fee for transporting a passenger in a wheelchair and if a meter is fitted it must not be activated before, or left running, whilst the driver performs duties required by the Equality Act 2010.

Drivers of vehicles designated as wheelchair accessible, must undergo and pass the specific external course before they are permitted to drive vehicles designated to carry passengers in wheelchairs.

Appendix M – Licence conditions- Private hire operator

NFDC aims to ensure that the private hire and hackney carriage service delivered within the district is of an excellent standard and meets the expectations of customers and the Licensing Authority.

All relevant information will be taken into account when considering the grant of an operator's licence. Should an application be refused, the applicant has a right of appeal in writing within 21 days to the Magistrates Court.

The following conditions will be attached to a Private Hire Operator Licence

1.0 Records

1.1 The operator shall keep details of all bookings accepted by them (or another operator) and shall record them on the approved booking system, immediately the booking is received and in the case of m.(below) when the booking is completed. This information must be held for a minimum of six months and be made available for inspection on demand by any Authorised Officer, or Police Officer.

Any computerised systems must be able to produce a printed record of the details specified below to enable the Licensing Authority to check record keeping.

1.2 Information required:

- a) the time and date the booking was made.
- b) the name of the hirer.
- c) the date and time of the pick-up required.
- d) the location of the point of pick-up.
- e) the destination.
- f) the identity of the driver allocated the journey.
- g) the time at which a driver was allocated the booking.
- h) the plate number (or other identification) of the vehicle allocated.
- i) details of any sub-contracted arrangement of the booking.
- j) identity of the person accepting the booking.
- k) the price quoted for the booking.
- l) how the booking was received.
- m) the time the job was completed.

1.3 The operator shall keep the following records relating to all private hire vehicles operated by them:

- a) the registration number of each vehicle operated.
- b) the private hire vehicle licence number of each vehicle operated.

- c) the date of expiry of each vehicle licence.
- d) the expiry date of the insurance for each vehicle.
- e) the name of each private hire driver.
- f) the driver licence number for each driver.
- g) the date of grant and expiry of each driver licence.
- h) the dates vehicle and drivers commenced and ceased work for the operator.

1.4 The information above must be produced upon request by the Licensing Authority to ensure that licensing records reflect the operator's current fleet.

1.5 The operator shall also keep records of the following to assist with accountability of driver:

- a) driver call signs.
- b) details of when any new driver begins service.
- c) details of when any driver's service ceases.
- d) details of any change of address of any driver in service.
- e) if the operator becomes aware that any driver is suffering from any illness, disability or condition which may affect the driver's ability to safely carry out his/her duties, details of that information.
- f) a copy of the driver's NFDC licence.
- g) a copy of driver's DVLA licence.

1.1 If a booking has been sub-contracted to another operator that is either licensed by NDFC or by another licensing authority, the (original) operator is required to provide the name and contact details of the sub-contracted operator to the hirer. The original operator must also maintain a record of the booking and which operator it has been forwarded to.

2.0 The premises

2.1 The applicant must obtain any necessary planning permission required for the operation of a private hire business and the premises and must comply with any conditions attached to that permission. The grant of an operator licence does not override any planning restrictions in place.

2.2 If the public have access to the premises, they shall ensure there is public liability insurance in force, which indemnifies against any claim for loss, damage or personal injury by any person using those premises. A copy of the operator licence must also be displayed in the public area of the premise.

2.3 Operator's premises where open to the public, shall be kept clean, adequately heated, ventilated and lit with adequate seating for customers.

2.4 The operator shall notify the Licensing Authority in writing within seven days of any change affecting this licence.

- 2.5 Any change of address will require a new application to be made, to allow for consultation with the planning authority to ensure that the necessary permissions are in place to allow the business to operate from the new premises. A new application must be received before the address is changed.

3.0 Transfer of licence

- 3.1 The licence is not transferable to another person or entity and the licensed operator may only operate from the premises specified on the licence.

4.0 Drivers and vehicles

- 4.1 The operator must undertake sufficient checks to satisfy themselves that only suitable drivers and vehicles are used (and continue to be used) in the course of their business. Operators must only use vehicles and drivers licensed by New Forest District Council.

- 4.2 The operator shall ensure that a certificate of motor insurance covers every private hire vehicle and driver operated by him under the licence, which is compliant with the Road Traffic Act 1988 as regards to the carriage of passengers for hire or reward.

- 4.3 The operator shall notify the Licensing Authority in writing within seven days of the commencement or termination of any vehicles operated by them.

- 4.4 The operator shall notify the Licensing Authority in writing within seven days of the commencement or termination of any driver or owner/driver operated by them.

- 4.5 The operator must accept a booking for, or on behalf of any disabled person if they have a suitable vehicle available.

5.0 Convictions

- 5.1 The licence holder shall notify the licensing authority in writing within 48 hours of an arrest, charge, receipt of a summons or fixed penalty notice, ASBO, conviction or police caution for any offence.

- 5.2 In addition, all motoring convictions must be reported to the Licensing Authority within 48 hours of receiving written notification of the penalty.

- 5.3 If the operator is a company or partnership, this requirement shall apply if any of the directors or partners.

6.0 Personal Data

- 6.1 The Operator must ensure that all individuals (non-drivers) working in any capacity who have access to booking records (paid or unpaid) have obtained a basic DBS Certificate from the Disclosure and Baring Service before

commencing employment. The DBS certificate must be dated within one month before the commencement of employment. Operators must consider any convictions shown on the DBS certificate in line with their policy on employing ex-offenders. The operator should also make their policy on employing ex-offenders available to the Licensing Authority upon request.

- 6.2 The operator must keep a daily record of the names of controllers engaged in the receiving of bookings and despatching of vehicles. These records must be kept for a period of six months and be made available for inspection on demand by any Authorised Officer, or Police Officer. The operator shall be totally responsible for the conduct and actions of controllers engaged in the receiving of bookings and despatching vehicles operated under the private hire operator licence.
- 6.3 The Operator must keep up to date records of all individuals working in any capacity (paid or unpaid) and who have access to booking records for the business as follows:
- a) full name.
 - b) address.
 - c) date of birth.
 - d) contact details (phone and email)
 - e) DBS issue date and certificate number.
 - f) start and finish dates of employment.
 - g) job title.
- 6.4 The Operator must ensure that any personal information obtained during the course of their business is stored securely, and only retained for as long as is absolutely necessary. Access to this information must be restricted to only those persons who will use it for the purpose for which it has been collected.
- 6.5 Personal information must not be used for any other purpose other than that for which it was collected without the express permission of the individual to which the information relates.
- 6.6 The loss of records by theft or otherwise must be reported to the Licensing Authority in writing within 24 hours and also immediately to the police in the event of theft being suspected. You may also need to report the data loss to the Information Commissioner's Office.

7.0 Description of business

- 7.1 The licensed operator shall not, in the name or description of the service at the premises or on any vehicle operated in the course of business, use the words "taxi"; "cab" or "taxi cab" or any other words or combination of letters so as to lead any person to believe the operator is providing a hackney carriage service.

- 7.2 The licensed operator may only advertise their operation as a taxi provider whilst they are a proprietor of one or more Hackney Carriages licensed by the Council.
- 7.3. The licensed operator shall ensure that any PHV operated under this licence does not display any mark or sign on the licensed vehicle that shall include the word 'taxi' or 'taxis', 'For Hire' or 'cab' or any words of a similar meaning or construction that may suggest the overall appearance of the vehicle is a hackney carriage.

8.0 Lost property

- 8.1 The Licensee shall immediately after the termination of any hiring of a licensed vehicle, or as soon as practicable thereafter, carefully search the vehicle for any property which may have been accidentally left there.
- 8.2 Any property accidentally left in a licensed vehicle must, (within 48 hours) be handed in to the private hire operator if the journey is booked through an operator.
- 8.3 The Operator must record details of all lost or found property and retain those records for examination for a period of 6 months.
- 8.4 The Operator must make every effort to return the lost property to the owner and retain the property for a suitable period of time to allow for the owner to make their own enquiries.

9.0 Notification of complaints

- 9.1 The Operator shall ensure that details of how a customer may contact the operator in the event of a complaint, are displayed on the operator's website, booking app or in the absence of online booking platform, at the booking office.
- 9.2 The operator must maintain a register of complaints received from members of the public (electronic or hard copy) which specifies all the relevant details of the complaint.
- 9.3 A copy of the complaints register must be available for inspection upon request of an authorised officer of the Licensing Authority. The records must be retained for a period of 6 months.
- 9.4 The Operator must notify the Licensing Authority within 48 hours if the operator receives a complaint about a driver operated by them when it has been identified that the complaint relates to any of the following:
- sexual misconduct, sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual attention,
 - racist behaviour,
 - violence,

- dishonesty,
- breaches of equality,
- any other serious misconduct (including those that are motoring related, i.e. dangerous driving or drink driving)

Appendix N – Information sharing and data protection

The Council will be the data controller for the personal data that it collects and processes relating to drivers and operators in accordance with its role as the Licensing Authority.

All personal data will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation ('UK GDPR') and as set out in the Council's Privacy Notice: www.nfdc.gov.uk/privacy

The Council will share information (which may include personal data) internally within the Council and externally with partner organisations including the Police, the Home Office, the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN), Hampshire County Council, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) where there is a lawful basis to do so. Information sharing aims to ensure effective regulation of the hackney carriage and private hire trade. The Police have powers to disclose information about relevant investigations even before an arrest or conviction is made.

In accordance with the Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022 ('the Act'), the Council will record (and keep updated) any decision:

- (a) to refuse a person's application for a driver's licence,
- (b) to refuse a person's application for the renewal of a driver's licence,
- (c) to suspend a person's driver's licence, or
- (d) to revoke a person's driver's licence.

on the National Register of Taxi and Private Hire Licence Revocations, Refusals and suspensions (NR3S). The Council will also search for entries on NR3S register before making a decision on a person's application for, or for the renewal of, a driver's licence.

In accordance with the Act, if any Licensing Authority in England has information about a driver licensed by another authority that is relevant to safeguarding or road safety concerns in its area, it must share that information with the authority that issued that driver's licence within the required timescale. Any Licensing Authority provided with such information by another authority must consider whether to suspend or revoke the driver's licence and inform the authority that shared the information of its decision.

The Council, as a public authority, is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. The Council may be required to disclose information relating to taxi and private hire licensing in accordance with a request for information. However, an exemption/ exception will

apply where that information is the personal data of a driver, vehicle owner, or operator.

The Council is also required to publish and make available for inspection information as part of its public registers relating to hackney carriages, private hire vehicles, taxi drivers, taxi operators and wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Appendix O – CCTV

The Council does not currently mandate the use of CCTV in vehicles.

However, it is recognised that the use of CCTV can provide a safer environment for the benefit of taxi/private hire vehicle passengers and drivers by:

- deterring and preventing the occurrence of crime
- reducing the fear of crime
- assisting the police in investigating incidents of crime
- assisting insurance companies in investigating motor vehicle accidents

Where a driver or operator chooses to install CCTV within a vehicle, they are responsible for ensuring that this is done in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK GDPR and guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office ('ICO') [Video surveillance \(including guidance for organisations using CCTV\) | ICO](#) and the Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner's Amended Surveillance Camera Code of Practice [Amended Surveillance Camera Code of Practice \(accessible version\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Appendix P- Mechanical Inspection Guidance

This has been produced by the NFDC's Transport and Depot Manager to detail checks undertaken during the vehicle inspection.

1. Registration plates
2. Vehicle identification number (VIN),
3. Brakes
4. Steering
5. Steering wheel and column
6. Visibility
7. Lamps, reflectors and electrical equipment
8. Electrical wiring
9. Axles, wheels, tyres and suspension
10. Suspension
11. Body, structure and attachments
12. Other equipment
13. Nuisance
14. Other environmental items
15. Taxi meter
16. Road test
17. Roof signs (Hackney carriages)
18. Private Hire Door Signage

1. Registration plates

Registration plates must not:

- be obscured, excessively damaged, deteriorated or delaminated
- have background overprinting
- have any feature or fixing that has the effect of changing the appearance or legibility of any of the characters including the use of tints or films
- have a honeycomb or similar effect background - back lit registration plates may have a honeycomb type construction which should not be confused with a honeycomb effect background

Ensure that the location of any fixing screws or bolts, as well as any delamination of the number plate do not prevent identification of the vehicle by automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras, which 'see' any non-reflective material as being black.

Registration plates may:

- have an optional non-reflective border displayed within the margin which must be:
- be no wider than 6mm and not within 5mm of the characters on vehicles first used before 1 September 2021
- be no wider than 5mm and not within 10mm of the characters on vehicles first used on or after 1 September 2021

Registration plate characters:

- may contain grey, possibly to achieve a 3D or highlighting effect (only on vehicles first used before 1 September 2021)
- may be raised or 3D
- must be the correct size, stroke width and spacing
- must not be italic, sloping or formed using broken or multiple strokes
- must be laid out in the correct format for the age of vehicle
- must be formed using the prescribed font or be substantially similar to the prescribed font - as shown below

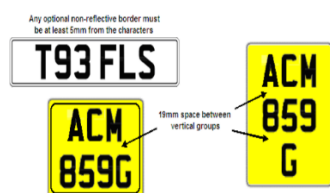
1234567890
ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ

They will only be rejected if the font is obviously incorrect. Registration plates fitted to vehicles must:

- have black characters on a white background when fitted to the front.
- have black characters on a yellow background when fitted to the rear.
- be fitted vertically, or as close to vertical as is reasonably practicable.

Registration plates fitted to vehicles first registered on or after 1 September 2021:

- must be a single shade of black
- may be raised, but the entire surface of the characters, including the sides, must be a single shade of black
- may have an integral raised or depressed border around the number plate periphery, not more than 5mm wide and 2mm high



Registration plates must meet the dimensional requirements shown in the example below. However, the space between a number '1' or a letter 'I' and another character is permitted to be proportionately greater. Vehicles with non-date related plates, such as those issued before 1963 and Northern Ireland plates must still meet the separation requirement between groups of characters where relevant.



It is a failure if the:

- Number plate is missing or so insecure that it is likely to fall off
- Number plate is showing an incorrect registration
- Number plate does not conform to the specified requirements

2. Vehicle identification number (VIN)

The vehicle must display a legible vehicle identification number.

Vehicles may have the VIN displayed in more than one location, but only one VIN is required to be complete and legible.

It is a failure if :

- The VIN is missing or cannot be found.
- The VIN is incomplete, illegible or obviously falsified.
- More than one different VIN displayed.

3. Brakes

Brake condition and operation, service brakes, secondary brakes, parking brakes, anti-lock braking system (ABS), electronic braking system (EBS) and brake fluid rules and inspection. All must be in good working order and effective.

Service brake pedal or hand lever condition and travel

A brake pedal – rubber pad, grooved or with raised grip section should not be worn smooth. It is a failure to have a worn smooth brake pedal.

However, if a brake pedal was manufactured with one that does not have grooves or anti-slip material, it is not a failure. Often a vehicle is fitted with an aftermarket brake pedal rubber.

A vehicle will be failed for insufficient reserve if the pedal is touching the floor.

It is a failure if:

- There is insufficient reserve travel.
- It is not releasing correctly.
- Functionality of the brakes are affected.
- The anti-slip provision is missing, loose or worn smooth.

Parking brake lever or control

A parking brake lever will be failed if it has obvious excessive travel.

Electronic parking brakes must be maintained in operation by direct mechanical means, even though they are applied electronically.

It is a failure if the:

- Ratchet is not holding correctly.
- Parking brake lever pivot or ratchet mechanism is obviously worn to the extent that the brake may inadvertently release.
- Parking brake lever has excessive movement.
- Parking brake control is missing, defective or inoperative.
- Electronic parking brake indicates a malfunction.

Brake servo units and master cylinder (hydraulic systems)

Hydraulic brake fluid level checks are confined to transparent reservoirs or where an indicator is fitted.

It is a failure if the:

- Brake servo is:
 - (i) defective or ineffective
 - (ii) inoperative
- Master cylinder:
 - (i) defective but brake still operating
 - (ii) leaking
- Master cylinder is insecure
- Brake fluid is below minimum mark
- Brake fluid level warning device is incorrectly functioning

Rigid brake pipes

The tester will check the condition of the metal brake pipes. Chafing, corrosion or damage to a rigid brake pipe, resulting in its wall thickness is reduced by 1/3 (approximately 0.25mm for typical hydraulic brake pipes) will be failed.

Repairs to the pressure lines of hydraulic brake systems are unacceptable unless suitable connectors are used. Compression joints of a type using separate ferrules are not suitable.

Unacceptable repairs to brake lines will be failed.

It is a failure if:

- The brake pipe is at imminent risk of failure or fracture.
- A brake pipe or connection is leaking.
- The brake pipe is damaged or excessively corroded.
- The brake pipe is:
 - (i) inadequately clipped or supported
 - (ii) likely to become detached or damaged.

Flexible brake hoses

A hose, which is excessively damaged or chafed, exposing the reinforcement will be failed.

It is a failure if the:

- Brake hose is damaged and likely to fail.
- Flexible brake hose is excessively damaged, deteriorated, chafed, twisted or stretched.
- Brake hoses or connections are leaking.
- Brake hose is bulging under pressure.
- Brake hose is porous.
- Brake hose ferrules are excessively corroded and likely to fail.

Brake linings and pads

It is a failure if the:

- Brake lining or pad is:
 - (i) worn down to the wear indicator
 - (ii) worn below 1.5mm
- Brake lining or pad is contaminated with oil, grease etc.

Brake discs and drums

If the brake disc or drum is significantly worn it will be failed. Brake judder felt from inside the vehicle from the steering wheel or foot pedal will also be a failure.

It is a failure if the Brake disc or drum is:

- Significantly and obviously worn.
- Insecure, fractured or otherwise likely to fail.
- Juddering or vibrating from inside

Load sensing valve

It is a failure if the:

- Load sensing valve linkage is defective or seized

4. Steering

Mechanical condition, steering wheel and column, steering play and electronic power steering (EPS).

Steering gear condition

To check the condition of the steering gear:

It is a failure if:

There is excessive roughness in operation of steering

- The sector shaft is:
 - (i) twisted or splines excessively worn
 - (ii) twisted or splines worn to the extent that functionality is affected
- The sector shaft is:
 - (i) excessively worn
 - (ii) worn to the extent that functionality is affected
- The Sector shaft:
 - (i) has excessive movement
 - (ii) has movement so excessive that functionality is affected
- The steering box is:
 - (i) leaking oil
 - (ii) leaking to the extent that oil is dripping

Steering gear security

‘Steering gear’ refers to any steering rack, box, relay or intermediate drop arm pivot housing.

It is a failure if the:

Steering gear casing is:

- (i) not properly attached
- (ii) retaining devices dangerously loose or relative movement to chassis/bodywork visible

- Steering gear casing fixing holes in the chassis are:
 - (i) elongated
 - (ii) elongated to the extent that attachment is seriously affected
- Steering gear fixing bolts are:
 - (i) missing or ineffective
 - (ii) missing or ineffective to the extent that attachment is seriously affected
- Strength or continuity of the load bearing structure within 30cm of any steering component mounting (a ‘prescribed area’):
 - (i) is significantly reduced or inadequately repaired
 - (ii) is so weakened that control of the vehicle is likely to be adversely affected

Steering linkage condition

Movement due to excessive wear will be a failure.

Unsafe modifications include:

- welded repairs

- the use of excessive heat to highly stressed components
- modifications likely to affect the roadworthiness of the vehicle

It is a failure if:

- A steering linkage component has:
 - (i) relative movement between components which should be fixed
 - (ii) excessive movement between components or likely to become detached
- A steering ball joint is:
 - (i) with excessive wear or free play
 - (ii) worn to the extent there is a serious risk of detachment
- A steering linkage component is:
 - (i) fractured or deformed
 - (ii) fractured or deformed to the extent that steering is affected
- A steering linkage retaining or locking device is missing or ineffective
- A track rod or drag link ends are seriously misaligned
- A steering rack gaiter or ball joint dust cover is:
 - (i) damaged or deteriorated
 - (ii) missing or no longer prevents the ingress of dirt etc.

Steering linkage operation

A missing steering lock stop will only be failed if it was fitted as standard.

It is a failure if the:

- Steering linkage is fouling any part of the vehicle
- Steering lock-stop is missing or incorrectly adjusted

Power steering

It is a failure if the:

- Power steering fluid is leaking or the system is malfunctioning
- Power steering fluid:
 - (i) level is below minimum mark
 - (ii) reservoir is empty
- Power steering:
 - (i) is inoperative
 - (ii) is inoperative and steering adversely affected
- Power steering pipe, hose or wiring:
 - (i) is excessively damaged or corroded
 - (ii) is damaged or corroded and steering adversely affected

5. Steering wheel and column

Steering wheel

Must be properly secured.

It is a failure if the:

- Relative movement between the steering wheel and column:
 - (i) indicates looseness
 - (ii) is such that there is a serious risk of detachment
- Steering wheel:
 - (i) retaining device is missing
 - (ii) is likely to become detached

Steering column

There should be no unsafe modifications. These include:

- welded repairs
- the use of excessive heat to highly stressed components
- modifications likely to affect the roadworthiness of the vehicle

It is a failure if there is:

- Excessive movement of centre of steering wheel up or down
- Excessive radial movement between the top of the steering column and the shaft indicating an excessively worn top bearing
- Excessive wear or play in a universal joint or a flexible coupling excessively deteriorated
- Excessive wear or play to steering head bearings

Steering play

Steering wheel free play should not be more than:

- 13mm for rack and pinion steering, or 48mm if there are several joints between the steering wheel and the rack
- 75mm for non-rack and pinion

It is a failure if the:

- Free play in the steering, measured at the rim of the steering wheel is:
 - (i) excessive
 - (ii) excessive to the extent that safe steering is affected

Electronic power steering (EPS)

For the purpose of an inspection, electronic power steering includes any steering system that incorporates an electric motor to control or assist the steering.

It is a failure if the:

- EPS indicates a system malfunction
- Electronic power assistance is not working

6. Visibility

This refers to the field of vision, bonnet catches, condition of the glass, the view to the rear, windscreen wipers and windscreen washers.

The following are considered a failure if they seriously restrict the driver's view:

- Signs to indicate when the vehicle is 'for hire'
- 'Official' stickers, such as parking and disabled permits
- Sun visor on the driver's side that cannot be stowed in the 'off screen' position
- Windscreen wipers that automatically stop in a position obscuring the view

It is a failure if:

- There is an obstruction:
 - (i) within the driver's field of view that significantly affects his view in front or to the sides outside the swept area of windscreen
 - (ii) that significantly affects the driver's view of the road through the swept area of the windscreen or an obligatory external mirror not visible
- A bonnet:
 - (i) cannot be safely secured in the closed position
 - (ii) is seriously at risk of opening inadvertently

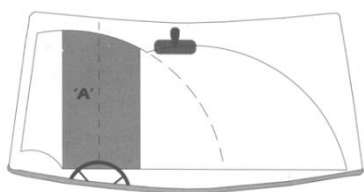
Condition of glass

The tester will check for:

- damage in windscreen zone A more than 10mm in diameter
- damage in the remainder of the windscreen's swept area more than 40mm in diameter
- damage to windows on either side of the driver's seat
- Any cracks to the windscreen
- Additional tinting to drivers view windows

Zone A is:

- in the swept area of the windscreen
- 290mm wide
- centred on the steering wheel



Repaired windscreens are judged on whether the repair interferes with vision. An 'invisible' or barely detectable repair, finished flush with the surrounding glass, does not count as damage.

It is a failure if the:

- Windscreen or window is damaged or seriously discoloured, affecting the driver's view of the road or of an obligatory external mirror
- Windscreen or window is excessively tinted, resulting in poor visibility through swept area of the windscreen or of an obligatory external mirror seriously affected
- Windscreen or window is:
 - (i) in an unacceptable condition e.g., due to excessive scratching
 - (ii) in such a condition that visibility through swept area is seriously affected
- (iii) in such condition that the windscreen has a crack

View to rear

Rear view mirrors and indirect vision devices can be any of the following positions:

1. an exterior mirror or device that provides a view along the offside of the vehicle
2. an exterior mirror or device that provides a view along the nearside of the vehicle
3. an interior mirror or device which provides a view to the rear of the vehicle

It is a failure if:

- A mirror is missing
- There is damage to the mirror or it is likely to come loose

Windscreen wipers

If the windscreen or rear wiper is clearly damaged or worn it will fail.

It is a failure if the:

- Wiper is not operating or missing
- Wiper blade is:
 - (i) defective
 - (ii) missing or obviously not clearing the windscreen

Windscreen washers

Washers must provide enough fluid for the wipers to clear the windscreen effectively. Fluid must hit the windscreen above the wipers at the parked position.

It is a failure if the:

- Windscreen washers not working or not providing sufficient fluid to clear the windscreen
- Windscreen washers are not providing fluid to both zone A and B

7. Lamps, reflectors and electrical equipment

This section refers to headlamp, position lamps, daytime running lamps, stop lamps, indicators, hazard warning lamps, fog lamps, reversing lamps, lighting 'tell-tales', electrical wiring and battery.

Headlamps

A 'light source' means any bulb, LED or other means of emitting light.

It is a failure if

- A headlamp:
 - (i) with up to ½ light sources are not functioning in the case of LED
 - (ii) is missing, inoperative or more than ½ not functioning in the case of LED
- Headlamp reflector or lens:
 - (i) is seriously defective or missing
- The lamp not securely attached
- The lamp is obviously distorted or cloudy

Switching

Dipped or main beam headlamps must immediately light up when they're switched on (depending on the position of the dip switch).

Headlamps must switch immediately between the main beam and dipped beam when the dip switch is moved. Moving the dip switch must do one of the following:

- extinguish all main beam headlamps and leave on at least one pair of dipped-beam headlamps
- deflect the main beams to make them dipped beams

Dipped beam headlamps can remain on or switch off when the main beam is selected.

It is a failure if the:

- Headlamp 'on' switch does not operate in accordance with the requirements

Compliance with requirements

Mandatory headlamps consist of a matched pair of main beam headlamps and a matched pair of dipped-beam headlamps. These can be separate or a single pair of headlamps.

Lamps are matched if they:

- emit light of substantially the same colour and intensity
- are the same size and shape and that they are symmetrical to each other

The colour of the light headlamps emit must be one of the following:

- white
- predominantly white with blue tinge
- yellow

The tester will assess damaged or repaired lamps for security, colour, light output and durability.

It is a failure if the:

- Headlamp emitted colour, position or intensity is not in accordance with the requirements
- Product on the lens or light source obviously reduces light intensity or changes emitted colour to that other than white or yellow
- Light source and lamp not compatible
- Mandatory headlamps, intended to be a matched pair, are not the same shape, size or colour

Levelling devices

It is a failure if the:

- Headlamp levelling device is inoperative
- Manual levelling device cannot be operated from the driver's seat

Headlamp cleaning devices

The tester will inspect vehicles first used on or after 1 September 2009 equipped with headlamp washers.

It is a failure if the:

Headlamp cleaning device is :

- (i) inoperative
- (ii) inoperative in the case of LED or gas discharge systems (HID)

Front and rear position lamps, daytime running lamps and end-outline marker lamps,

This inspection is for:

- mandatory end-outline marker lamps
- daytime running lamps (DRLs) fitted to M1 vehicles first used on or after 1 March 2018

It is a failure if the:

- Lamp is missing, inoperative or in the case of a multiple light source more than a half not functioning
- Lamp has a defective lens
- Lamp:
 - (i) is not securely attached
 - (ii) is likely to become detached

Switching

It is a failure if the:

- Switch does not operate in accordance with the requirements or the rear position lamps can be switched off when the headlamps are on
- Function of the switch is impaired

Stop Lamps

It is a failure if the:

- Stop lamp(s) are:
 - (i) with a multiple light source
 - (ii) missing, inoperative
 - (iii) all missing or inoperative

Switching

All stop lamps must light up immediately when the brake is applied and switch off immediately when the brake is released.

Vehicles first used on or after 1 January 1971 must have 2 stop lamps, one on each side.

It is a failure if the:

- Stop lamp(s):
 - (i) switch does not operate in accordance with the requirements
 - (ii) switch has a delay in operation
 - (iii) remains on when the brakes are released
- Stop lamp is adversely affected by the operation of any other lamp

Direction indicators and hazard warning lamp

All direction indicators and hazard warning lamps must be amber.

- The side repeater can be part of the front direction indicator if it has one of the following:
- a wraparound lens marked either with an 'E' mark in a circle or an 'e' mark in a rectangle with a number 5 above it
- an amber light coming through the front lens when viewed from 1m to the side of the rear bumper

It is a failure if a:

- lens is defective, such that the emitted light is adversely affected
- lamp is:
 - (i) not securely attached
 - (ii) likely to become detached
- Mandatory hazard warning device inoperative

Switching

Hazard warning lamps must operate using only one switch

It is a failure if the:

- Indicator or hazard warning switch:
 - (i) does not operate in accordance with the requirements
 - (ii) is inoperative

Flashing frequency

Indicators must flash at between 60 and 120 times per minute. Semaphore type direction indicators do not need to flash.

It is a failure if the:

- Rate of flashing is not between 60 and 120 times per minute

Front and rear fog lamps

Fog lamps must produce a steady light which is:

- white - for front fog lamps
- red - for rear fog lamps

Rear fog lamps may be combined with the rear position lamps.

It is a failure if a:

- Lens is defective, such that emitted light is adversely affected

Switching

Front and rear fog lamp switches may be combined or independent switches.

The switch or switches must:

- be secure
- be able to be operated from the normal driving position
- operate the fog lamps as intended

It is a failure if the:

- front or rear fog lamp switch is inoperative, or not operating in accordance with the requirements

Reversing Lamps

Reversing lamps must show a white light to the rear. At least one reversing lamp must be fitted.

It is a failure if a:

- front or rear fog lamp switch is inoperative or not operating in accordance with the requirements
- reversing lamp is inoperative
- reversing lamp is defective

Rear registration plate lamps

Registration plate lamps must light up the rear registration plate. Some vehicles may have these lamps fitted behind the number plate.

A 'light source' means any bulb, LED or other means of emitting light.

It is a failure if a:

- rear registration plate lamp is throwing direct white light to the rear
- rear registration plate lamp or light source is missing or inoperative

Rear reflectors

Reflective tape is not an acceptable substitute for a rear reflector.

It is a failure if the:

- Reflector is defective or damaged:
 - (i) by up to 50% of the reflecting surface
 - (ii) by more than 50% of the reflecting surface
- Reflector is:
 - (i) not securely attached
 - (ii) likely to become detached

8. Electrical wiring

The tester will carry out a visual inspection of the electrical equipment

It is a failure if the:

- Electrical wiring is:
 - (i) insecure or inadequately secured
 - (ii) insecure and in contact with sharp edges or connectors likely to become disconnected
 - (iii) likely to touch hot or rotating parts, drag on the ground or the connectors for braking or steering are disconnected
- Electrical wiring is:
 - (i) slightly deteriorated
 - (ii) so damaged or deteriorated it is likely to cause a short-circuit
 - (iii) extremely deteriorated for braking or steering components
- Electrical wiring insulation is:
 - (i) damaged or deteriorated
 - (ii) heavily deteriorated
 - (iii) in such a condition there is an imminent risk of fire or formation of sparks

Battery(ies)

If the batteries are leaking, the tester will refuse to test the vehicle.

It is a failure if the:

- battery is insecure and is likely to fall from the carrier or cause a short circuit
- battery is leaking

9. Axles, wheels, tyres and suspension

Axle, wheel bearing, wheel and tyres, tyre pressure monitoring system (TPMS), and suspension (including springs, shock absorbers, and suspension arms and joints)

Axles,

It is a failure if:

- An axle is fractured or deformed
- (b) An axle is:
 - (i) insecure or with loose fixing bolts
 - (ii) insecure such that stability is impaired, or functionality affected
- An axle is:
 - (i) with an unsafe modification
 - (ii) modified so that vehicle stability is impaired, or axle functionality affected

Stub axles

It is a failure if the:

- stub axle is fractured

- stub axle swivel pin and/or bush:
 - (i) is excessively worn
 - (ii) is so excessive the stub axle is likely to become insecure or directional stability is impaired
- Movement between the stub axle and axle beam:
 - (i) is excessive
 - (ii) is insecure or directional stability is impaired

Wheel bearings

It is a failure if the:

- wheel bearing has:
 - (i) excessive play
 - (ii) play so excessive it is likely to break up or directional control impaired
- wheel bearing is:
 - (i) excessively rough
 - (ii) likely to collapse
- bearing is noisy when rotated

Wheels

Road wheel and hub

It is a failure if the:

- wheel:
 - (i) has a loose or missing wheel nut, bolt or stud
 - (ii) has more than one loose or missing wheel nut, bolt or stud
- spigot mounted wheel hub has been:
 - (i) excessively worn or damaged
 - (ii) worn or damaged to the extent that wheel security is adversely affected

Tyres

The tester will assess a cut in a tyre:

- any ply or cord that can be seen without touching the tyre – fail
- if by folding back rubber or opening a cut with a blunt instrument, so as not to cause further damage, exposed ply or cord can be seen irrespective of the size of the cut – fail
- if a cut which is more than 25mm or 10% of the section width whichever is the greater, is opened with a blunt instrument and cords can be felt but not seen - fail

Tread depth

In simple terms, grooves containing tread wear indicators (TWI), or grooves cut as deep as those containing the wear indicators when new, are considered to be primary grooves, when assessing tread depth.

The 'breadth of tread' is the part of the tyre which can contact the road under normal conditions of use measured at 90 degrees to the peripheral line of the tread.

The primary grooves of the tread pattern must be at least 2mm deep around the entire outer circumference of the tyre.

The tread pattern must be visible over the whole tread area

Tyre pressure monitoring system (TPMS)

The inspection of the tyre pressure monitoring system (TPMS) is for M1 vehicles first used on or after 1 January 2012.

The TPMS warning lamp (see diagram 1) can operate in many ways depending on the vehicle type. If it is clear that the lamp indicates a system malfunction it is a fail. If it indicates that one or more of the tyre pressures is low it is not a fail.

Diagram 1. Example of a TPMS warning lamp



Tyre age

Tyre age is determined by the date code on the sidewall and will be a three or four-digit code. Tyres with a three-digit code will be more than 10 years old.

The code is usually located in a 'window' on the sidewall and may or may not be located at the end of the DOT number (see image below).



The first two digits of the code represent the week of manufacture of the tyre and the second two digits represent the year of manufacture. In the example above, the tyre was manufactured in week 35 of 2016.

Tyres over 6 years old at the time of test are failed if they are on any axle

Tyres not displaying a date code must also a fail

It is a failure if the:

- tyres on the same axle are different sizes
- tyre:
 - (i) with a cut in excess of the requirements is deep enough to reach the ply or cords
 - (ii) has a lump, bulge or tear caused by separation or partial failure of its structure, including any lifting of the tread rubber or with cords exposed or damaged
- Tyre tread depth is not in accordance with the requirements
- Tyre is fouling a part of the vehicle
- Tyre pressure monitoring system is malfunctioning or obviously not working
- Tyre valve seriously damaged or misaligned and likely to cause sudden deflation of the tyre
- Tyres are obviously under inflated

Wheels

The vehicle must be right-hand drive and have a minimum of four approved road wheels and spare tyre provision as provided at vehicle manufacture stage. Replacement alloy wheels are not acceptable.

Wheels should be correctly aligned, joints and bearings free from abnormal wear. All mounting points should be in a sound condition with no undue wear in any associated bushes.

10. Suspension

Springs

The tester will check the security of a coil spring to the chassis or axle when jacking and lowering the vehicle. If the spring does not correctly locate when the suspension is returned to its normal running position, then it will fail for being insecurely attached.

Unsafe modifications include:

- welded repairs
- the use of excessive heat to highly stressed components
- modifications likely to affect the roadworthiness of the vehicle

It is a failure if the:

- fixings are loose to the extent that relative movement is visible
- spring component is fractured or seriously weakened

Shock absorbers

A shock absorber will fail if a negligible damping effect becomes evident at any point during the inspection.

It is a failure if the:

- shock absorber is:
 - (i) insecurely attached to chassis or axle
 - (ii) missing or likely to become detached
- shock absorber is damaged to the extent that it does not function or is showing signs of severe leakage
- shock absorber bush is excessively worn
- shock absorber which has a negligible damping effect

Suspension arms, rods, struts, sub-frames, anti-roll bars etc.

Unsafe modifications include:

- welded repairs
- the use of excessive heat to highly stressed components
- modifications likely to affect the roadworthiness of the vehicle

It is a failure if the:

- suspension component is:
 - (i) insecurely attached to chassis or axle
 - (ii) missing, likely to become detached or directional stability impaired
 - (III) excessively damaged or corroded
 - (iv) fractured or likely to fail

Suspension joints, pins and bushes

The tester will assess wear or play in spring pins and bushes using

- a small pinch bard

Wear is excessive if play is more than:

- 2mm for a 12mm diameter pin
- 3mm for a 25mm diameter pin
- 10% of the pin diameter for pins over 25mm diameter

Rear axles

It is a failure if the:

- suspension pin, bush, joint or bearing is:
 - (i) excessively worn
 - (ii) likely to become detached

- suspension joint dust cover is:
 - (i) severely deteriorated
 - (ii) missing or no longer prevents the ingress of dirt etc.

11. Body, structure and attachments

Structure and attachments (including exhaust system and bumpers), and body and interior (including doors and catches, seats and floor)

Structure and attachments

General condition

It is a failure if the:

- Main load-bearing structural member is:
 - (i) fractured or deformed such that structural rigidity is significantly reduced
 - (ii) fractured or deformed such that steering, or braking is likely to be adversely affected
- Strengthening plates or fastenings are:
 - (i) insecure
 - (ii) so insecure that structural rigidity is seriously reduced
- Vehicle structure is corroded to the extent that:
 - (i) the rigidity of the assembly is significantly reduced
 - (ii) steering or braking is likely to be adversely affected

Exhaust system

It is a failure if the:

- Exhaust system has a major leak or is insecure
- Exhaust fumes:
 - (i) are entering cabin
 - (ii) are causing a danger to health of persons on board

Fuel system

It is a failure if the:

- Fuel tank, pipe or hose is:
 - (i) insecure
 - (ii) insecure such that there is a risk of fire
- Fuel system is:
 - (i) leaking, or missing or ineffective filler cap
 - (ii) leaking excessively or there is a risk of fire
- Fuel pipe or hose is:
 - (i) chafing
 - (ii) damaged

Bumpers

It is a failure if the:

- Bumper is:
 - (i) insecure or with damage likely to cause injury when grazed or contacted
 - (ii) likely to become detached
- Unsightly damage

Spare wheel

The spare wheel should be present, have a minimum of 2mm across the tyre and be correctly inflated. You must also have the correct tools to change the wheel E.G. Jack, wheel brace, locking wheel nut. If a spare wheel cannot be present an approved inflation kit is required and must be in date.

It is a failure if:

- The Tyre is below 2mm
- The tyre has cut to cords
- The tyre is under inflated
- There is no spare or inflation kit
- The inflation kit out of date or used
- There is no jack
- There is no wheel brace or incorrect size for wheel nuts
- There is a missing locking wheel nut if fitted
- It is an aerosol type inflation

Transmission

It is a failure if the:

- transmission shaft:
 - (i) securing bolts are loose or missing
 - (ii) is likely to become detached
- transmission shaft bearing is :
 - (i) excessively worn
 - (ii) likely to break up
- transmission shaft constant velocity joint boot is :
 - (i) severely deteriorated
 - (ii) missing, split or insecure so that it no longer prevents the ingress of dirt

Engine mountings

Body and interior

Body condition

This inspection is for all vehicles and includes:

- all body panels
- undertrays
- spoilers
- mirror housings

It is a failure if:

- A body panel or body component is:
 - (i) damaged or corroded and likely to cause injury when grazed or contacted, or insecure
 - (ii) likely to become detached
- A boot lid, tailgate, dropside, loading door or access panel cannot be secured in the closed position
- There is accident damage, deep scratches, or it is an untidy looking vehicle
- There is anything that can foul the wheels

Doors and door catches

It is a failure if the:

- A door will not open using the relevant control or close properly
- A door is likely to open inadvertently or not remain closed:
 - (i) in the case of a sliding door
- A door hinge, catch or pillar:
 - (i) is excessively deteriorated
 - (ii) is missing or insecure
 - (iii) Hinge drops when open

Interior

The interior must be clean with no foul odours, torn seats or carpet. It must have no loose or missing trim. The glass must be polished

Floor

It is a failure if the:

- Floor carpet is dirty or has holes

Driver's seat

All seats should be in a good condition and clean

It is a failure if:

- A driver's seat is :
 - (i) with a defective structure
 - (ii) insecure
- A driver's seat:
 - (i) fore and aft adjustment mechanism is not working as intended

(ii) is moving inadvertently, or the backrest cannot be retained in the upright position

- Too close to rear seat leaving inadequate leg room

Passenger seats

It is a failure if:

- A passenger seat is:
 - (i) with a defective structure or the backrest cannot be retained in the upright position
 - (ii) insecure
- The seats are torn
- The seats are in an un-clean condition

Driving controls

It is a failure if:

- A driving control necessary for the safe operation of the vehicle is:
 - (i) not functioning correctly
 - (ii) not working or functioning such that safe operation of the vehicle is affected

12. Other equipment

Seat belts and restraint systems, airbags, anti-theft devices, horn, speedometer, speed limiter and electronic stability control (ESC) rules and inspection.

Seat belts and supplementary restraint systems (SRS)

Seat belt security

It is a failure if the:

- Strength or continuity of the load bearing structure, within 30cm of any seat belt anchorage (a 'prescribed area'):
 - (i) is significantly reduced or inadequately repaired
 - (ii) anchorage likely to become detached in the event of a collision
- Seat belt anchorage is loose

Seat belt fitment and condition

It is a failure if :

- A statutory seat belt is missing
- A seat belt:
 - (i) or flexible stalk is damaged
 - (ii) webbing or flexible stalk is significantly stretched or weakened
- The seat belt not functioning as intended or of an incorrect type
- The seat belt buckle is missing, damaged or not functioning as intended
- The seat belt retractor is not functioning as intended

Seat belt pre-tensioners

It is a failure if:

- A seat belt pre-tensioner fitted as original equipment is obviously missing or deployed

Airbags

This inspection is for all airbags fitted as original equipment.

It is a failure if:

- An airbag fitted as original equipment is obviously missing
- An airbag is obviously inoperative

Supplementary restraint system (SRS)

It is a failure if the:

- Steering lock is missing or not functioning
- Steering lock is inadvertently engaging

Audible warning (horn)

An audible warning must be loud enough to be heard by other road users.

For vehicles first used on or after 1 August 1973, the sound emitted must be continuous or uniform. It cannot be harsh or grating.

It is a failure if the:

- Audible warning is not working
- Audible warning control is insecure
- Audible warning is not in accordance with requirements

Speedometer

It is a failure if the:

- Speedometer is not fitted where one is required
- Speedometer :
 - (i) operation is impaired
 - (ii) is not working
- Speedometer is :
 - (i) not sufficiently illuminated
 - (ii) not illuminated

Electronic stability control (ESC)

It is a failure if the:

- Wheel speed sensors are missing or damaged
- ESC wiring is damaged
- Other ESC component is missing or damaged
- ESC switch is damaged or not functioning correctly
- ESC MIL indicates a system malfunction

13. Nuisance

Noise, exhaust emissions, engine malfunction indicator lamp (MIL) (sometimes called an engine management light or 'EML'), and fluid leak

Noise suppression system

It is a failure if:

- Exhaust noise levels are in excess of those permitted
- Any part of the noise suppression system is:
 - (i) insecure
 - (ii) likely to become detached

14. Other environmental items

Fluid leaks

It is a failure if the:

- Fluid is:
 - (i) leaking and/or likely to harm the environment or to pose a safety risk to other road users
 - (ii) leaking continuously and likely to pose a serious risk to road safety
- Below the minimum mark in any fluid level

No smoking/vaping sign

It is a failure if the:

- Sign is missing

15. Taxi meter

The meter should accurately record the time and distance covered. It should be set to charge at the Council's current tariff and this should be accurately reflected by way of charges. The meter should be sealed. Vehicles fitted with a meter will undergo a road test on a marked road.

It is a failure if the taxi meter is:

- Inoperative
- Over charging on a marked road
- Not set to the correct rate
- Not sealed

16. Road test

On the road test the vehicle will be checked for any unfamiliar noises e.g., crunching into gears while driving, whining gearbox, final drive or suspension knock. You must also check for control e.g., steering feels tight and responsive, brakes do not judder or pull to one side. Clutch does not slip on pulling away. The exhaust will also be checked for excessive smoke.

It is a failure if the vehicle has:

- Noises when changing gears / crunching or jumping out
- A gearbox with differential noise
- Suspension knocking
- Excessive steering free play
- Brakes that judder / pull to one side
- A slipping clutch
- Excessive exhaust smoke
- A gearbox that cannot select all gears

17. Roof Sign (Hackney Carriage)

It is a failure if:

- The hackney vehicle is not fitted with an illuminated roof sign of a size and design approved by NFDC Licensing Services.
- The front of the sign has does not have a white background and in black letters and is not a minimum of height of 62.5mm and a maximum of 75mm displaying the word 'TAXI'.

18. Private Hire Door Signage

It is a failure if:

- The vehicle is not fitted with the rear door signage specified in the policy and provided by the Licensing Authority, unless an exemption is in place.

Appendix Q – Relevant legislation and statutory guidance

In undertaking its licensing function, the Licensing Authority will have regard to the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Town Police Clauses Act 1847
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
- Transport Act 1985
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Health Act 2006 and subsequent amendments
- The Equality Act 2010 (amended by the Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Act 2022

- Data Protection Act 2018
- Immigration Act 2016
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendment) Order 2002
- Guidance on the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (March 2014)
- The Department for Transport “Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Best Practice Guidance” (March 2010)
- Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022
- Deregulation Act 2015
- Road Traffic Act 1988
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The Department for Transport -Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Standards, July 2020
- FTA Hackney carriage and private hire vehicles-National inspection standards-Best Practice Guide August 2012
- The Regulators Code 2014
- Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards-updated 2022

New Forest District Council
Licensing Services
Appletree Court
Beaulieu Road
Lyndhurst
SO43 7PA
Email: licensing@NFDC.gov.uk
Website: www.newforest.gov.uk

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Benchmark age NEW vehicles May 2024

APPENDIX 2

Basingstoke	BCP	Dorset	East Hants	Eastleigh	Havant	IOW
Newer than 3 years old	No more than 3.5 years with less than 50k mileage and euro 6	None	Less than 5 years old	Less than 7 years	Less than 5 years old. 8 years hybrid and electric	Less than 3 years old or 5 years if fully electric
Portsmouth	Reading	Rushmoor (draft policy)	Southampton	Test Valley	Wiltshire	Winchester
Less than 3 years old.	No H/C licensed if over 15 years from 2018. New H/C must be less than 8 years from registration. PHV less than 5 years	none	No diesel vehicle with an emissions standard of Euro 5 or lower	Less than 6 years old	H/C + PHV less than 5 years old	Petrol/diesel less than 5 years old. Hybrid/electric less than 8 years old

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APPENDIX 3

Benchmark other authorities-Existing fleet and renewals

Basingstoke	BCP	Dorset	East Hants	Eastleigh	Havant	IOW
Newer than 3 years old	Euro 6 or higher	None	Less than 5 years old	No vehicle lower than euro 5	Less than 5 years old. 8 years hybrid and electric	Less than 3 years old or 5 years if fully electric
Portsmouth	Reading	Rushmoor (draft policy)	Southampton	Test Valley	Wiltshire	Winchester
Less than 3 years old.	No vehicles over 20 years	none	Euro 6 and above	Doesn't specify	H/C + PHV less than 5 years old	Petrol/diesel less 12 years old. Hybrid/electric less than 15 years old

Southampton	BCP	Eastleigh	Test Valley	Wiltshire	Dorset	Reading
	5 years old or less	Over 12 no longer licensed	Up to 12 years	No restriction	None	Up to 15 years
Portsmouth	IOW	Fareham	Basingstoke	East Hants	Havant	Winchester
12 years	No restriction	5 years	Up to 12 years	none	Discretion of LO	12 years P&D 15 years Hybrid & Electric

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Comments

Age restrictions for new vehicles

This is a very contentious subject in the taxi and private hire industry, not just in the New Forest but all over the UK so please forgive me but I must make my points and feelings clear.

I need to firstly say that if you neglect your responsibility as our licensing authority by not listening to all stake holders and ploughing through you WILL put the finances of families at risk all over the New Forest which potentially will add increased pressure on the already stretched benefits system to bridge the gap financially as families will simply not be able to survive. This will also majorly effect peoples mental health through stress and worry and will certainly add increased pressures onto the health service when it can simply be avoided. Not all drivers in the New Forest are attached to a company who are supplying them with regular work, most drivers work for themselves and they go to work every single day in order to put food on the table for their families. If you insist on implementing this upper age limit all drivers and drivers families will suffer. Operators will inevitably have to change their vehicles once they become 10 years old and new vehicles are not cheap and so they will have to take out finance, this will suffocate individuals and businesses with extra costs. We are still in the middle of a cost of living crisis where we are all struggling as it is, let alone adding extra costs for vehicles and burdening families with extra costs is going to majorly effect people. Not all operators may even be able to get the finance for new vehicles and so you will be backing them into a corner and they will have to either come out of the industry due to the extra costs or you will force them into operating illegally in order for them to make any money, this obviously has untold effects both on the public and the driver involved. If we put ourselves in the shoes of new potential operators and drivers looking at being licensed in the New Forest, they will go elsewhere due to the tight restrictions in place and so NFDC will be limiting themselves from the potential extra income that comes from new drivers and operators. I note from the GP & L Committee meeting held on 8th March 2024 it was mentioned by the officers that the council need to try and get money back (this is going to be done through an increase in all fees). Surely if NFDC make this major change, new and existing drivers will go elsewhere. This will then mean NFDC will not be able to get as much money back as expected. Drivers and operators looking at coming into the taxi and private hire industry will get licensed with surrounding authorities for a variety of reasons in addition to the points above. If we look at Southampton City Council (SCC), they have a similar policy to the one proposed by yourselves but that's where the similarity's simply stop. Once you step into the SCC authority region there are many more pubs, bars, clubs, restaurants, hotels as well as an extremely large student population from both universities and colleges alike. There is also a European airport as well as 5 international cruise terminals which are all serviced by SCC licensed vehicles. All of these locations are within a circa 8 mile radius of the centre of Southampton and so they are very quick to get another job. Drivers and operators in Southampton therefore have more potential to make money compared to the New Forest area. In the New Forest there is a far bigger area and so a less concentrated amount of venues to service, as you can imagine this has a greater impact on how much money can be made in the New Forest in the same time as it would take in Southampton. Another note to take is that of 'cross border hiring'. In short this is where a driver and vehicle is licensed with one authority but works somewhere else. This is mainly used by certain 'app based' private hire companies. If I once again make note to the same appendix as before "Maintains a professional fleet for local customers and visitors to the area and raises standards". I know for a fact that many tourists as well as local people to the area use the same 'app based' private hire companies. This instantly overrides you're reasoning for this change in policy because drivers and their vehicles can work in the New Forest and so they will be servicing the same customers. Customers do not know and many don't even care where these vehicles are licensed. Many passengers just want to be picked up and taken to their destination and they don't care how they get there. All they worry about it the cost and reliability of the service, this can come from anyone.

If NFDC were to go ahead and introduce an age limit of 10 years we would obviously have to renew certain vehicles in our fleet. We would have to buy brand new vehicles so that we get the full 10 years on the road. We recently sold one of our minibuses for £7,000.00. If we use this as an example for renewing our fleet. The factual cash price to buy a brand new equivalent minibus would cost us £57,000.00. us, like many other operators don't have major cash reserves so we would need to finance the difference of £50,000.00. With cost of interest, this vehicle would then cost us £62,500.00. This is just over £1,000.00 per month over 60 months. This is an extra £1,000.00 on top of all other costs to drive this vehicle and the cost to live. This cost for us, as well as 95% of other people is just unreachable. If we look at an example for replacing a car. The cars that we have would sell for around £6,500.00. A brand new equivalent vehicle would cost us £30,000.00. With cost of finance this would rise to £40,000.00 which works out to be just over £650.00 per month over 60 months. Again, this is on top of the existing costs to operate. We also operate many executive vehicles and so they warrant a higher cost to buy. If we were to sell one of our executive saloon cars we would get around £20,000.00. To buy a like-for-like replacement it would cost at least £120,000.00. After finance this would rise to £140,000.00 which works out to be a staggering £2,329.83 every month. Many operators do not make this as profit at the moment so it is guaranteed that they would be put out of work due to not being able to afford a new vehicle. I can only speak for ourselves but we do not keep running vehicles until the end of their lives, us like many other operators and drivers change vehicles periodically not only because of their age and general condition but if you were to imagine driving your personal vehicle for 10 hours a day I'm sure you would soon get bored of the same car. Taxi and private hire drivers are just the same, as soon as it becomes affordable and all external factors such as interest rates, vehicle prices etc. allow we change our vehicles. We should not be forced to change a vehicle because NFDC believe it doesn't look professional, this is not a good enough reason to put drivers out of work and cause hardship to families as well as ruining peoples futures. Many vehicles after 12 years old still look modern as long as they are being well kept and these vehicles are typically able to do higher mileages. Many vehicle manufacturers keep to the same design for many years.

I would like to bring a few manufacturers to your attention. Firstly, Mercedes-Benz make the Vito. This is a well-known and highly used vehicle in the taxi and private hire industry up and down the country. The current Vito shape has been around since 2015 and is still for sale brand new today in the same shape. This shape has been around for the past 9 years and I'm sure it will continue to be sold. Secondly, Renault make the Trafic. This is also a highly used vehicle in the industry. The current shape has been in service since 2014 and apart from the addition of LED headlights on certain specifications the vehicle remains unchanged, especially inside the vehicle where nothing has changed from 2014 to the current day. Lastly, Toyota make the Prius. The current shape vehicle has been around since 2009. That's a whopping 15 years on the same shape. I hope you can see from the points above that vehicle manufacturers rarely change vehicle shapes, they keep the same shape vehicle because they are tried and tested and they are accepted well by users. As mentioned, many of these vehicles look the same regardless of age but would instantly be un-licensable if NFDC were to introduce an upper age limit. If I were to have a 2015 Mercedes Vito I would have to sell that and buy the exact same looking vehicle for no other reason than age. If I may quote an extract from your proposed policy "Maintains a professional fleet for local customers and visitors to the area and raises standards" as I have mentioned potentially vehicles from 2015 will still look 'professional' as they still look the same as the current model. Unfortunately I am unable to add images to our response but I urge you to look at these vehicles mentioned and look at the 2024 shape and the year mentioned with each vehicle. I feel this is an oversight from NFDC and this point needs to be seriously considered as these points made will make a major change to the proposed licensing policy.

In comparison, all vehicles first registered after 1st September 2015 are certified as having a euro 6 diesel engine. So when you state "after 1 January 2026 only those vehicles less than ten (10) years old will be renewed" this means that some euro 6 vehicles will be barred from being renewed although they still have clean engines. Transport For London (TFL) demand all vehicles driving into greater London (Not central London and the congestion charging zone) be either euro 6 diesel or euro 5 petrol and above. Subsequently these same vehicles can drive into greater London free of charge, if this is good enough for TFL who look after all transport provisions in the most populated city in the UK and one of the most populated cities in the world why isn't this good enough for NFDC. I know for a fact TFL were offering a cash incentive up to a maximum of £7,500.00 for hackney carriage drivers to give up their older diesel taxis in order for them to acquire a new electric taxi. I know NFDC cannot do the same but one thing you can do as our licensing authority is not pursue an age limit so that we are afforded more time to make more money with our vehicles. I can only speak for ourselves but we only operate euro 6 vehicles, every year we put these in for test with VOSA and they pass both the mechanical check and the emissions test. I note from your proposal the following extract "assists our clean air strategy (currently in development)" I have a couple of issues with that reasoning, firstly I note you say "currently in development". Firstly, from this statement you haven't actually got a clean air strategy/policy so why are you including this as a reason for change in the policy. My second issue is that all vehicles used on UK roads are subject to the same emissions tests as set out by VOSA. Anyone can drive to the New Forest in a highly polluting vehicle and add to the pollution, whereas if you implement this policy taxi and private hire drivers will be stopped from driving their licensed vehicles on the same roads in the New Forest when they are contributing less emissions than other road users. Something that NFDC could look at is rather than implementing an upper age limit why not introduce an engine euro rating? Eastleigh Borough Council already have a stipulation in their licensing policy where all vehicles must have a minimum of a euro 5 diesel engine. Is this something NFDC could introduce instead? This will mean all vehicles licensed by NFDC will be a minimum of a 2015 (65) plate and will have the cleanest engine available.

I have done some extra research with regards to age limits with other local authorities and the findings are interesting. Over half of the local authorities I researched do not have an upper age limit, surely this must mean something to you. I also know some other authorities around the country are looking at actually removing the upper age limit in their policies, surely this shows you that they are considering peoples futures and keeping a reliable and cost effective taxi and private hire service in their regions.

I would like to quote an extract from the government website on the best practice guide for Taxi and private hire licensing as follows. Vehicle age limits 8.28 The frequency of testing required (see 'frequency of vehicle tests' above) to ensure the ongoing safety of vehicles is a separate issue to the setting of maximum age limits at first licensing, or maximum age limits beyond which an authority will not licence a vehicle. The setting of an arbitrary age limit may be inappropriate and counterproductive and result in higher costs to the trade and ultimately passengers. For example, a maximum age for first licensing may have adverse unintended consequences; a five-year-old used electric vehicle will produce less emissions than a new Euro 6 diesel or petrol fuel car – enabling the trade to make use of previously owned vehicles will assist it to transition more rapidly to zero emission vehicles and improve air quality. 8.29 Licensing authorities should not impose age limits for the licensing of vehicles but should consider more targeted requirements to meet its policy objectives on emissions, safety rating and increasing wheelchair accessible provision where this is low.

In short, we wholly disagree with the upper age limit of 10 years. Instead, we would encourage NFDC to pursue the emissions rating of vehicles rather than age.

All petrol or diesel vehicles must be less than five (5) years from the date of first registration, at the time of initial licensing.
 We understand the rationale behind this new condition and welcome efforts to ensure that there are more electric vehicles on the road and in maintaining a high standard in the condition of vehicles
 In our recent driver forum, this age limit was raised as a concern by many of our drivers. Over 75% of our licensed drivers in New Forest have vehicles over the age of five years and this condition may place a financial burden on drivers who are not able to afford a new vehicle. In addition, the average age of a vehicle in the UK according to the DfT is 9.1 years. Therefore this new condition may deter new PHV drivers from entering the market. During our driver forum, drivers also expressed concerns that this age limit would impact the availability of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles in New Forest. We agree with the proposals to test the condition and standards of vehicles every six months as an alternative but also recommend further engaging with operators and drivers on a range of options to ensure that there is a balance between maintaining the condition of vehicles and the burdens placed upon drivers.

Age of vehicle should not matter providing it is in good condition and passes inspection. If the policy change goes ahead I will need to buy a new vehicle sooner than planned which may prevent me continuing to hold a private hire licence.
 The age limits will mean that it will be harder for new drivers to register .

Please think about drivers situation as some of the draft policies will make drivers to buy new car. And most of them can't afford!
 Some vehicles are very old and outdated. New forest district council should make changes of newer vehicles for drivers .
 It's Good that vehicle policy is changing as some of the cars were very old.
 Vehicle age should not be very old.
 My vehicle is 9 years old and it's as good as new. Every 6 months test feels like just making more money for the council and wasting drives time. Life is already tough enough with the cost of living and inflation.
 Vehicle can be same standards as Southampton.nfdc registered vehicles seems to ne more older vehicles then Southampton so vehicle age limit would be good.lots of southampton registered drivers complaining that when vehicle is too old to plate in southampton,drivers going to new forest to get plated and working in southampton and most living in southampton. Also cctv should be compulsory
 I strongly object to the proposed implementation of the new licensed vehicle age limits. Five years at first presentation is reasonable but for those of us operating vehicles older than 8 years, the six monthly test is sufficient and provides adequate opportunity to ensure safety and cleanliness standards.
 The thing that i really cannot agree with is the maximum 10 year age of any vehicle from 2026. This will put owners like myself out of business overnight as I cannot afford to replace my vehicle and moreover should not be expected to, providing that it continues to operate within the rules set down by both yourselves and DVLA.
 The current cost of living crises has no signs of improving in the foreseeable future. This means that not only do we drivers struggle to survive day by day due to increased costs for business running and personal finances, it also means that there are much reduced customer numbers so its lose lose all around. To be expected to provide a newer vehicle at this time/period is completely out of reach.
 I implore you NOT to implement this new rule at this time. Vehicle standards on the current rules are perfectly sufficient, and MOT tests ensure pollution from vehicles is kept to safe levels.
 Firstly, the economic impact on taxi drivers should taken by the NFDC into account. Many drivers have invested in their vehicles and may face financial strain if NFDC renew only less than ten years old vehicles after 1st January 2026
 Additionally, above ten years older vehicles (especially Euro 6 cars) can be well-maintained and meet safety standards through regular inspections.
 Moreover, the environmental aspect should considered by the NFDC. By allowing well-maintained vehicles beyond the 10-year limit, we contribute to sustainability by reducing unnecessary waste and the environmental impact of manufacturing new cars.
 I am a private hire driver, please consider the maximum age from 10 to bit longer as drivers are already struggling to make ends meet, and cars under 5 years old cost a fortune to buy please consider cars with newer engines like Euro 6 instead of the age requirement because brand new cars have the same Euro 6 engine's and these engines start from 2015 if you consider the engine over age driver can buy good cars on newer technology engines instead they go for high mileage under 5 years old cars as the market is really high for under 5 years old car's and also PHV vehicles do not need door stickers,PHV vehicles already have front window stickers and license plates at the back please reconside as the vehicle's will look ugly, Thanks.
 Age limit and door stickers is unreasonable.
 As you are going change age limit 05 years and continue driving with PHVP 10 years.
 You can do whatever you like to change but honestly I'm not able to buy a vehicle.
 Then I have option to work with my local council's because I have plenty of options work with any Operator on their car without investing a single penny
 I start working with you after clearing all your process because your Vehicle policy affordable.
 Vehicles Age. Concerned to read about the 10 year old limit from 2026. This will be detrimental to the home to school specialist operators, many of whom operate slightly older vehicles but relatively low mileage, often with quality wheelchair accessibility. Many of the best home to school operators only carry out home to school work and there is already an nationwide shortage. Consideration should be given to exemption arrangements or perhaps a restricted licence with relaxed age criteria but only for home to school transport. Otherwise these specialist companies may be forced out of the industry.
 I'm NFDC driver. Under 5 year old car will be very tough for most of the drivers as prices are too high. If condition of vehicle is your concern you can do minimum euro 6 cars as requirement.
 Also I think front windscreen sticker and taxi plate is enough. Mostly private hire doesn't have stickers on sides or roof signs. Its ok for hackney plated cars but not good for private hire because private hire customer make advance booking and 99% they know from operators that which car is coming to pick them up with car details and reg. so I think stickers on sides will look ugly and most of PH drivers won't like it.
 No vehicles older than 5 years.
 I strongly disagree with this proposed policy. It will lead to fewer and more expensive taxis in the New Forest.
 Being part of the trade in Fareham we have no age limit on WAV taxis ,HC or PHV I'm in but all vehicles are euro 6 complaint and that I believe should be the way forward
 Removing a vehicle that is fully functional meets Euro 6 standards and is receiving a good MOT and engineers report is ludicrous and an expense for a taxi driver that sometimes will not be able to make that purchase
 There aren't a great deal of taxi companies within the area and the 5 year requirement would impose such a strain on them that I believe that they could be put in a position where, due to the cost of new vehicles, they could go to the wall.
 Other than being able to crow about " cleaner air", which can be argued against in the overall situation, what would be the advantage of new vehicles to those of any age that are regularly serviced and well looked after.
 Although buying a vehicle That's no more than five years old, is in the current climate, more expensive than one up to 8 years old. Then have to pull it off of the license when it becomes 10 years old even if it's in perfect condition is unaffordable for many of us that are barely hanging onto a business since Covid.
 The decision to restrict the age of vehicles rather than on the Euro class is supported. This enables a clearer understanding of the Policy requirements and ensures regular improvements to the fleet. The current Euro 6 standard was introduced in 2015 (9 years ago) which would currently align with the policy proposals however with Euro 7 possibly coming into force in 2025 / 26, it is likely a Euro standard fleet requirement could be out of date within 18months. It is noted the Policy does not apply to the current fleet until 2026, when only 10yr old or younger cars will be able to be relicensed. All newly licensed vehicles will have a requirement of being less than 5 years old for petrol and diesel vehicles - this approach is agreed.
 The Policy on vehicle restrictions in terms of age or Euro class falls in line with many Local Authorities, including neighbouring and regional authorities. The majority of Local Authorities who adopt this type of Policy do so to align with their commitments to improve local air quality and address climate change.
 This Policy is agreed and welcomed.
 As with all Licencing authorities and how businesses work . It's easy enough for an operator to register in a different area . When an operator looks to register in an area they take into account many things including age of the vehicle and livery requirements .
 Age of vehicles :- restricting the use of petrol/diesel vehicles to five years or less from 2026 seems to be an attack on the working class so that a few councillors can 'virtual signal' unless of course the long term plan is to restrict all vehicles over five years from the Nfdc area. I oppose this plan in the strongest way
 Sensible age limits - higher age limits for hybrids.
 You need to consider the ground reality that's average private hire driver's working with you just because their own Local Council's not Licencing more than 05 years vehicle
 Remove the part about taxis needing to be less than five years old.
 Consider the unintended consequences of this policy.

I understand the wish to have all newer vehicles on the road , but the cost of purchasing vehicles have soared enormously .

In 2019 I purchased new Mercedes E Class for £37,000 today to purchase the same vehicle it costs £62,000. The costs of second hand cars have consequently hit the roof. To purchase a 2020 E Class today would cost £30-37,000. The residual when the car has fulfilled its licensed life then becomes considerably as traders do not like cars that have been licensed so are marked down accordingly. Changing the policy from 8 to 5 years seems to penalise the operator , this could stop prospective new operators and the existing operators as to the viability /profitability of Running a licensed company.

We need to look at the overall picture for electric vehicles. The NFDC promoting electric vehicles for CO2 lower emissions is short termism. Look at the wider picture , when the valuable minerals used for the batteries, the need for polluting power stations providing the electric, the extra cost to purchase the vehicle, the massive lack of charging infrastructure, the disappointing mileage per full charge and the lack of recycling of lithium batteries. Short term CO2 reduction isn't necessarily looking at the bigger picture for the long term , when all the cars are electric , the mineral resources are low, the forest car parks will have to have electric charging points, the fire hazards that all entail and finally the batteries that will be dumped in the forest because the charges to dispose of them will be too high, Is this the future of New Forest ?

Why is there no mention of alternative fuel cars like BIO Deisel, HVO and Hydrogen, where do they stand in you plans, will they have the same benefits as the Hybrids and electric cars?

newly formed NFDC Taxi operator and Driver association There is also a cost factor involved newer cars are in the region of £26,000 upwards now minibuses are currently around the £50,000 mark second hand vehicles are at an all-time high also so the investment operators are putting in does not warrant if there are time scales introduced so that in 10 years, they are expected to replace this is just not good for operators or drivers across the board. Many finance agreements are over 5- 6 years this leaves 4 years to make a profit from the vehicle. It is also our fear that this may increase the number of non-licensed vehicles operating in the area due to operators and drivers not being able to meet the costs and just closing business.

We would like to quote the gov.uk best practice guide for Taxi and private hire licensing as follows. Vehicle age limits 8.28 The frequency of testing required (see 'frequency of vehicle tests' above) to ensure the ongoing safety of vehicles is a separate issue to the setting of maximum age limits at first licensing, or maximum age limits beyond which an authority will not licence a vehicle. The setting of an arbitrary age limit may be inappropriate and counterproductive and result in higher costs to the trade and ultimately passengers. For example, a maximum age for first licensing may have adverse unintended consequences; a five-year-old used electric vehicle will produce less emissions than a new Euro 6 diesel or petrol fuel car – enabling the trade to make use of previously owned vehicles will assist it to transition more rapidly to zero emission vehicles and improve air quality.

8.29 Licensing authorities should not impose age limits for the licensing of vehicles but should consider more targeted requirements to meet its policy objectives on emissions, safety rating and increasing wheelchair accessible provision where this is low. We also note that this policy change rests on NFDC clean air strategy which is in fact not written yet but in development so there is no evidence for these changes to be implemented. Furthermore, there is insufficient infrastructure available in the New Forest area to support the uptake of electric vehicles and not to our knowledge a grant available to assist with the high prices of purchasing electric cars. Main government have already pushed the electric vehicle date forward as they are aware that the dates are not fit for purpose or achievable.

We suggest no age limit for first test or a renewal timescale of 10 years for vehicles. If a vehicle passes yearly mot test and is deemed fit by DVLA and the NFDC vehicle test they are fit to be operated as a taxi or private hire vehicle in the New Forest, there is no necessity to burden us as a trade with these extra unnecessary costs. I do hope that our objections are given serious consideration as we see these as a great threat to our livelihoods and detrimental to our future in the trade. For reference licensing councils local to NFDC policies on age limits as follows. Eastleigh – No Max, East Hampshire- No Max, Gosport- No Max, Wiltshire- No Max, Winchester- 12 year Max, Bournemouth- No max, Test Valley- 12 year Max, IOW- NO Max.

These objections are a joint objection from the NFDC Taxi driver and Operator association we represent in excess of 100 drivers and operators and hold a substantial amount of NFDC Taxi and Private hire plates. The two points we are objecting to have serious detrimental effects on our operations and our livelihoods and if put in place will naturally put possibly us and other operators out of business the current trade and financial climate does not allow for us to replace vehicles in these time periods it is just not realistic. We do hope our voice and our objections are considered. As this is a genuine concern for us and our businesses.

Age restriction for existing fleet

The policy regarding age of vehicles is wholly unsustainable. Drivers cannot afford to upgrade cars every few years. This is especially true for hybrid vehicles. One of the primary reasons this vehicle change is being pushed is because of neighbouring councils putting restrictions on NFDC vehicles. Can the council confirm that NFDC licensed vehicles will be able to freely use Bus gates/lanes in neighbouring council (like Southampton) that has made it difficult for our trade and undermined our services?

Will the council provide grants for the purpose of upgrading vehicles to get in line with these new regulations?

Currently the taxi fleet does not have age restrictions on the vehicles. This can result in an ageing fleet, particularly with the preference for the use of diesel vehicles which are the most polluting vehicle type in terms of tailpipe emissions when comparing different fuel type vehicles of the same age. Recent air quality assessments for the New Forest advises the main source of NOx pollution is from vehicle emissions, and for particulate matter vehicle emissions are the third highest source of pollution.

Improvements in vehicle technologies - cleaner engines, stop / start technologies has shown monitored decreases in NOx pollution across the country and within the New Forest district, including Lyndhurst, which combined with other factors resulted in the revocation of an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The AQMA was originally designated due to the exceedances of the nitrogen dioxide air quality objective, with the main source being determined as vehicle emissions. Such improvements in vehicle technologies continue over time and are not restricted to updates to the Euro class specifications. Therefore by gradually reducing the age of the fleet, this will improve local air quality for our communities.

the removal of vehicles from the license after ten years is in itself environmentally unfriendly as the vehicle itself may be more than fit for purpose and you are just scrapping a vehicle for no good reason. continue with twice yearly testing should insure the vehicles make standard of rif needs be introduce the option of the third test more often.

it is also unclear if current vehicles that will become over ten years old after the 1st january 2026 would need to be withdrawn from service? the appendix states no change to the currently fleet! surely this should mean that the ten year maximum should apply to vehicles registered after 1st january 2026.

also with the ever increasing cost of second hand vehicles, and many single car operators being unable to afford changing vehicle more often than needs. this is more than likely to force some of them out of business.

I don't think taxi drivers should have to upgrade their vehicle at enormous cost to themselves.

Your draconian measure not to renew licences for cars over 10 years old from 1.1.26 will be a death knell for some small firms.

I am sure that a cost analysis has been undertaken, but did it factor in the economic effects on the local area.

The effect the change will mean that cars will have to be replaced every 10 years regardless of condition. This presumably unintended consequence will close down firms and cause unemployment.

The rationale behind the change is hypocritical. As long as the car passes the inspections all the criteria are being met regardless of it's age

I do not agree with the age restriction of a taxi being limited to 10 years. So long as the 6mthly tests are carried out and the vehicle passes there should be no need to limit the taxi to an age of 10 years this is not a free n policy

This is a poorly thought out policy if it leads to fewer available taxis in the New Forest.

ULEZ compliant vehicles can date from 2015 meaning older cars can be used without worries of pollution provided they are maintained.

Vehicle age and emissions - from 2026 vehicles can keep going for 10 years, of any engine type – could this be more ambitious e.g. 8 years?

Implications for WAVs (Wheelchair accessible vehicles)

Introducing age restrictions on vehicles operating in NFDC would have no benefit to the residents of NFDC, especially those residents who require wheelchair access

It's very important that the dft consultation is applied and used . There is no age limit imposed on cars . The new forest is a large rural area with a very small ammount of public electric chargers how much infrastructure including charging points will be made available at taxi ranks . Would chargers be installed at taxi ranks ?

By imposing age limits on the vehicles of 10 years is handy however the current air quality regulations may not change and plenty of good vehicles that would still meet current legislation would ne removed from

The fleet. . WAVs are extremely expensive . New forest has an exceptionally large amount of " voluntary wheel chairs accessible hackneys , and phv " owing to the lack of age limits These vehicles would need to be replaced, it's highly unlikely they will be replaced with equivalent vehicles . Lots of operators do school transport and the requirement to replace cars at 10 years would mean an increase of costs to Hampshire council .

If I understand this correctly in order for me to continue operating a NFDC hackney registered vehicle, I would not only have to replace my current vehicle but replace it with a DISABLED ACCESS vehicle less than 5 years old??

This would cost in excess of £40,000!! Does anyone at NFDC licencing have any idea of the impact this will have on the taxi fleet in the new forest??

I would estimate that you would loose 70 - 80% of operating taxi's I would not consider continuing and have spoken to many other drivers who feel the same.

Do you think I make anywhere near enough to even consider buying a new vehicle? Cost of fuel, dead mileage, insurance costs increased by 50% this year, lowest fare rate in the country and the lack of support provided by NFDC licencing??????????????

I am writing regarding proposed changes to taxi licencing laws at NFDC, a draft policy is out at the moment detailing worrying changes to the existing regulations required to operate a hackney or private hire vehicle in NFDC. At present a taxi operator can have a suitable vehicle which in addition to a regular MOT test has a NFDC inspection, if the vehicle is over 3 years old then two annual inspections are required (three annual inspections) no age restriction is currently in place. As licencing laws stand at present and in order to own and operate a hackney taxi at NFDC it must be wheelchair accessible, (unless on a historic plate), therefore if the proposed changes take effect then I would have to acquire a disabled adapted vehicle, less than 5 years old.

I currently operate a London taxi, built to be a taxi and wheelchair accessible, it is maintained to the highest order and is visually pleasing to many in the New Forest.

To follow these new guidelines as set out by NFDC I would have to invest £40k at least for a suitable replacement vehicle. Many other small operators are exactly the same, ironically the small operators are the only ones currently operating wheelchair access vehicles, many of the larger firms don't have a suitable vehicle on their fleet.

I have only been in business for a few years and there is no way I could justify outlaying that kind of money to keep up with proposed changes, it will wipe out 75% of the taxis currently operating in Ringwood, especially with the ever increasing cost of fuel.

I think that NFDC are mimicking neighbouring BCP council who have already implemented a similar change, this is grossly unfair as at NFDC we have, by geographical nature, massive dead milage as well as the lowest fair structure in the country and totally unsuited to operating a fully electric vehicle as implemented in the proposed change.

The Hampshire County Council School Transport Service has concerns regarding a lack of dispensation to the age of wheelchair accessible vehicles under the proposed changes to the Taxi Policy. Increasing the restrictions on age for wheelchair accessible vehicles, as is proposed under these changes, is therefore likely to increase the cost to school transport and in the medium term also reduce availability. We would therefore like to request that a dispensation is considered for wheelchair accessible vehicles, in line with other licensing authorities. Useful examples can be found in the policies of Eastleigh Borough Council, Southampton City Council, East Hampshire District Council and Fareham Borough Council.

My company is New Forest Travel. I am really concerned by this change as we have 5 Minibus's licenced by NFDC and are currently in contract with Hampshire County Council for School transport for 4 years. We carry children in Wheelchairs. This new change would take out my entire fleet and also make 3 drivers redundant. This is a worry. To replace all vehicles we are looking at over £300,000. Our mileage is relatively low compared to normal taxis as they are only used for school contracts. Is there a way that Minibus's could be exempt from this.

WAVs are extremely expensive. New forest has an exceptionally large amount of "voluntary wheel chairs accessible hackneys", and phv "owing to the lack of age limits These vehicles would need to be replaced, it's highly unlikely they will be replaced with equivalent vehicles. Lots of operators do school transport and the requirement to replace cars at 10 years would mean an increase of costs to Hampshire council.

Interim vehicle testing

I believe Hybrid Vehicles should be tested twice a year only if they are 7 or more years old. (Not 5 years as described in vehicle licensing section)

I further write to disagree about another proposed change in the vehicle regulations, this time not about costings.

It seems discriminatory against diesel and petrol vehicles over hybrid and electric in age and **testing**, of which it seems critical detail has been overlooked!

In what world are electric cars any less problematic than diesel or petrol? Electric or hybrid's are much more expensive to buy, much heavier in weight meaning more tyre wear, hybrid's less efficient on motorways, potentially harder on suspension and ball joints and other mechanical parts. Becoming more expensive to insure, difficult to be recovered on break downs.

Harder wearing on brakes due to excessive weight.

They will also corrode in the same way as diesel or petrol vehicles as well.

Also I suggest a potential risk in your workplace.

Another oversight by yourselves and indeed Government is 75% of the population do not have off road parking for charging if forced the EV route.

Oppose test every 6 months vehicle over 5 years not cost effective.

Oppose this that petrol diesel cars 5 years old this is, financially unviable.

Cost of new vehicles start £26,000 last at least 6 to 5 years so would take at least 4 years to be in any profit.

We oppose this point for many reasons. Firstly, New Forest District Council already struggle with the current pressures where vehicles over 8 years old are tested twice a year. I phoned up on the 27th February for a vehicle test date and the next available test was the 13th March. This will only get worse if vehicles over 5 years old are being tested twice a year. We believe the current 8 year provision is sufficient enough to maintain a high level of vehicle standards.

We can only speak for ourselves, but our vehicles are inspected multiple times during the year as it is already. For our vehicles under 8 years old they are tested by VOSA once a year, they are then inspected by yourselves (NFDC) once a year, we then service all vehicles every year or at 10,000 miles (whichever is first) and during the service they are inspected again. All of our vehicles inevitably require general maintenance during the year so every time they are bought in for work they are inspected again. These inspections are not just mechanical but we like to think they are similar to the NFDC test so as well as the mechanical side, the condition of the inside of the vehicle is inspected to make sure it is a fit and proper state for carrying passengers, we do this to catch potential issues early and if they need rectifying we do that immediately. Obviously for our vehicles over 8 years old they are subject to another test from yourselves.

To reduce this to 5 years seems ludicrous and from the outside looking in it could be seen as a money making scheme for the council, especially in light of the proposed increase in test fees.

Twice yearly testing of vehicles - this is better than the current 8 years but our understanding is that neighbouring authorities say 3 years. Could this be more ambitious?

Due to the extra checks on the 5 year and above vehicles the appointments will take so much longer to arrange. I am sure the proportion of vehicle this age in the forest having to have an extra test will have an impact on administration and vehicle test time, will there be extra staff and space at testing centres to accommodate the surge?

Life of a Taxi. 5 years for petrol and diesels, 7 years for hybrids. No restrictions for E.V.'s. (Surely E.V.'s wear at same rate as other vehicles.) This depends on make, quality and maintenance of the vehicles. With New Forest having its own testing centre, many older vehicles are in good condition, surely they are able to advise if vehicle is fit for purpose. Double testing for vehicles over 8 years.

Dear NFDC Licensing I write to you as chairman of and on behalf of the newly formed NFDC Taxi operator and Driver association with regards to the Key changes to New Forest taxi policy 2024. We have read through the alterations proposed and, in most parts, agree that they are for the good of the trade and support them. We do object to two points as follows and would like them to be seriously re considered they are as follows.

Vehicles that are 5 years or older from the date of first registration must undertake an additional test six months after the license grant date. We oppose this proposal on the grounds that we as operators struggle to get tests when we require them with often two or three-week lead time. Reducing this date would make there a necessity for more vehicle testing thus further problems obtaining testing. Also, modern cars are much better built than in the past with some manufacturers even giving a 10-year warranty although taxis do higher mileage than average cars the product is much more reliable, and we feel the current 8-year timescale for 6 monthly testing is sufficient at present and should be kept in place. There is furthermore an impact on costs involved in a market with already tight profit margins and unbelievable amounts of competition a further cost at 5 years rather than as present 8 years would be detrimental to our businesses. Appendix F 2.3 All petrol or Diesel vehicles must be less than five years from the date of first registration, at the time of initial licensing.

All Hybrid vehicles must be less than seven years from the date of first registration, at the time of initial licensing. No change for current fleet, but after 1 January 2026 only those vehicles less than ten years old will be renewed. The age policy does not apply to fully electric cars. We oppose this policy change that all petrol or diesel vehicles must be less than five years from the date of first registration at the time of initial licence and the policy to introduce a 10 year life span for Taxis on the grounds that all petrol or diesel vehicles have such stringent emission levels and on mot tests it currently states emissions not recorded on a (2016 1.6 Seat Toledo TDI car) as an example, they are free to travel in London's clean air zones and most are zero or very low road tax so there is little evidence to show they are contributing largely to any excess emissions.

The legal requirement is that private hire vehicles which are at least three years old, and all taxis, must be subject to an MOT test or its equivalent at least once a year. Local authorities may obtain a designation from the Secretary of State for Transport to issue 'Certificates of Compliance'. The requirements of the test normally include those in an MOT test but may also include another inspection by a licensing officer to ensure the vehicle meets the relevant local requirements for issuing a taxi or private hire vehicle licence e.g. cleanliness of the vehicle inside and outside, correct plates displayed etc.

An annual test for licenced vehicles of whatever age (including vehicles that are less than three years old) seems appropriate in most cases, unless local conditions suggest that more frequent tests are necessary. More frequent tests may be appropriate for older vehicles which may be more prone to mechanical defects (see Vehicle age limits or for vehicles owned by proprietors that persistently present vehicles that do not meet the standards required by the authority

Private Hire door signage

I have executive car I spend 30,000 on it we have nfcd taxi vehicle plate as a identity so why we need sticker on the door.it doesn't look nice on car in london they are reducing the the plate and sticker and our areas putting more stickers on car.

<p>I am NFDC driver. I am not happy with vehicle signage and windows tinted. We work with executive. Our cars are expensive. We won't like to put signage or remove tinted windows No where in England private hire vehicles has these restrictions. If this will go ahead a lot of drivers will go to other councils. Door stickers.i am against the door stickers. Being a NEWFOREST DRIVER FOR over 5 years I never had any issue with customer about door stickers. The inside badge and back plate is more than enough. I do not agree with door sticker and would like to request not to implement this policy. Door sticker removal The dft consultation made no mention of a Licencing authorities name on the door of a vehicle (this is something that Southampton Licencing have wanted for a long time . All the drivers and companies know that you're bowing to their wishes) door stickers indicate the car is available to be hired . And That invites the public to approach the vehicle and find out the booking details and could lead to uninsured bookings occurring . Without door signage only the person ordering the vehicle will be aware of its status and no attempt would be made any member of the public to enquire how to order it. Hackney carriages should be identifiable as being able to be hired immediately. The lights indicate this. . The stickers on a phv also indicate it can be hired , by asking the driver who his operator is Operators must identify the vehicles by giving a registration number to the passenger . No other identification needs to be on the vehicle . The registration is enough . Any extra identification just indicates it is " possible to hire this vehicle" and invites the public to ask how.</p>
<p>The dft consultation made no mention of a Licencing authorities name on the door of a vehicle (this is something that Southampton Licencing have wanted for a long time . All the drivers and companies know that you're bowing to their wishes) door stickers indicate the car is available to be hired . And That invites the public to approach the vehicle and find out the booking details and could lead to uninsured bookings occurring . Without door signage only the person ordering the vehicle will be aware of its status and no attempt would be made any member of the public to enquire how to order it. Hackney carriages should be identifiable as being able to be hired immediately. The lights indicate this. . The stickers on a phv also indicate it can be hired , by asking the driver who his operator is Operators must identify the vehicles by giving a registration number to the passenger . No other identification needs to be on the vehicle . The registration is enough . Any extra identification just indicates it is " possible to hire this vehicle" and invites the public to ask how</p>
<p>I believe in all councils signage is to promote or to proof the licensed operator of the that council. If I am working for Uber and I work in zone system where I can work in any city, Then I do not think I should have sign on the car. If I work in New Forest area with a Local operator then yes I should have signage with operator name and phone number to make bookings. But If I am on app based operator then I should be exempt from the signage. I HOPE COUNCIL WILL ALLOW EXEMPTION FOR APP BASE PHV DRIVERS. I Have Mercedes E Class 68 plate this is executive cars.sorry we don't want any stickers on our cars. But please don't make it compulsory to put signage and remove windows tinted As a Private Hire Driver with New Forest District Council I don't agree to put additional signage to be placed on the rear doors of the vehicle. I request the council not to implement this rule for Private Hire Vehicles. Only external plate and internal plate issued by the council is enough. Please consider my request. Door sticker:New Forest District Council, which licenses taxis in the area, understands the value of its taxi drivers. Many drivers work part-time to supplement their income, and come from diverse backgrounds. Currently, New Forest permits drivers to work with multiple operators without requiring door stickers. Implementing mandatory door stickers could create difficulties for these drivers, as it might limit their flexibility. Therefore, I strongly recommend against implementing mandatory door stickers for private hire vehicles in the New Forest district council . Vehicles are hard to identify as they don't have door stickers and only plate on the back.also in Southampton ph Vehicles are not allowed to be white colour so it's also confusing when white car comes outside house and have no door stickers.maybe have same rule as Southampton like no white cars as ph and have door stickers As a Private Hire Vehicle Driver with NFDC, I don't agree to put additional signage to be placed on the rear doors of the vehicles. It is to be requested that please don't implement this rule on Private Hire vehicles. Only external and internal plates issued by council is enough. There are some companies as well who had clients they prefer signage free vehicles. It might effect there business as well. Hope for the positive response, Ultimately, it's a cost for private hire drivers who want to change their vehicle or the firm they work for, as the stickers can damage paintwork when removed. No need of signage As a Private Hire Vehicle Driver with NFDC, I don't agree to put additional signage to be placed on the rear doors of the vehicles. It is to be requested that please don't implement this rule on Private Hire vehicles. Only external and internal plates issued by council is enough. There are some companies as well who had clients they prefer signage free vehicles. It might effect there business as well. As experienced driver, i believe that permanent stickers should be avoided for the following reasons: **Safety Concerns**: When it comes to private hire vehicles, the safety and well-being of our customers must always remain our top priority. With the majority of the public unaware of the distinction between private hire and hackney taxis, there is a risk that passengers will hail any vehicle displaying these stickers, potentially leading to drivers taking advantage of the situation. Simply relying on stickers on doors will cause customers to overlook essential details like the driver's photo and registration number, potentially putting their safety at risk. When a customer books a private hire vehicle, they receive the driver's name, registration number, vehicle color, body type, and the driver's private hire number for identification. Therefore, the permanent door stickers are deemed useless and unnecessary. As an experienced private hire driver, I believe that stickers on the doors do more harm than good. **Confusion with Taxis**: It's important to distinguish between private hire vehicles and public taxis clearly. Requiring private hire cars to have permanent stickers similar to taxis will create confusion among the public. This confusion will lead individuals to mistake any vehicle with council stickers for a taxi, inadvertently compromising their safety. Maintaining this distinction is essential to ensure a clear and safe transportation environment. **Driver Experience**: Introducing permanent stickers on the doors of private hire vehicles will pose significant challenges for drivers. Just imagine situations where customers mistakenly enter the wrong vehicle, causing inconvenience and potential safety risks. This will create major difficulties for drivers, especially for the majority of New Forest drivers who work for Uber. Given Uber's popularity for night out, many rides are requested from popular nightlife spots in busy areas. These Serious safety concern that must be considered. **Financial Impact** The implementation of permanent stickers on private hire vehicles by the New Forest Council might not directly benefit the drivers financially, but it could inadvertently impact the Council itself. This is because some drivers may choose to prioritize obtaining the Southampton private hire badge over the New Forest sticker. Many drivers in New Forest also hold the Southampton badge, and they will lean towards using it more if the option of utilizing bus lanes in Southampton becomes more attractive to them. This shift in preference will lead to a potential decrease in revenue for the New Forest Council as drivers opt to operate under the Southampton badge to enjoy the additional benefits it offers. On the other hand, Southampton City Council might experience a financial advantage from this situation, seeing an increase in revenue from licensing fees and more drivers choosing to operate under their authority due to the appeal of using bus lanes. It's important for the New Forest Council to consider this financial impact when assessing the implications of the permanent sticker law on private hire vehicles.</p>
<p>As an Operator and Driver in the NFDC authority, I object to this new policy change. Door cards were a requirement in the past for NFDC registerd PHV's. They were used then removed. The stated reason for re-introduction of the door cards is safeguarding. I have read your policy changes. I have also read the UK.Gov guidelines on door cards, from the taxi and PHV guidelines, as well. There is NO conclusive evidence that door cards makes the public any safer. Furthermore, The evidence used in the government policy guidelines uses midlands cities such as Birmingham for data analysis. I submit that Southampton, the New Forest and othere local authorities are nothing like Birmingham. Further study on crimes in our areas related to taxis or PHV's has shown conclusively that no victim was able to remember the type, registration, or council where the perpetrator's car was registerd. I have spoken to several victims directly and councillors of SCC about door cards. They agree that they were unable to remember anything about the vehicle used in their crime case. This is despite having door cards fixed to the vehicle used to perpetrate the crime. My business is PHV only. I have an affluent clientele, including executives of PWC, Directors of Sovereign wealth funds, and other prominent figures. They appreciate the minimal licensing on the car. None of my work is with Uber, or any other operator in the region. All my work is prebooked by phone, text, or email. In all cases my PHV is described to the client during the booking process. Or, the customer is a regular user of my services and knows the car.</p>

I would ask that you reconsider the efficacy of this policy as well as the added burden for drivers and NFDC staff. If you must institute this policy, I request that you expand on the defined exemptions allowed to this new policy to include owners/operators who exclusively use prebooking; or are not using any app based hiring platform such as Uber, Lyft, etc...

The Council supplied License plate holder is of poor design. There are 3 bolts which hold the 2 halves of the assembly together. 1 half is bolted to the car. The other half holds the license plate bracket. The 3 bolts holding the 2 halves together are easy to remove. The plate can then be removed from the vehicle. This process takes only a minute or two. I have spoken with NFDC registered PHV drivers who regularly remove them when not driving the car as a taxi. The exemption I received for using Velcro stickies was given as they are much harder to remove and replace. Once removed you need a new set of velcro stickies to fix the plate to another car.

I agree with this policy. However, there should be an exception for classic/vintage cars used for weddings and other special events.

I have my internal badge on the dash board. It stays there all the time. I can easily retrieve it for showing a passenger. If it were fixed to the windshield in the lower left and it is raining then it is not visible. Also it is not accessible to me for showing to a customer once they are in the car.

I prefer not to have stickers on my vehicle as a private hire driver. They can be distracting and may affect the aesthetics of my car.

the door signage could indicate that a vehicle is available for hire and could therefore lead to uninsured bookings,

It may cause confusion with the public between private hire vehicles and taxis,

It may encourage customers to hail a private hire vehicle in the street

Customers make an advance booking and know the details of the operator, vehicle type and registration number, which is collecting them,

app based operators who work outside of the area should be exempt from the signage requirement,

the door stickers can damage the vehicle paintwork when removed for sale of a vehicle, licence plates at the rear are sufficient,

clients may prefer signage free vehicles.

The new rule on stickers is completely unnecessary. The myth that car stickers make it safer is clearly outdated and this shouldn't be pushed for by the council. One of the main reasons why I personally chose to license with NFDC is the fact that stickers are not required.

Cars are identified by the number plate firstly and secondly by the taxi plate that we are required to fix to our cars, as well as the sticker on the front window. In my short 1.5 years working in this trade I've never had any issue with this. In fact, it can be argued that having stickers makes it unsafe, as people become indifferent. Does the council know that in London vehicles neither have a plate or stickers? Why would it be that we require it in the New Forest. This will also hit our pockets as some jobs and events will not give jobs to vehicles with stickers (because it looks tacky).

Other authorities have consulted on door stickers and these are not popular with drivers or passengers. DFT guidance clearly states that stickers should say pre booked only. Having to display company name and contact details makes it obvious to public that vehicle is available for booking rather than just pre booked through an operator.

Do not implement door signage

Drivers are not happy with new signage policy. Drivers are thinking about changing council and we are worried that we will struggle again with taxis.

Vehicles should have door stickers so it's easy to identify as at the moment only have plate on back.

It seems as though this council like many others is keen to put so much signage on PHVs that the mind of the consumer is injured to it all. Perhaps we should look at better training for the drivers instead.

NO STICKERS!

NO STICKERS!

Please don't make signage compulsory for the drivers and make it easy for them to get operator license.

We like to work in NFDC but please don't implement signage and windows tinted and make it easier for outside NFDC resident to get operator license.

I request the council not to implement the requirement to put signage on rear doors of Private Hire Vehicles.

We don't want to see door sticker signage

I request the council not to implement the requirement to put signage on rear doors of Private Hire Vehicles.

We don't want to see additional door sticker. We would like stay in newforest traditional way.

I don't want permanent door sticker in my car.

NO STICKERS!

NO STICKERS!

NO STICKERS!

We feel it is important for members of the public and other road users to know certain vehicles are licensed and who they are licensed by and that this is visible from all angles

I am an NFDC registered private hire driver in my 8th year. I have completed over 22,000 trips as a contractor with Uber. Uber recognise me as one of the highest customer rated professional drivers. Uber have provided me with acknowledgement and recognition that I am one of very few most complimented Drivers within the UK. My rating based on updated previous 500 rated trips is 4.99 out of a maximum of 5.

I object to vehicle door stickers being a requirement on my own personal Private hire taxi. I see it as a step backwards because customers can recognise my car is a taxi by my car Number plate.

These stickers can damage the paintwork and also can be a nuisance as I usually work at night and the door signage can draw unwanted attention of sometimes intoxicated people (who haven't booked), trying to enter my car because they see I am a taxi. I am insured in my car when not working, and

They can sometimes be aggressive and damage my car because I refuse to transport them because they have not made a bona fide booking. I personally don't want to draw unwanted attention of people being aggressive because I won't take them as they have not made an official booking. They can sometimes slam the door or hit the car, and this is damage I will have to pay for.

My car is owned outright by myself and bears the in car NFDC taxi licence details within the front windscreen, my rear taxi plate and also my taxi badge that I wear whilst working. The pre-booked Uber customers have my car Number plate and a huge amount of information about myself, including my up to date photo before entering my car.

I am registered with Uber for flexible bookings via app, and I also have regular pre-booked School runs for Hampshire County Council through an authorised taxi Operator registered with NFDC

I believe the door signage should be for all metered cars and cars owned by a company with hackney cars. The one-man band who has only his regular airports and hospital transfers, the clients would probably prefer not to have the signage and to promote the fact their home is unattended. The signage on the cars would make the forest an uglier place to drive in.

The signage would put off new PH owner drivers as it's their only car in the household, we need to encourage more independent owner drivers.

Not sure in 4th paragraph the sentence regarding depreciating high mileage cars.

I am writing to formally object to the proposals in the draft licencing document

The taxi trade is a wide and varied trade, where (no one size fits all) The members of the trade look round and register where the regulations suit them. The vast majority of the feedback I have had is (we registered in NFDC because they don't have door stickers) A few drivers even suggested £500 licence fees for stickerless cars.

I would suggest that the Council adopts all the recommendations in the DFT guidelines regarding signage and vehicle ages

During this report, you will see a reference to the DFT recent release of the best practice guideline

Taxi and private hire vehicle licencing best practice guidance for licencing authorities in England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

I fully understand that it's a long and drawn out document, but since its release, I have asked every person involved in taxis if they have read it. Only two have replied yes. I feel it is therefore important that this read

As experienced driver, i believe that permanent stickers should be avoided for the following reasons:

Members of the public can often confuse private hire vehicles with taxis, failing to realise that they are not available for immediate hire and that a private hire vehicle driver can only fulfil pre-booked requests. Greater differentiation in signage will help the public to distinguish between the two elements of the trade. To achieve this, licensing authorities should seek to differentiate the profile of private hire vehicles as these can only be legally engaged through a booking with a licensed operator.

This increases the success of those illegally standing or plying for hire and may lead to confrontation when private hire vehicle drivers refuse a request for a journey that has not been pre-booked. Having an illuminated sign on taxis and prohibiting them from private hire vehicles will provide a simple way for the public to differentiate between the two services and we encourage all licensing authorities to promote this difference to raise public awareness.

Licensing authorities' private hire vehicle signage requirements should be limited to the authority licence plate or disc and a "pre-booked only" door sign.

This approach enables passengers to be given the clear and consistent message that you should only get in a vehicle that 'has a taxi sign on the roof' unless you have pre-booked a private hire vehicle and have received information from the operator to identify it.

Where an exclusive relationship exists between the vehicle proprietor, driver and operator, a licensing authority should consider permitting the display of operator details in a discreet manner to not undermine the overall objective of enabling the public to differentiate easily between taxis and private hire vehicles. This might, for example, be through small branding on the rear of the vehicle.

The signs on the door are also a generic sign any person who orders a car could think it's their car and could also get annoyed .

General Comments

Changes from 2026

Air Quality

This is controversial, more about very poor traffic flow, traffic lights, road works, state of the roads, pollution from cruise and container ships in the Solent and Southampton having the most amount of traffic lights per mile than any other city in Britain. Stuck at traffic lights.

clarification regarding the boot or luggage compartment must be separated from the passenger compartment by a suitable barrier? surely the seats are barrier enough as this is the case in most cars/suv/mpv

"To meet the requirements of the Licensing Authority, the business address provided on the application form (which will subsequently form the licence address) must have recognised office facilities, a regular postal service and be widely acknowledged as a site that provides office space. The site must also be suitable for compliance inspections and meetings with officers. "

This policy will not be good for owner operators who may have their business running from home. With new technology and booking systems, it may be better to run operations from home. For this reasons making home business operations obsolete with this policy is not a good thing for small time operator who may not need office space per say.

Cost of this box ticking exercise? I would like to know how much this will cost and who will undertake this consultation. Or to make work for idle hands?

Drivers and passengers are at risk in the dark and unlit areas .

This will have the effect of the driver, passengers thinking its safe to get out the car in some areas of the forest . and could put them at risk of further injury on the unpaved roads

Visitors to the new forest are not aware of the dangers of Badgers , Ponies, Bulls, Deer or pigs that can be easily frightened if you creep up on them during the day let alone at night .

Visitors could also be easily frightened by the forest noises and run off , they could easily fall in a roadside ditch or mud and be difficult to find.

Any person who has walked in the forest will realise its easy to lose your bearing , get lost , fall down and be hard to find. The safest option is to stay with the car

Really pleased to read about the enhanced DBS procedures and requirement to participate in the update scheme and 6 monthly checks.

Increased checks on drivers

This all looks as an operational increase in Council staff duties. Why is this all really necessary? Obviously these extra cost will need to be past on by operators and drivers, with the price of cars and mini-buses more than doubling in price over the last 6 years, the New Forest will have to have a large increase in Tariffs and Rates.

There should be some consideration of the possibility of driverless taxi / hire vehicles.

Over the intended lifetime of this policy driverless vehicles are almost certain to be in wider use. Driverless taxi / hire vehicles should bring important cost savings and convenience to users, particularly in less densely populated areas, and contingency plans should be in place for oversight (and possibly regulation) of organisations deploying them.

Removal of Fire extinguisher.

Thank you! I have been saying for years that this policy puts drivers at risk.

I am a NFDC private hire driver. And I am worried about the draft for the new taxi policy.

It is easier to get taxi in NFDC. much better then before.

Cant say I had any problems with drivers

Been all good so far

I think the proposed changes would destroy the already fragile network of NFDC private hire and hackney transport

Already you have everything up to date.

This is good and part of a national programme

Hil I find the measures you wanna implement extremely harmful for the trade and most of them are unacceptable. Seems like NFDC really want go go backwards with this one. I will not renew both of my licenses,driver and car with your money lover,extremist city council.

This is all just a cash grab. You are after our money but guess what? You will most definitely lose alot. Name one measure you guys took having drivers/car owners in mind and to help them. Ill wait. Also ,cut the bullshit about climate change agenda. We all know its a hoax.

People starting to wake up. You will not gonna get away with this. Been licensed with you for over 4 years but no more.

Private hire operator should be easily accessible for NFDC drivers as NFDC have given Uber operator licence even Uber doesn't have any office in NFDC but NFDC driver who live outside NFDC cannot get operator licence.

So many drivers are speaking about opening their own companies but some don't live in NFDC. And they can't apply for operator license. Can it be possible for the outside NFDC drivers to get operator license.

I live outside NFDC and would love to start my own taxi company but I can't as I can't get operator license.

I still don't agree with cross border hiring.vehicle licence in nfcd should only be working in new forest and soon vehicle only southampton.

The draft policies will make NFDC drivers out of job and they will have to rely on public benefits as new cars are very expensive.

As you change lot of drivers leave

Ridiculous why are you so determined to put people out of business

I have set out Bolt's response to the relevant proposals as a licensed private hire operator in New Forest in response to this consultation on your updated licensing policy. In support of our response, Bolt held a driver forum with New Forest Drivers on 1st March 2024.

We appreciate some changes that have already been made to the proposed conditions, such as providing further clarity on reporting requirements for drivers when they partner with multiple operators. At our driver forum,100% of drivers mentioned the importance of flexibility in maintaining their livelihoods so we are glad to see this change in the draft conditions.

We would appreciate further clarity on the three specific conditions referenced.

Any sensible driver registered in the new forest will realise that they might as well pay the £600 get a camera and register in Southampton .
That way they will have access to the bus lanes . And an extra 2 years on their licence .
With the introduction of door stickers and an age restriction .
That will be my personal choice. Couple this with the 6 months wait to get a driver authorised to drive a new forest car. It certainly makes sense

Probably going to register in Southampton

This year taxi insurance has gone over the roof and drivers are struggling.
I believe if NFDC will go with draft policies, so many NFDC drivers will either leave NFDC or will be depend on public benefits.
I live in Calshot, and first time to apply for taxi licence

White vehicles should not be allowed as private hire vehicle as its very confusing for passengers in southampton.ctv and door stickers

The cost of living crisis is the wrong time to be increasingly any payments from new forest taxi firms and drivers

I am continuing to fight this proposed change, I think NFDC licencing are making a massive mistake!

Welcome to the online world :)

I moved to the New Forest a couple of years ago to be near my daughter. I have found it very difficult at times to hire a taxi. Going forward if there are less taxis available here I would have to move again away from my family to a less isolated area.

Should be ashamed of yourselves stressing drivers out like this.

it is a shame that over recent years, more interest in assuring hackney carriage are complying with currently legislation by sending out compliance officers and following up of customers complaints about over charging.

Peoples habits have changed drastically since Covid and may never go back to the way it was before. It is hard enough to make a living in the current climate without imposing extra restrictions with regards to vehicles.

Please make it easy for us not hard. Thank you

I was disappointed to find that I had to read the national newspapers to discover that NFDC had been conducting a review of the Taxi Licensing Policy which could have an adverse impact on the scale and scope of the taxi service within the New Forest.

I have now read the review document and have a number of concerns

1.Why are these things done in such a stealthy way? As someone who was born in the area, I have always tried to disagree with the widely held belief that NFDC is remote and detached from the people that it is supposed to serve but it will be hard to continue believing that unless the Council introduces a far more open, inclusive and better advertised approach when considering changes to their existing policies. I believe that Taxpayers shouldn't have to constantly monitor the NFDC website to enable them to engage with their Council and that there should be some form of distribution mechanism that allows interested parties to receive notifications of all such reviews and thereby facilitate a greater involvement in Policy making than is currently the case.

2.Given that the New Forest has always had a woefully inadequate level of public transport provision, anything that could impinge on the availability and scope of the Taxi Service in the area should be avoided.

3.The review states that "the new fleet standards will reduce the impact of emissions from our (licenced) vehicles on the air quality in both the New Forest and other areas where our licensed vehicles work". I would challenge this assertion and would like to seek the data that supports such a claim - even if this were true (which I doubt) then any such impact would be absolutely negligible.

Non-UK passport holders - requiring a good character/ conduct certificate, that is not limited by time passed or by the amount of time spent living in another country since the age of 10, appears a significant barrier for those who wish to enter in to the taxi trade, as these certificates can not be obtained from many countries. This element of the policy could be considered discriminatory based on race, especially for those who are not legally permitted to hold UK citizenship, no matter how long they have resided in the UK (e.g. China, Austria, Japan - to name just a few that do not permit dual nationality to be held). Therefore, a 55 year old with permanent residence in the UK potentially held for their entire adult life, would still need to obtain a certificate based on their childhood?

When compared with the requirements for a UK citizens; who only have to account for periods abroad for periods in the last 5 years, over 6 months in duration, it appears that the perception that non UK citizens pose a greater threat to the public than UK citizens, is being built into policy, when this is not a reality.

High viz to be worn when attending the garage - good to be in the policy

any exemption for station ranks that are private property? if not you may have a series of petty complaints from drivers about idling engines in the middle of winter when temperatures drop to freezing conditions. people expect taxis to provide a service but if they are not allowed to continual heat the cars why would they wish to stay out working in the evening and risk becoming ill through the cold conditions

Idling engines

This area of the policy is welcomed and agreed. Unnecessary idling engines increases localised air pollution impacting the local community including the drivers. It is agreed that compliance officers should routinely advise and request taxi drivers with idling engines to turn them off or move on. It would also be welcomed for taxi firms to request this positive behaviour from their drivers. Obviously suitable provisions should be provided in colder weather to ensure drivers do not get cold, and in extreme cold weather a common sense approach should be adopted by compliance officers.

Legislation and law Outdated. (please explain). I would have thought after operating a Licensing department for more than 100+ years I would have thought the New Forest Council authority should be aware if it is suitable for purpose.

The Licensee shall immediately after the termination of any hiring of a licensed vehicle, or as soon as practicable thereafter, carefully search the vehicle for any property which may have been accidentally left there; and Any property accidentally left in a licensed vehicle must, (within 48 hours) be handed in to the private hire operator if the journey is booked through an operator, or handed in at a Police Station.

As mentioned in our recent Site Visit in February 2024, Bolt has a clear lost property process in place. If the driver and passenger are unable to resolve the issue within 24 hours, we escalate this to our local operations team to investigate further and arrange for a courier to pick up the item from the driver and deliver it to a local hub where a passenger can pick it up. We are happy to explain our Lost Property process in detail in a future meeting. We recommend that this requirement is caveated for operators such as Bolt who have their own processes in place and are app-based.

No smoking signs. No one smokes in my car. Ever. This is the law. anyone entering the car who wishes to smoke is told that his is not allowed by law. I do not want to have to put stickers all over my car to show customers what is clearly part of the law already. My vehicle is not operating with Uber or any other app based service. All my customers are aware of me and my car. My customers, with rare exception, do not smoke at all. I make arrangements with those customers who do smoke to stop at appropriate points to allow them to exit the vehicle to smoke.

Licence holders must notify licencing services

Discriminatory , if the rules are being followed according to DVLA . there is no need to ask for extra proof.

This is ambiguous, "the office to be a recognised office facility" .

When a small operator only needs a phone and a laptop or iPad, why would they need an office? Booking systems , online diaries and accounting packages are all online , no need for office facilities. To pay for a commercial office would not be financially viable and a total waste of money. The taxi companies, yes, I understand as the cabs and passengers would visit often so the need for a commercial premise is warranted. I even have reservations for the independent Hackney's that just use the ranks, why would they need an office?

However, your independent Private hire owner operator why would there be the need? They do not have passengers visiting their home address , they probably only go out a couple of times a day. This would not be viable spending £1000 a month for you to visit for compliance purposes. We need to encourage more independent operators not put them off. If we lose the independents operators there will only be the large operators and the lack of the personal touch will be gone! Look what's happened to the corner shops and the supermarkets. Seriously think about how to encourage them, they are an asset to the community, they go above and beyond for their clients, please do not place barriers with your new policy , YOU WILL LOSE THEM !! then you will not have their revenue.

Measures should be in place to stop the drivers from having vehicles licenced in NFDC and them working in Woking and Reading etc why do you allow this? I talk to drivers at the airports and the NFDC licencing is seen as a soft touch council to get a licence . Due to the volume of these vehicle and drivers and their applications ,it leaves the potential local driver waiting for 5 months to get a new application ? Who wants to wait for that long!! I have serious issue in getting drivers because of this. There should be a 25-mile limit set for drivers to live from the boundaries of New Forest.

I have worked as an operator in the New Forest for over 19 years and I have seen a decline the recent years of the independent drivers. Please encourage them. I struggle to get drivers as your process is so long. It used to take 4- 6 weeks for a new driver application.

Please reverse this situation and let's make it easier for the new local drivers. Let's encourage them , let's make them welcome please!!!

Drivers must cooperate fully with requests from police officers, authorised officers and authorised officers from other licencing areas
 Only the police have the right to stop a moving vehicle. Any other person trying to stop a licenced vehicle , can be seen as attempting to "flag down" Any person trying to gain the attention of a licenced vehicle is clearly trying to "immediately hire a pre booked only car"
 Licencing officials and the Police must comply with PACE section 34 "you do not have to say anything . but it may harm your defence if you do not mention when questioned , something which you later rely on in court" It would be a miscarriage of justice if an accused person who followed their rights was later prosecuted under a byelaw for "non cooperation"

external safeguarding training provided by the Blue Lamp Trust.
 Hampshire County Council is redeveloping its MiDAS Accessible training course at the moment, with a view to incorporating Safeguarding training along side other material that would be beneficial and seek to raise the standards in the PH and HC trade in relation to customer service, disability etc.
 Once developed, NFDC may wish to consider whether this combined course would offer a wider overall benefit. Therefore, removal of the reference to a specific external provider (Blue Lamp Trust) may provide scope for NFDC to select a different provider of safeguarding training, if appropriate, in the future.

Legislation was added to the police and crime act 2017 section 177 and is quoted as below
 Licencing functions under taxi and PHV legislation: protection of children and vulnerable adults

(1)The Secretary of State may issue guidance to public authorities as to how their licencing functions under taxi and private hire vehicle legislation may be exercised so as to protect children, and vulnerable individuals who are 18 or over, from harm.

Safety and best practice

I would have thought the Council do this automatically and is capable of operating the system. Driving test for all new would-be Taxi drivers would be an idea as for all taxi drivers over 70's. This is undertaken by the Council examiner and could check if an understanding of the English language.

Drivers should not stop or wait near a taxi rank

The dft guideleins state

Members of the public can often confuse private hire vehicles with taxis, failing to realise that they are not available for immediate hire and that a private hire vehicle driver can only fulfil pre-booked requests. Greater differentiation in signage will help the public to distinguish between the two elements of the trade. To achieve this, licencing authorities should seek to differentiate the profile of private hire vehicles as these can only be legally engaged through a booking with a licensed operator.

Licencing authorities should not impose a livery requirement on private hire vehicles. The more distinctive a private hire vehicle is made to appear, the greater the chance that this might be confused with a taxi. To assist the differentiation further, licencing authorities which require taxis to be a particular colour should prevent private hire vehicles from being that same colour, unless they are easily identifiable i.e. they are purpose-built vehicles as is the case in many of our cities.

Licencing authorities' private hire vehicle signage requirements should be limited to the authority licence plate or disc and a "pre-booked only" door sign.

If a vehicle is made to look like it can be hired the public will try and hire it . The best practice is to make it look inconspicuous as possible as per the guidelines ,

But most importantly how near to the taxi rank , My car has no stickers on it , this can be parked 5 metres from a rank and no one would notice it was a PHV , unless they got close .

A vehicle that has livery on can be clearly seen from 100 metres from a rank ???

Where are the protections for the drivers? The council set the fayre tariffs but do not stipulate the minimum amount that is passed on to the driver as a living wage.

My experience that charges set by the operator that I work for (on a self employed basis!) make it impossible through their mileage charges and operating methodology to earn anywhere near minimum wage. The company are not responsible for the lack of work or time spent waiting for work. They use more drivers than necessary which far exceeds the work load and do not offer a minimum amount that can be earned in an 8 hour day. Time does not matter to them!

For example: The NFDC put tariff rates up by 5% in February 2023. The operator increase charges for drivers from £0.90 per mile to £1.15 per mile. An increase of 28%. Therefore, taking in to account the NFDC increase of 5% the drivers immediately lost a total of 23% of their income during a cost of living crisis!

Is the NFDC not responsible for this treatment?

I believe tint is allowed on rear windows by law. All taxi with tint windows are preferred by passengers. In taxi Business customers love their privacy and that is why all taxi drivers use tint papers. Only luxury cars are manufactured tint because it cost a lot of money. So all other cars have to arrange it privately to tint the rear windows. I request council to look on this amendment.

We oppose this point for a few reasons, many vehicles still do not come with air conditioning and so the only reason we put tinted film on our windows is for passenger comfort. It goes without saying that if you sat in a greenhouse for an hour or so you would become very uncomfortable and potentially very adjtated. This is very similar to sitting in a minibus in the middle of summer.

If I may quote an extract from your proposal, "windows tinted during the build of the vehicle (factory fitted) are permitted to be used on a licensed vehicle" I honestly don't see how it effects proceedings whether the vehicle tints are factory fitted or if window film has been applied after the fact. They both have the same effect on the passenger by cutting UV light coming into the vehicle thus making it cooler inside the vehicle. If I may quote another extract from a different appendix "Maintains a professional fleet for local customers and visitors to the area and raises standards". I know for a fact that if visitors to the New Forest are forced to sit in vehicles with no air conditioning because it wasn't fitted at factory and the vehicle doesn't have tinted windows because you are forcing us as drivers/operators to remove the film, this will have the total opposite effect to what you are trying to achieve and if anything the standards will fall and visitors will not use taxis (both hackney carriage and private hire).

The DFT has said 8.8 Tinted windows

Authorities should carefully consider the views of the public and the trade when considering the acceptance of 'after-market' tinting and should be assured that any after-market window tinting does not negatively affect the safety features of the glass it is applied to.

Euro NCAP rating 4 is good. However, 5 should be the aim. Also, it seems that this point isn't binding – it is a recommendation that something should be considered. Could or should the wording be strengthened here?

Probably better to choose a Licencing authority that doesn't have massive waiting times , and can use the bus lanes on Southampton

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PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE



New Forest
DISTRICT COUNCIL

PRE-BOOK ONLY

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Council – 24 February 2025

Licensing Fees and Charges 2025 – 2026

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>This report presents the proposed fees and charges for the Council’s licensing functions. They have been reviewed and set at a level calculated to cover the cost of delivering the services.</p> <p>Council is asked to approve of the fees and charges for 2025-26 as listed in Appendix 1, following the recommendation by General Purposes and Licensing Committee on 10 January 2025.</p>
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Council agree and approve the proposed fees and charges for the financial year 2025–26 as set out in Appendix 1; and 2. That the power to set the scale of fees and charges for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licences, including to consider any objections made in respect of the proposed fees, be delegated to the General Purposes and Licensing Committee.
Reasons for recommendation(s)	<p>The local authority is able to recover the costs associated with undertaking its licensing functions, where these fees are not statutorily set. The cost of providing these functions has been fully costed, and proposed fees have been adjusted where necessary.</p> <p>Where appropriate, new fees have been added to reflect the costs associated with the issue of licenses under new legislation.</p> <p>Additionally, in some cases the way in which fees are charged has been amended to better reflect the way in which applications are received and administered.</p>
Ward(s)	All

Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Dan Poole
Strategic Director(s)	Richard Knott – Strategic Director of Housing & Communities
Officer Contact	<p>Ben Stockley Food and Safety Team Manager 023 8028 5348 ben.stockley@nfdc.gov.uk</p> <p>Christa Ferguson Licensing Manager 023 8028 5352 christa.ferguson@nfdc.gov.uk</p> <p>Joanne McClay Service Manager – Environmental and Regulation 023 8028 5325 joanne.mcclay@nfdc.gov.uk</p>

Introduction

1. As part of the annual review of budgets, decisions are required by the General Purposes and Licensing Committee, to agree any non-statutory licensing fees and charges for the forthcoming financial year.
2. This report details the proposed fees and charges in **Appendix 1** for licences and registrations for 2025 - 2026 for the following work areas – animal welfare licensing, caravan site licensing, skin piercing registrations, gambling, pleasure boats, boatmen and pavement licences.

Background

3. The Council has a statutory responsibility for the administration and enforcement of a wide range of licences, registrations and permits. Many of these allow the Council to set and charge a fee, to cover the costs of the administration and issue of these permissions.
4. The basis in setting these fees is to ensure they are reasonable and cover the costs of performing the functions which includes, administration, officer costs for undertaking inspections, testing and hearings. Costs associated with enforcement activity, for example

relating to premises which are operating without a licence, or breach of licence conditions cannot be included in the license fee.

5. Furthermore, legal cases such as Hemming v Westminster City Council have confirmed that licensing fees may not be used to generate a profit for Councils and that fees should be reviewed regularly to ensure that neither a significant surplus nor deficit is created.
6. Fees set under the Licensing Act 2003, are set centrally by Government and the Council has no discretion to review or amend these. The current fee structure was set when the Act came into force in November 2005 and the fee regime has not been revised since this date.
7. The Council is, however, able to set fees for the following licence types:
 - pavement licences.
 - gambling establishments.
 - animal welfare (boarding, home boarding, dog breeding, riding establishments, pet shops and zoos).
 - residential caravan sites.
 - skin piercing (tattooing, acupuncture, electrolysis, cosmetic piercing and semi-permanent skin colouring).
 - pavement licences.
 - pleasure boats (boatmen and vessels) and
 - taxis and private hire (drivers, vehicles and operators)

Issues for consideration

8. The setting of discretionary fees for the licensing of the above matters, must be formally agreed by the Council's General Purposes and Licensing Committee prior to approval by Council.
9. The draft Taxi Licensing Policy has been reviewed following a consultation process on new proposals and an amended draft policy was considered by the General Purposes and Licensing Committee on 10 January 2025. Once the Policy is approved by Council, any new process requirements will need to be reviewed and built into the assessment for the cost recovery of issuing these licences. Taxi licensing fees will therefore be consulted on after adoption and publishing of the policy, therefore they are not proposed to change at this time.
10. The proposed fees for licences and permits in **Appendix 1** have been increased following a detailed review of the cost to deliver each function and have also been benchmarked against similar and neighbouring local authorities.

Pavement Licences

11. The Business and Planning Act 2020 (BPA) provided temporary permissions following the covid pandemic, which allowed businesses such as public houses, cafes, bars and restaurants to place chairs and tables over part of the highway adjacent to their premises.
12. This Act has since been amended by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 which introduced a permanent pavement licensing scheme from 31 March 2024. Fees for the application can be set locally but are capped at a maximum of £500 for first time applications and £350 for renewals. The proposed new fees in Appendix 1 are for full cost recovery of this application process.

Gambling fees

13. All permits and lottery fees set under the Gambling Act 2005 are statutorily set, whereas gambling premises licence fees are capped, with the discretion for fee setting up to this level. These gambling premises licences have been increased in line with inflation.

Animal welfare fees

14. Animal welfare licensing fees have been reviewed and increased where required and the fee structure revised, to recover all costs relating to the processing and issue of different licence types. New applications for all animal welfare applications have been costed at a higher level than renewal licences, based on additional officer time in providing advice and assistance during the initial licensing process.

Skin piercing fees

15. Skin piercing registration fees have been reviewed and a further breakdown of registration options provided for customers, which better represent the costs of the different application processes. The two additional fee categories are:
 - A combined cost for a practitioner and premises registration in one single application,
 - A cost for registering additional practitioners, when applied for at the same time as a premises/practitioner application.
16. The fee for a practitioner application alone has been substantially increased. This proposed fee covers the full costs of administering such an application when there is no premises application. It is important to note, that as with all skin piercing fees, this is a one-off fee.

17. The fee for a business to be registered to undertake additional skin piercing activities has also been increased, to reflect the full cost of administering this service.

Caravan sites fees

18. Caravan site fees have also been raised to reflect the increased cost of delivering the service.

Corporate plan priorities

19. **Theme:**
Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives.
Future New Forest. Transforming tomorrow, together.
20. **Corporate Plan Objective:**
Protect and improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.
Being financially responsible.
21. **Service Objective:**
Implementation of the Environmental and Regulation Service Plans.

Consultation undertaken

22. This report has been reviewed by EMT, the Portfolio Holder and the General Purposes and Licensing Committee.
23. The General Purposes and Licensing Committee on 10 January 2025 considered the proposed fees and charges for the 2025-26 financial year. The Committee debated the proposed introduction of licence fees for pavement licences and whether there should be no charge in order to support local businesses. It was concluded that fees and charges should be across all licensing services, to have a fair and consistent approach. It was also agreed that fees and charges should recover the cost of providing the service but not generate a profit.

Financial and resource implications

24. There will be no additional costs in adoption of these fees and changes, and the new charges are likely to better offset the costs of the licensing work, therefore increasing income and closing the income-cost gap.

Legal implications

25. The fees and charges review was undertaken in line with legislation and statutory guidance with the aim of ensuring full cost recovery.

Risk Assessment

26. A formal risk assessment is not required.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

27. There are no direct climate implications.

Equalities implications

28. There are no direct equalities implications.

Crime and disorder implications

29. There are no direct crime and disorder implications.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

30. There are no direct implications.

Conclusions

31. The setting of the proposed licensing fees and charges has been through a rigorous process, to cost the delivery of the service to businesses and members of the public.

32. The increased fees are proposed to take effect from 1 April 2025.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Proposed fees for 2025 - 2026

Background Papers:

[Mobile Homes Act 2013: a guide for local authorities on setting licence fees](#)

[Mobile homes: a guide for local authorities on setting fees for the fit and proper person test](#)

[Animal activity licensing process: statutory guidance for local authorities](#)

[LGA guidance on locally set licensing fees | Local Government Association](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL AND REGULATION-LICENSING SERVICES
PROPOSED SCALE OF FEES AND CHARGES FOR 2025/26

All annual fees unless stated

ANIMAL WELFARE LICENCE FEES

New Pet shops (1, 2 or 3 year licence) **(NEW)**
 Renewal Pet shops (1, 2 or 3 year licence)
 New Dog breeding (plus vet inspection fees) (1, 2 or 3 year licence) **(NEW)**
 Renewal Dog breeding (plus vet inspection fees) (1, 2 or 3 year licence)
 New Dog/cat boarding (1, 2 or 3 year licence) **(NEW)**
 Renewal Dog/cat boarding (1, 2 or 3 year licence)
 New Home dog boarding (1, 2 or 3 year licence) **(NEW)**
 Renewal Home dog boarding (1, 2 or 3 year licence)
 New Dog day care (1, 2 or 3 year licence) **(NEW)**
 Renewal Dog day care (1, 2 or 3 year licence)
 New Keeping animals for exhibition (3 year licence) **(NEW)**
 Renewal Keeping animals for exhibition (3 year licence)
 New Horse riding: 0-9 horses (plus vet inspection fees) (1, 2 or 3 year licence) **(NEW)**
 Renewal Horse riding: 0-9 horses (plus vet inspection fees) (1, 2 or 3 year licence)
 New Horse riding: 10-19 horses (plus vet inspection fees) (1, 2 or 3 year licence) **(NEW)**
 Renewal Horse riding: 10-19 horses (plus vet inspection fees) (1, 2 or 3 year licence)
 New Horse riding: 20+ horses (plus vet inspection fees) (1, 2 or 3 year licence) **(NEW)**
 Renewal Horse riding: 20+ horses (plus vet inspection fees) (1, 2 or 3 year licence)
 Request for re-rating
 Variation of licence (plus £46 per hour for additional work as agreed)
 Unsuccessful Appeal brought by applicant
 Dangerous Wild Animals Act Licence (plus actual cost of vet fees) (3 year licence)
 Zoo Licence (6 year licence)

Charges	Proposed Charges		Change + £
	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	
N/A	444.00		
338.00	371.00	33.00	
N/A	481.00		
388.00	400.00	12.00	
N/A	444.00		
360.00	371.00	11.00	
N/A	327.00		
275.00	283.00	8.00	
N/A	444.00		
360.00	371.00	11.00	
N/A	392.00		
341.00	351.00	10.00	
N/A	613.00		
538.00	554.00	16.00	
N/A	699.00		
613.00	635.00	22.00	
N/A	768.00		
660.00	704.00	44.00	
226.00	233.00	7.00	
45/hr	46/hr		
Actual cost	Actual cost		
190.00	196.00	6.00	
Actual cost	Actual cost		

OTHER LICENCE AND REGISTRATION FEES

Sex Shop Licence
 Pleasure Boat (1 year licence)
 Boatman Licences - new and renewal (3 year licence)
 Pavement licence -New application **(NEW)**
 Pavement licence -Renewal application **(NEW)**

Actual cost	Actual cost	
115.00	121.00	6.00
116.00	120.00	4.00
N/A	350.00	
N/A	250.00	

Skin Piercing (one-off fee)

Registration of Premises
 Registration of Practitioners
 Registration of Premises and one Practitioner **(NEW)**
 Registration of Additional Practitioner (at time of premises/practitioner registration) **(NEW)**
 Application to include additional activities
 Minor Variation - Reissue of registration certificate

186.00	196.00	10.00
76.00	146.00	70.00
N/A	270.00	
N/A	78.00	
76.00	89.00	13.00
23.00	25.00	2.00

LICENSING ACT 2003

Statutory fees apply

GAMBLING ACT 2005

Permits and Small Society Lottery licences-Statutory fees apply

Bingo Premises

New Application
 Annual Fee
 Provisional Statement New
 Premises licence fee for holders of Provisional Statements
 Variation Fee
 Transfer Fee
 Reinstatement of Licence

2,500.00	2,575.00	75.00
750.00	772.00	22.00
3,500.00	3,500.00	0.00
630.00	649.00	19.00
920.00	948.00	28.00
630.00	649.00	19.00
1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00

Betting premises

New Application	1,750.00	1,802.00	52.00
Annual Fee	400.00	412.00	12.00
Provisional Statement New	1,575.00	1,622.00	47.00
Premises licence fee for holders of Provisional Statements	630.00	649.00	19.00
Variation Fee	790.00	814.00	24.00
Transfer Fee	550.00	567.00	17.00
Reinstatement of Licence	630.00	649.00	19.00

Adult Gaming Centre (AGC)

New Application	900.00	927.00	27.00
Annual Fee	500.00	515.00	15.00
Provisional Statement New	840.00	865.00	25.00
Premises licence fee for holders of Provisional Statements	505.00	520.00	15.00
Variation Fee	500.00	515.00	15.00
Transfer Fee	505.00	520.00	15.00
Reinstatement of Licence	505.00	520.00	15.00

Family Entertainment Centre (FEC)

New Application	1,000.00	1,030.00	30.00
Annual Fee	500.00	515.00	15.00
Provisional Statement New	840.00	865.00	25.00
Premises licence fee for holders of Provisional Statements	400.00	412.00	12.00
Variation Fee	500.00	515.00	15.00
Transfer Fee	400.00	412.00	12.00
Reinstatement of Licence	400.00	412.00	12.00

Track

New Application	1,320.00	1,373.00	53.00
Annual Fee	525.00	541.00	16.00
Provisional Statement New	1,320.00	1,373.00	53.00
Premises licence fee for holders of Provisional Statements	500.00	515.00	15.00
Variation Fee	655.00	682.00	27.00
Transfer Fee	500.00	515.00	15.00
Reinstatement of Licence	500.00	515.00	15.00

RELEVANT PROTECTED CARAVAN SITE LICENCE FEES

Application for a new site -single pitch	565.00	607.00	42.00
Application for a new multiple licensed site	800.00	851.00	51.00
Multiple licensed site - Annual fee for each permitted caravan	14.00	14.40	0.40
Transfer of site licence	192.00	215.00	23.00
Alteration of conditions attached to an existing site licence	392.00	404.00	12.00
Depositing site rules	94.00	98.00	4.00
Fit and Proper Person Application	260.00	268.00	8.00

Licence Fees are not subject to VAT unless otherwise stated

Council – 24 February 2025

Pay Policy Statement 2025/26

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	The Localism Act 2011 requires the Council to prepare a pay policy statement for each financial year. The statement must be prepared and approved by the end of March each year.
Recommendation	That the Council approve the Pay Policy Statement 2025/26.
Reasons for recommendation	<p>We are required to have a pay policy statement in place which sets out the authority's policies for the financial year relating to:</p> <p>The remuneration of its chief officers, The remuneration of its lowest-paid employees, and The relationship between –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the remuneration of its chief officers, and (ii) the remuneration of its employees who are not chief officers.
Wards	All
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Jeremy Heron – Finance and Corporate
Strategic Director	Alan Bethune – Strategic Director Corporate Resources, S151 and Transformation.
Officer Contact	<p>Heleana Aylett Service Manager – Human Resources 023 80 285662 Heleana.aylett@nfdc.gov.uk</p>

Introduction

1. The Localism Act 2011 requires the Council to prepare a pay policy statement for each financial year. The statement must be prepared and approved by the end of March each year. A recommended statement for 2025/26 is included at **Appendix 1**. The statement details the policies in place from 1 April 2025.
2. Appendix 2 reflects the nationally agreed Pay Award for 2024/25 for Chief Executives, Chief Officers and those covered by the 'Green book' (which covers NFDC employees).

Background

3. A pay policy statement must set out the authority's policies for the financial year relating to:

The remuneration of its chief officers,
The remuneration of its lowest-paid employees, and
The relationship between –

- (i) the remuneration of its chief officers, and
 - (ii) the remuneration of its employees who are not chief officers.
4. The statement must state –

The definition of "lowest paid employees" adopted by the authority for the purposes of the statement, and
The authority's reasons for adopting that definition
5. The pay policy for 2025/26 has been set up on the basis of the organisational structure (the Strategic Director and Assistant Director model).

National pay award for 2024/25

6. The Pay Award for 2024/25 has now been agreed for Chief Executives, Chief Officers and Local Government Services (Green Book) employees. As a result, all NFDC Spinal Column Points up to 47 have been increased by £1,290. Those above scp 47 had an increase of 2.5%. Chief Officer and Chief Executive pay increased by 2.5%.
7. As a result of the national pay award and the changes made to the Council's pay spine in October 2022, the lowest pay point on the council's pay structure is now £12.37 per hour. The updated pay structure is shown in **Appendix 2**.

HR Committee Comments

8. The HR Committee, at its meeting on 9 January 2025, supported the recommendations.

Corporate plan priorities

9. The pay policy statement is in support of the council's ambition to be an Employer of Choice.

Options appraisal

10. Not applicable.

Consultation undertaken

11. None.

Financial and resource implications

12. None in respect of the Pay Policy Statement itself. The national pay award is accounted for within budgets.

Legal implications

13. The Localism Act 2011 requires the Council to prepare a pay policy statement for each financial year.

Risk assessment

14. Not required.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

15. None.

Equalities implications

16. There are no equality implications arising from the report.

Crime and disorder implications

17. None.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

18. None.

Appendices:

Background Papers:

Appendix 1 – Pay Policy Statement None
Appendix 2 – Pay Structure

New Forest District Council

Pay Policy Statement Financial year 2025-26

Background

1. The purpose of this Pay Policy Statement (“Pay Statement”) is to set out New Forest District Council’s pay policies relating to its workforce for the financial year 2025-26, including the remuneration of its Chief Officers and that of its lowest paid employees. The pay levels in this document include the settlement of the Pay Award for 2024-25.
2. The functions of appointment, dismissal and related matters for all employees below Chief Officer Level shall be dealt with by the Chief Executive and Strategic Directors, or such other employees as may be authorised. Standing Orders for General Procedures deal with procedures for appointing and dismissing employees at Chief Officer Level.
3. With the exception of apprentices on the National Minimum Wage, pay for all staff, including Chief Officers, is formally discussed and consulted upon at the Employee Side Liaison Panel before recommendations are taken forward to the HR Committee who will make recommendations to Council.
4. For the purposes of this Pay Statement and in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 (“Localism Act”), staff employed by the Council have been separated into two groups:
 - (a) Chief Officers as defined by the Localism Act
 - (b) Employees who are not Chief Officers as defined by the Localism Act
5. An “employee who is not a Chief Officer” refers to all staff that are not covered within the “Chief Officer” group as outlined below. This includes the “lowest paid employees”. In the context of the Council, the “lowest paid employees” are those employed at Band 1 on the District Council’s pay structure (this is appended as item 1).
6. Section 43(2) of the Localism Act defines Chief Officers for the purposes of the Localism Act. The following roles within the Council fall within the definition “Chief Officers”: -
 - (a) Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive)
 - (b) Monitoring Officer
 - (c) Section 151 (Chief Finance) Officer
 - (d) Non-Statutory Chief Officers (Strategic Directors)
 - (e) Officers reporting directly to those officers falling within (a), (b), (c) and (d) above (Deputy Monitoring Officer and Deputy S151 Chief Finance Officer)

Chief Officers as defined by the Localism Act 2011

7. The Chief Executive’s pay is set in comparison with other district councils. The Chief Officers below the Chief Executive are paid on Band 13 of the Council’s pay structure (the Band for each role is determined by a consistent job evaluation process), Chief Officer current salaries are outlined as follows:

8. The Head of Paid Service salary range is detailed below;

Spinal points	Salary
CX1	£125,010
CX2	£128,813
CX3	£132,733
CX4	£136,327
CX5	£140,941

CX4 and CX5 are available for exceptional performance.

9. The Council has a duty to appoint a Returning Officer responsible for local government elections and has decided that this role be carried out by the Chief Executive. The Returning Officer fees are regarded as a special responsibility payment in relation to independent duties carried out.
10. The fees and charges for European, UK Parliamentary and Police Commissioner elections and National Referendums are set by external bodies. The scale of fees and expenses for County, District, Parish and Town Council elections will be set in partnership with the County Council and other Hampshire local authorities to ensure uniformity and will be submitted to General Purposes and Licensing Committee.
11. The Strategic Directors¹ salary range (Band 13) is detailed below:

Spinal points	Salary
74	£96,689
75	£99,475
76	£102,384
77	£105,411
78	£108,510

77 and 78 are available for exceptional performance.

12. The Assistant Directors² salary range (Band 12) is detailed below:

Spinal points	Salary
66	£77,867
67	£79,992
68	£82,213
69	£84,513
70	£86,689

69 and 70 are available for exceptional performance.

¹ This band currently contains the Section 151 Officer. The Council retains the right to amend the placement of this post in line with structural changes, as required from time to time.

² This band currently contains the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Section 151 Officer. The Council retains the right to amend the placement of these posts in line with structural changes, as required from time to time.

13. The Service Managers³ salary range (Band 11) is detailed below;

Spinal points	Salary
58	£64,369
59	£65,677
60	£66,988
61	£68,395
62	£70,172
63	£71,973

62 and 63 are available for exceptional performance.

14. The salary range for officers in Band 10 is detailed below;

Spinal points	Salary
52	£57,684
53	£58,775
54	£59,842
55	£60,920
56	£62,006
57	£63,071

56 and 57 are available for exceptional performance.

15. The salary range for officers in Band 9 is detailed below;

Spinal points	Salary
46	£51,530
47	£52,606
48	£53,698
49	£54,793
50	£55,862
51	£56,926

50 and 51 are available for exceptional performance.

16. The salary range for officers on Band 8 is detailed below;

Spinal points	Salary
39	£44,100
40	£45,144
41	£46,166
42	£47,220
43	£48,215

43 is available for exceptional performance

³ This band currently contains the Deputy Monitoring Officer. The Council retains the right to amend the placement of this post in line with structural changes, as required from time to time.

17. Not all employees placed in bands 8 and 9 meet the definition of a 'Chief Officer' as defined by the Localism Act 2011, but a small number of officers in these bands do report directly to a Chief Officer according to definitions a, b, c and d in paragraph 6, hence these bands being included above.
18. The Council reviews its terms and conditions and pay levels regularly. The Strategic Director pay was reviewed in 2022.
19. Pay awards are considered annually for all staff including Chief Officers. At the Council, Chief Officers for the purpose of pay award implementation are regarded as the Strategic Directors. The outcome of the national consultations by the Local Government Employers in negotiation with the Trade Unions is applied unless this distorts the councils local pay structure.
20. The Chief Executive, Chief Officers' and Service Managers' performance and pay progression is reviewed annually on the achievement of clear organisational objectives. Incremental progression does not apply to these roles. The Chief Executives' annual review is undertaken by a member panel (comprising of the Leader of the Council, plus three other Portfolio Holders to be determined by the Leader).
21. The Council recognises that Chief Officers sometimes incur necessary expenditure in carrying out their responsibilities e.g. travel costs. Chief Officers will be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred on council business in accordance with local Terms and Conditions.
22. Chief Officers as a result of their employment are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme in the same way as other employees. The pension's policy statement is appended as item 2 to this statement applies to all employees including chief officers.
23. All employees including Chief Officers with more than 2 years continuous service will be entitled to a redundancy payment. If employees are aged at least 55 they are also automatically entitled to the immediate payment of pension benefits if they are retired on the grounds of redundancy. The redundancy payments are based on actual weekly pay. The number of weeks individuals are entitled to is based on the statutory redundancy grid which provides for a maximum of 30 weeks. A multiplier of 1.5 is used to support efficient organisational change. The Council scheme therefore provides for an entitlement of up to a maximum of 45 weeks based on length of service and age. The Council operates one redundancy scheme for both voluntary and compulsory redundancies. All redundancies are subject to a full Business case which requires a maximum financial payback of 3 years.
24. The Council practice is not to re-employ Chief Officers who have received a redundancy or severance package on leaving the council. any request to do so would require specific approval from the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council. If it relates to the appointment of a Chief Executive then this needs to have approval through full council.
25. In accordance with the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency, pay and benefits information for staff paid over £58,200 are published. This information is contained on 'Transparency and Open Government' pages on the Council's external website.

Employees who are not Chief Officers as defined by the Localism Act

26. These employees are all paid on the Council's pay structure on Bands 1-9. Each employee will be on one of the 9 Bands based on the job evaluation of their role. Each Band consists of between 1 and 6 spinal points. Pay progression within the Band is subject always to good performance.
27. Each "lowest paid employee" is paid within the salary range for Band 1. All other employees are paid within the salary range for the Band of their role i.e. (2-9). In very exceptional cases individuals are paid a pay supplement. Bands 7 to 9 include Performance Points which can be used for exceptional performance.
28. Employees new to the Council will normally be appointed to the first spinal point of the salary range for their Band. Where the candidate's current employment package would make the first spinal point of the salary range unattractive (and this can be demonstrated by the applicant in relation to current earnings) or where the employee already operates at a level commensurate with a higher salary, a different spinal point in starting salary may be considered by the recruiting manager. This will be within the salary range for the Band. The candidate's level of skill and experience should be consistent with that of other employees in a similar position on the salary range.
29. Employees' performance during the year is reviewed within the Council's performance management arrangements and pay progression within the Band is subject always to good performance.
30. Pay awards are considered annually for staff. For all staff up to and including the Chief Executive the outcome of the national consultations by the Local Government Employers in negotiation with the Trades Unions is applied.
31. The Council believes in rewarding outstanding performance. It operates this through a system of bonus payments which are designed to reward outstanding performance at the time it occurs. The size of the award paid to an employee will be commensurate with the work being rewarded. All bonuses are subject to approval of the relevant Strategic Director.
32. The Council recognises that employees sometimes incur necessary expenditure in carrying out their responsibilities, for example travel costs. Employees will be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred on Council business in accordance with the Council's local Terms and Conditions.
33. As a result of the Travel Review this year the criteria for receiving the Essential User Car allowance has been updated. From 1st April 2025 the criteria will be; posts that require a vehicle to be always available or are regarded as visiting officers and require the ability to access all areas of the district on a regular basis. This should be reviewed regularly to ensure the criteria is still met.
34. All employees as a result of their employment are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme. Details of the Council's pension policy are appended as item 2 of this Pay Statement.
35. The Council's redundancy scheme is detailed in paragraphs 21 and this applies to all employees.

36. The Council practice is not to re-employ staff who have received a redundancy or severance package on leaving the Council; any request to do so would require specific approval from the appropriate Executive Head.
37. In accordance with The Local Government Association guidance on the Government's requirement for reporting remuneration relationships (the ratio between the top of the ordinary pay range of the highest paid employee and the median average earnings across the organisation as a multiple). Based on current salaries for 1st April 2025 this has been calculated as follows:

Chief Executive Remuneration	£132,733
Employees Median average remuneration	£29,430
Ratio	4.51

Pension Policy Statement

Under the Local Government Pension Scheme, the Council is required to publish a written statement of policy in relation to pensions.

Any decision that has a financial impact will be subject to a Business Case, where a payback period of no more than three years, is achievable.

The statutory provisions governing exit payments to local government workers are in the process of reform including the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations.

1. Regulation 16 (2e)(4d) Shared cost additional pension contributions

Discretion not exercised. (Decision at Council July 2014)

2. Regulation 30(6) Power to allow flexible retirement

Discretion exercised in line with Policy agreed from 1 May 2015 (Decision at Council April 2015)

3. Regulation 30 (8) Waiving of actuarial reductions on compassionate grounds

Discretion exercised provided there is no cost to the Council (Decision at Council July 2014)

4. Regulation 31 Power to award additional pension

Discretion not exercised. (Decision at Council July 2014)

5. (LGPS Regulations 2014 (Transitional provisions, savings and amendments – paragraph 2 (2) of schedule 2)) – Switching on the 85 year rule

Discretion not exercised (Decision at Council July 2014)

6. Regulation B30(2)(5)B30A(3)(5) Post – 31 March 2008 /pre – 1 April 2014 leavers early payment of pension

Discretion not exercised (Decision at Council July 2014)

7. Membership aggregation Regulation 22 (7)(b), (8)(b)

Discretion not exercised (Decision at Council July 2014)

8. Transfers of Pension Rights (Administration Regulation 100 (6))

Discretion not exercised (Decision at Council July 2014)

9. Pension Contribution Bands (Regulations 9 and 10 of LGPS Regulations 2013)

Discretion is exercised (Decision at Council July 2014) - The Council's policy is to review an employee's contributions band when there is a contractual change to the member's salary or hours at some point during the year, when the change is permanent. Any changes in variable pay (i.e. overtime) will only be reviewed once on 1st April each year.

10. Assumed Pensionable Pay and 'regular lump sum' (regulations 21(4)(a), 21(4)(b) and 21(5) of the LGPS Regulations 2013)

Discretion not exercised (Decision at Council July 2014)

11. Election of Early Payment of Benefits

The Council's Early Retirement Policy came into effect from 1 July 2009 and applies to all employees at least 55 and over. Early Retirement can only occur in the following circumstances:

REDUNDANCY – for employees where employment is terminated for reasons of redundancy.

EFFICIENCY - for employees where early retirement is in the interests of the efficiency of the service.

Leave Days	April 2024	Hourly Rate Apr 2024	SCP	BAND 1	BAND 2	BAND 3	BAND 4	BAND 5	BAND 6	BAND 7	BAND 8	BAND 9	BAND 10	BAND 11	BAND 12	BAND-13	Chief Exec (CX)
28	£140,941	£73.05	CX5														140,941
28	£136,327	£70.66	CX4														136,327
28	£132,733	£68.80	CX3														132,733
28	£128,813	£66.77	CX2														128,813
28	£125,010	£64.80	CX1														125,010
28	£118,378	£61.36	81														
28	£114,995	£59.60	80														
28	£111,703	£57.90	79														
28	£108,510	£56.24	78													108,510	
28	£105,411	£54.64	77													105,411	
28	£102,384	£53.07	76													102,384	
28	£99,475	£51.56	75													99,475	
28	£96,689	£50.12	74													96,689	
28	£94,340	£48.90	73														
28	£91,708	£47.53	72														
28	£89,151	£46.21	71														
28	£86,689	£44.93	70												86,689		
28	£84,513	£43.81	69												84,513		
28	£82,213	£42.61	68												82,213		
28	£79,992	£41.46	67												79,992		
28	£77,867	£40.36	66												77,867		
28	£75,817	£39.30	65														
28	£73,852	£38.28	64														
28	£71,973	£37.31	63												71,973		
28	£70,172	£36.37	62												70,172		
28	£68,395	£35.45	61												68,395		
28	£66,988	£34.72	60												66,988		
28	£65,677	£34.04	59												65,677		
28	£64,369	£33.36	58												64,369		
28	£63,071	£32.69	57										63,071				
28	£62,006	£32.14	56										62,006				
28	£60,920	£31.58	55										60,920				
28	£59,842	£31.02	54										59,842				
28	£58,775	£30.46	53										58,775				
28	£57,684	£29.90	52										57,684				
28	£56,926	£29.51	51												56,926		
28	£55,862	£28.95	50												55,862		
28	£54,793	£28.40	49												54,793		
28	£53,698	£27.83	48												53,698		
28	£52,606	£27.27	47												52,606		
28	£51,530	£26.71	46												51,530		
28	£50,291	£26.07	45														
28	£49,215	£25.51	44														
28	£48,215	£24.99	43												48,215		
27	£47,220	£24.48	42												47,220		
27	£46,166	£23.93	41												46,166		
27	£45,144	£23.40	40												45,144		
27	£44,100	£22.86	39												44,100		
27	£43,093	£22.34	38												43,093		
27	£41,895	£21.72	37												41,895		
27	£40,834	£21.17	36												40,834		
27	£39,835	£20.65	35												39,835		
27	£38,928	£20.18	34												38,928		
27	£38,245	£19.82	33												38,245		
27	£37,315	£19.34	32												37,315		
27	£36,382	£18.86	31												36,382		
26	£35,487	£18.39	30												35,487		
26	£34,541	£17.90	29												34,541		
26	£33,579	£17.40	28												33,579		
25	£32,486	£16.84	27												32,486		
25	£31,871	£16.52	26												31,871		
25	£31,021	£16.08	25												31,021		
24	£30,195	£15.65	24												30,195		
24	£29,430	£15.25	23												29,430		
24	£28,760	£14.91	22												28,760		
24	£27,735	£14.38	21												27,735		
23	£27,073	£14.03	20												27,073		
23	£26,531	£13.75	19												26,531		
23	£25,809	£13.38	18												25,809		
23	£25,204	£13.06	17												25,204		
23	£24,616	£12.76	16												24,616		
23	£24,047	£12.46	15												24,047		
23	£23,857	£12.37	14												23,857		
Employee Notice Period				1 Month						Two Months				Three Months			

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Council – 24 February 2025

Report of Cabinet – [5 February 2025](#)

Part I – Items Resolved by Cabinet

1. Draft Air Quality Strategy

Portfolio - Community, Safety and Wellbeing

Cabinet Resolution:

That the process for implementing the Air Quality Strategy be supported and that the draft Strategy be approved for public consultation.

Cabinet Discussion:

The Portfolio Holder for Community, Safety and Wellbeing introduced the report highlighting that the District Council no longer had any Air Quality Management Areas, and that as directed by the Environment Act 2021, it was necessary for the Council to produce an Air Quality Strategy to ensure that air quality remained a high priority. It was proposed that following a public consultation exercise, approval would formally be sought to adopt the Air Quality Strategy.

Non-Cabinet members welcomed the draft Air Quality Strategy, recognising the desire to go beyond the air quality objectives set by Government. It was noted that the draft Strategy had been robustly considered at the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel and that officers should be commended for their hard work in its production.

It was highlighted by a non-Cabinet Member that statistics had been presented in the strategy in relation to people over the age of 30, but that there was no mention of infants and young children. The Portfolio Holder for Community, Safety and Wellbeing responded, noting that the public health statistical data reported on air quality impacts with data provided from the Department for Health and Social Care. He would seek clarification on why data was only provided for the over 30s. He did however confirm that young children were considered vulnerable in terms of the impact of air pollution impacts within the draft Strategy.

Some non-Cabinet members spoke about the lack of provision of accessible public transport, recognising that Hampshire County Council would not be prioritising rural public transport. One of the main pollutants in the District was from vehicle emissions. It was suggested that efforts be made to enhance public transport where the District Council was able to.

2. Housing Landlord Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Strategy

Portfolio - Housing and Homelessness

Cabinet Resolution:

That Cabinet support the process for implementing the ASB Strategy and approve the draft strategy for public consultation.

Cabinet Discussion:

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness introduced the report, highlighting that the last ASB Strategy had been adopted in 2013. A new Strategy was proposed which took into consideration good practice and guidance as well as the Social Housing Regulation Act (2023) which places an additional focus on housing landlords to prevent and tackle ASB. The draft Strategy had been considered and supported by the Tenant Involvement Group as well as the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel. There were four clearly defined strategic priorities.

A number of non-Cabinet members welcomed and supported the draft Strategy, recognising the importance of partnership working and that the local community needed to be encouraged to live together harmoniously. The issue of deprivation and child poverty was raised noting that a fifth of New Forest children were in receipt of free school meals. It was suggested that this had not been reflected sufficiently in the strategy. In response, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness acknowledged this point and reported that there had been a restructure of the estate management team to create a new neighbourhood team in order to respond to and resolve any issues before they escalate further. The other part of the team would focus on tenancy sustainment and support, which would link vulnerable people to any necessary support, and therefore this had been considered.

3. Local Plan Review – Issues and Scope Consultation Document

Portfolio - Planning and Economy

Cabinet Resolution:

1. that the Local Plan Issues and Scope document be approved for public consultation, attached at Appendix 1 to the Cabinet report; and
2. that any final editorial changes to the document prior to publication for consultation be agreed by the Strategic Director of Place, Operations and Sustainability in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy

Cabinet Discussion:

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy introduced the report which set out the progress on the Local Plan Review ahead of the first stage of public consultation with the issues and scope document. The importance of having an up to date Local Plan was highlighted. The Government had given a strong directive emphasising that Council's should have up to date Local Plans and any reviews should continue and not be delayed in light of any devolution or Local Government Reorganisation.

Extensive consultation had taken place with officers and an elected member group which had led to the broad range of issues, set out in the issues and scope document. It was proposed that following approval, consultation would commence in mid February and be widely publicised inviting as much engagement as possible. The planning policy team would host drop in sessions across the district to give people the opportunity to express their views. A list of locations would be published in due course. There would also be engagement with local town and parish councils and key stakeholders. Specialist engagement tools would be used for the consultation and the Portfolio Holder recommended that people respond to the consultation to help shape the future of the District.

Non-Cabinet members spoke in support of the report. The intention for a comprehensive engagement exercise, in particular involving the local towns and parish councils was welcomed. The Leader reiterated the importance of the consultation and invited members to publicise this in their local area and to encourage people to respond in order to achieve the best outcomes for the local community.

Non-Cabinet members also highlighted that the Member Task and Finish Group had considered the proposed consultation questions within the document very carefully, reviewing the wording to remove any planning related jargon wherever possible, to make the questions easier to understand. It was also acknowledged that respondents did not need to provide a response to every question within the consultation document. The hard work of officers in the production of the document was commended.

4. Community Grant Funding 2025/2026

Portfolio – Community, Safety and Wellbeing

Cabinet Resolution:

Part A

That Cabinet approve:

1. The proposal to increase Councillor Community Engagement Grants from £600 to £1,000 a year from 1 April 2025;
2. Community grants totalling £152,500 in revenue grants and £77,871 in capital grants, as detailed in Appendix 1, be included in the Medium-Term Financial Plan and proposed budget for 2025/26; and
3. The Community Transport grants totalling £44,359, as set out in paragraph 25 of the Cabinet report.

Part B

4. That officers be requested to produce a detailed report on how a community lottery scheme could be successfully run in the district, and the short to long-term implications for the Council, and for the report to progress through the Council's decision-making process.

Cabinet Discussion:

The Portfolio Holder for Community, Safety and Wellbeing reported he was delighted to present the community grants report which proposed to award funding to support the local community. In light of the number of grant applications received in the previous year, the process for community grants had been reviewed and a more streamlined approach had been introduced. As part of this, the Town and Parish Councils had been directed towards applying for CIL funding which had

reduced the number of applications received. The Portfolio Holder reported he supported the new approach and recommendations within the report.

A non-Cabinet member spoke of the financial difficulty of Hampshire County Council and that there was no longer a community grant process. It was also highlighted that a review was being carried out of the County member grants and that no funding would be available until September 2025, if at all. Therefore, any funding the District Council could give to support local community organisations was welcomed.

Other non-Cabinet members spoke in support of the report, recognising that the new streamlined approach to consider the grant applications had reduced both officer and member time when reviewing the grant applications. The recommendations proposed would support a range of organisations across the forest, and consideration had been given to signposting the organisations to other sources of funding. The proposal to increase member engagement grants was welcomed in order to enable councillors to support local organisations and charities in their local area.

Part II – Recommendations to Council

5. Financial Monitoring Report (based on Performance April to December 2024 inclusive)

Portfolio – Finance and Corporate

Cabinet Resolution:

1. that the latest budget forecasts of the General Fund, HRA, and Capital be noted

Recommended:

2. That Council approve the reallocation of the net residual 2024/25 Pay Award contingency (£496,000) to create a new £150,000 Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) reserve, with the remaining £346,000 being applied to the Council's existing Corporate Priority Reserve.

Cabinet Discussion:

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate presented the third quarter financial monitoring report. He noted there were a number of variations of the general fund but the most significant change was to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which was currently presenting a £207,000 surplus.

The following general fund variations were highlighted:

- Waste transition costs – an increase of £39,000, however given this was a major project, it was not to be unexpected.
- Additional business rate costs plus loss of income due to voids, of £248,000 in relation to Jubilee Business Park and Queensway.
- A reduction in public lighting costs of £50,000 due to lower than expected electricity costs.
- There was some remaining contingency funds held following the pay award. It was proposed that the remaining funds be reallocated to create a new £150,000 Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation Reserve. This was a significant change and had been an unforeseen requirement when the budget had been set last year and to top up the Corporate Priority reserve by £346,000.

In relation to the HRA, £248,000 was required to prioritise works to void properties to bring them back into use, however this pressure was offset against the additional rental income of £400,000 exceeding that which

had been budgeted for. There was also an additional benefit of £277,000 to reflect the outcome of the pay award costs.

A non-Cabinet Member questioned the waste transition costs and the reason for £12,000 falling within the remit of the Finance and Corporate Services rather than the Environment and Sustainability Portfolio. The Assistant Director – Finance reported that the waste project was cross cutting, and that this cost was in relation to customer services which was within the Finance and Corporate Portfolio.

Appendix 1 – Background report to Cabinet

6. Adoption of the revised Statement of Community Involvement

Portfolio – Planning and Economy

Recommended:

1. That the outcomes of the public consultation that took place for 6 weeks on the proposed amendments to the SCI be noted and that the draft responses to the representations received be agreed (set out in Appendix 2);
2. That the changes to the SCI set out in Appendix 1 be agreed and the amended SCI documents be formally adopted; and
3. That any final editorial changes to the document prior to publication be agreed by the Strategic Director of Place, Operations and Sustainability in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy.

Cabinet Discussion:

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy introduced the report highlighting that the Statement of Community Involvement was a comprehensive planning document which set out how the council would engage with local communities on planning matters, including the preparation of the Local Plan, determining planning applications, planning guidance and how to allocate CIL. It detailed the minimum commitment of the Council to consult on such matters, however, it was expected that this would be exceeded at times in order to seek as much engagement as possible within the community.

A six week consultation had been carried out on the proposed amendments to the SCI and during this time there had been engagement with the local town and parish councils and key

stakeholders. Specialist engagement tools had been used to encourage as much engagement as possible. Whilst there had not been a significant response to the consultation, the responses received were valuable. The SCI had been updated and the revised document was presented to Cabinet seeking that it be recommended for approval to adopt at Full Council.

Appendix 2 – Background Report to Cabinet

7. Asset Maintenance and Replacement Programme and General Fund Capital Programme 2025/2026

Portfolio – Finance and Corporate

Cabinet Resolution:

That the intention to create an Asset Management Strategy be noted.

Recommended:

1. That the schedule of projects, as included in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 be approved within the 2025/26 budget, noting that this commits the Council to expenditure beyond 2025/26 whereby a project commences in 2025/26 and extends into future years;
2. That the Vehicle and Plant replacement programme be approved for a 2-year period, covering purchases due in 2025/26 and 2026/27;
3. That the Appletree Court scheme previously approved in August 2024 be removed from the Capital Programme, updating the Council's MTFP accordingly and note the new £200,000 allocation for a reduced scope of work in the revised Capital Programme under recommendation 1; and

Cabinet Discussion:

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate introduced the report highlighting that revenue budget allowance to cover the AMP programme represented £2.5 million for the general fund and a further £390,000 for HRA.

The following key points were highlighted:

- Investment was proposed to continue to maintain the buildings of the health and leisure centres
- Depot improvements at Marsh Lane, Lymington

- ICT replacement programme and infrastructure works
- £1.65m was proposed as part of the revenue implications of the vehicle and plant replacement programme.
- £60,000 had been awarded to the Council from the UK shared prosperity fund and a separate report would be presented on how this grant would be spent
- Continued support to the community grant programme with a maximum budget of £100,000 towards capital grants.

The proposed General Fund Capital programme for 2025/26 represented £19.411 million. Within this, the majority of the scope of the work at Appletree Court had been removed in light of the Local Government Review. The new vehicle and plant programme proposed £2.463 million, with an additional £3.709 million to support the new waste strategy vehicles. The procurement of the new containers for the new waste strategy would cost £4.550 million. Finally, £1.5 million was proposed towards the disabled facilities grants, through the Better Care Fund.

The Assistance Director – Finance reported that almost 50% of the programme would be funded from external sources.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability spoke in relation to paragraph 20 of the report regarding the renovation of public conveniences. He felt that they were often undervalued, however they provided a critical role on providing facilities for all residents and visitors to the area. Modern and well-maintained public conveniences could attract and boost the local economy by making towns and villages, as well as open spaces more welcome and accessible. He understood and supported the work undertaken to prioritise projects with the funding available, however devolution and the Local Government Reorganisation landscape had shifted things. As the Portfolio Holder for this important service, he was pleased to note that a separate piece of work would be undertaken as part of a wider asset management strategy and welcomed investment in public conveniences over the next 2-3 years to provide high quality facilities to facilities and transfer to any a new authority or to the local towns and parishes. This was supported by the Leader, and she reported the approach should be applied to the other asset holdings the Council had. It was agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate that this would be considered and taken forward as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Appendix 3 – Background Report to Cabinet

8. Capital Strategy 2025/2026

Portfolio – Finance and Corporate

Recommended:

That Council approve the Capital Strategy 2025/2026, including the adoption of the Minimum Revenue Payment (MRP) statement.

Cabinet Discussion:

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate introduced the report which detailed the Capital Strategy for 2025/26 and how expenditure would be financed in line with financial regulations. It was proposed that the Council continue to maintain £10 million in reserves, in order remain in a stable and sound financial position. It was highlighted that there had been a change in position regarding the future of Lymington Town Hall and this had been reflected in the report.

The Assistant Director – Finance, in addition reported that the Capital programme was extensive over the period and that as a consequence, there was an increasing reliance on debt to fund the programme, having already exhausted most of the cash and internal resources.

Appendix 4 – Background Report to Cabinet

9. Scheme of Members' Allowances – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) and Scheme to Apply from 1 April 2025

Portfolio – Leader

Recommended:

That the full recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel and the scheme of members allowances to apply from 1 April 2025 be approved.

Cabinet Discussion:

The Service Manager – Democratic and Support Services reported that this was the second of two reviews commissioned by the Cabinet for an IRP of members allowances. This review was discretionary and reflected on the electoral review of the District which had seen a reduction in the number of elected members and the changes to the governance arrangements.

Appendix 1 detailed the considerations and recommendations of the IRP and a revised draft Scheme of Members allowances (Appendix 2), reflected on these recommendations. Minimal changes had been proposed by the Panel, but it was acknowledged that each councillor had an additional number of electors within their ward with the reduction in the number of councillors. The proposals sought to tidy up the basic allowance and the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) multiplier, which in turn would make minor changes to the range of SRA's payable. It was proposed to continue with indexation to the national pay award for staff.

It was noted that in relation to financial implications, the conclusion of the process of the electoral review, meant there was an ongoing saving in the Medium Term Financial Plan. The IRP recommended continuing with the parental leave policy and the dependent carers allowance, which would help to remove any barriers for prospective councillor candidates from standing for election as a councillor and that this should be promoted by the council and political groups.

Appendix 5 – Background Report to Cabinet

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Cabinet – 5 February 2025

Financial Monitoring Report (based on Performance April to December 2024 inclusive)

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>This report provides the latest budget forecasts for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and capital programme for the 2024/25 financial year, based on the performance from April 2024 to December 2024 inclusive.</p> <p>It confirms that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) despite further variations to the quarter 2 position a balanced budget is forecast in the General Fund overall. 2) the HRA has improved by £407,000 and now forecasts a £207,000 surplus. 3) the capital programme for 2024/25 has a net increase in this update of £225,000 and now totals £52.725m.
Recommendation(s)	<p>It is recommended that Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) note the latest budget forecasts of the General Fund, HRA, and Capital; and 2) Recommend that Council approve the reallocation of the net residual 2024/25 Pay Award contingency (£496,000) to create a new £150,000 Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) reserve, with the remaining £346,000 being applied to the Council’s existing Corporate Priority Reserve.
Reasons for recommendation(s)	<p>To comply with accounting codes of practice and best practice which requires councils to regularly monitor the annual budget position and take any action to support the sustainability of the council’s financial position ensuring we are being financially responsible.</p>

	To comply with the council's financial regulations regarding budget virements and supplementary budget requests.
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Jeremy Heron – Finance and Corporate
Strategic Director(s)	Alan Bethune – Strategic Director Corporate Resources and Transformation (Section 151 Officer)
Officer Contact	Paul Whittles Assistant Director - Finance 02380 285766 paul.whittles@nfdc.gov.uk

Introduction and background

1. Following the approval of the Original Budget for 2024/25 in February 2024 and updates after the first quarter and half year positions, this report provides a further update on the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital budgets, adjusting for any budget changes now required and recommended as at the quarter three position.
2. Financial Monitoring is an important feature in the management of the council's finances as it gives an opportunity to reflect on variations as against the latest set budget and reflect on the impact that these variations may have over the period covered by the council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

Pay award implications

3. As previously reported the 2024/25 pay award for all employees has now been agreed.
4. Following a detailed review of the impact across all Council pay budgets this has collectively added an additional £235,000 of salary costs above the original service level budgets in the General Fund and £66,000 in the HRA.
5. In the General Fund the £235,000 will be funded by reallocating the centrally held £800,000 pay award contingency to each service. £69,000 of the residual £565,000 balance is being applied first to ensure a balanced budget is achieved in 2024/25. It is then recommended to use the remaining £496,000 to create a new

£150,000 Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) reserve and to top up the existing Corporate Priorities Reserve by £346,000 with an intention for the latter to support the costs of the Waste Strategy Rollout.

6. In the HRA the £66,000 will be funded from its £300,000 contingency, leaving £234,000 to contribute towards the current positive outturn position.

General Fund revised projection

7. A General Fund budget of £24.513 million for 2024/25 was agreed by council in February 2024 (£24.898 million at Portfolio analysis level, with other budget elements reducing this to this lower General Fund budget figure).
8. The quarter one monitoring report to September Cabinet identified net reduced budget requirements of £4,000. Overall, no additional net budget adjustments in quarter two were reported to Cabinet in November.
9. This report again identifies a number of new budget variances but there is no overall change from the quarter 2 position, that being a £4,000 reduction from the original budget approved in February to £24.509 million.
10. The latest budget variations include additional net favourable expenditure variations of £40,000 and additional net income decreases of £40,000.
11. New major variations are detailed below and can be found in (Appendix 1), with full variations listed in (Appendix 2).

Environment and Sustainability (Place, Operations and Sustainability)

12. **Waste transition costs £27,000** – Various adjustments in year to storage, advice, communication, and project support costs as detailed in the December MTFP Update presented to Cabinet has increased the 2024/25 waste transition costs by a total of £39,000, of which £12,000 falls within the Finance and Corporate portfolio (paragraph 17).
13. **Garden waste (£8,000)** – Additional licencing costs associated with the Bartec management system supporting the garden waste service totalling £32,000 are being covered by a further £40,000 increase in income from the garden waste service.

14. **Public lighting (£50,000)** – Electricity costs are lower than expected leading to a forecast saving of £50,000 for the year across our public lighting infrastructure network.

Finance and Corporate (Corporate Resources and Transformation)

15. There are variations that impact directly on the reported Finance and Corporate Portfolio summary and other variations under the control of the Portfolio holder which impact all Portfolios or other General Fund budgets:
16. **Eling Toll bridge (£40,000)** – This was originally approved and included as part of the Asset Maintenance and Replacement budget 2024/25 to support the essential repairs required at Eling Tide Mill toll bridge and quayside. Due to the classification of works being undertaken this has been transferred to capital (paragraph 44) and will supplement an additional request which shall be subject to formal approval as part of the Asset Maintenance and Replacement Programme and General Fund Capital Programme 2025/26 report.
17. **Waste transition costs £12,000** – Additional storage related budget resulting from increased NNDR and loss of rental income (paragraph 12).
18. **Commercial Investment Properties £248,000** – Platinum Jubilee Business Park has incurred £60,000 of additional Business Rate costs and generated £100,000 less income than budgeted due to extended void periods. The Queensway site has also experienced additional Business Rate costs totalling £27,000 and due to site dilapidations being required following the surrender of the lease by the previous tenant, no third-party income will be received during the 2024/25 financial year. This site will be used to support the delivery of the new waste service during 2025/26 with that income loss recognised in the latest waste transition costings.

Planning and Economy (Place, Operations and Sustainability)

19. **Planning Development Management (£30,000)** – Ongoing vacancies within the Development Management service has resulted in an additional £30,000 on top of the of £80,000 salary underspends declared as part of the quarter 2 report. Vacancies will continue to be managed throughout the remainder of the year to provide further mitigation to the £150,000 budgeted income shortfall presented as part of the quarter 2 report.
20. **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) (£90,000)** - An additional £90,000 income relating to the administration of CIL

compared to budget is providing this favourable surplus supporting the costs incurred.

21. The revised General Fund Budget for 2024/25 can be seen at (**Appendix 1**), with further details on the variations being reported included within (**Appendix 2**).

Other Financial Matters to Note

22. The following matters do not affect the council's net revenue position but is included for information and transparency.
23. **Cemeteries – Safety maintenance** - Within the Environment and Sustainability portfolio £41,000 has been allocated from the Asset Maintenance and Replacement contingency to enable safety works to be completed at Sway cemetery.
24. **Coastal maintenance** - Additional costs relating to coastal maintenance previously anticipated to be capital in nature are creating a £100,000 adverse variance against the revenue budget. An adjustment to the Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO) has been made to reflect this and mitigate the impact.
25. **Fleet and Infrastructure** – In 2024/25 £80,000 was provided to support the strategic approach of moving the Council's fleet to zero carbon. The service is forecasting expenditure of £10,000 in 2024/25 consequently the remaining £70,000 will be rephased to 2025/26.
26. **Local Plan** - In 2024/25 £350,000 was provided to support the development of the Local Plan within the Planning and Economy portfolio. The service is forecasting expenditure of £100,000 in 2024/25, consequently the remaining £250,000 will be rephased to 2025/26.

Housing Revenue Account Revised Projection

27. A break-even HRA budget for 2024/25 was agreed in February 2024, with a Revenue Account contribution of £9.700 million supporting the financing of the £32.380 million HRA Capital Programme.
28. The quarter one monitoring report to September Cabinet identified additional budget requirements of £122,000 and the quarter two report to November Cabinet identified further additional budget requirements of £78,000.

29. This report identifies net budget reductions of £407,000 (£207,000 reduction in year to date). New variations are detailed in the following paragraphs and summarised in Appendix 3.
30. **Dwelling Rents (£400,000)** – Rental income is exceeding the budget by £400,000. This reflects additional properties arising from the Development Programme Strategy but could be mitigated if additional Right to Buy sales result before year end following the recently announced discount rates.
31. **Non-Dwelling Rents £40,000** – A reduction in garage income reflects the impact of reduced lettings, largely linked to the ongoing project to provide a full options appraisal of all sites.
32. **Contributions Towards Expenditure (£18,000)** – The Council has received Government Grant of £17,760 towards the costs of implementing Tenant Satisfaction Measures requirements.
33. **Repairs and Maintenance £230,000** – This reflects ongoing supplies and services cost requirements of £152,000, largely on void properties, £35,000 for equipment purchase and training for high level working, £25,000 impact of the pay award allocation and an £18,000 additional requirement for a technical gas audit.
34. **General Management (£277,000)** – This reflects additional pay award cost implications of £23,000 less the removal of the £300,000 pay award contingency detailed in paragraph 6.
35. **Other Expenditure £18,000** – Pay award allocation implications on Grounds Maintenance and Housing Schemes and Temporary Accommodation are £18,000.
36. The updated HRA budget can be seen at (**Appendix 3**).

Capital Expenditure (General Fund and Housing Revenue Account)

37. A Capital Programme budget of £48.959 million for 2024/25 was agreed by council in February 2024.
38. Principally due to rephasing from 2023/24, the budget was increased by £3.454 million to £52.413 million in the September Cabinet report.
39. The November Cabinet report identified gross programme variations in year totalling £300,000 and rephasing into 2025/26 of £213,000 which resulted in an updated 2024/25 Capital Programme Budget of £52.500 million.

40. The latest forecast confirms additional gross programme changes in year totalling £275,000 and rephasing into 2025/26 of £50,000 which results in an updated 2024/25 Capital Programme Budget of £52.725 million (**Appendix 4**).
41. Details of the changes and rephasing are provided below:
42. **Environment and Sustainability** – Expenditure regarding various coastal schemes has been reviewed. This has resulted in £50,000 for the Milford Cliff and Beach Study scheme rephased and rolled forward into 2025/26. Additionally, there is a £75,000 reduction of in year expenditure relating to the Barton Horizontal Directional Drilling Trails and Hurst Spit Shingle Source Study schemes. Furthermore, £100,000 of Sea Wall Construction Works at Milford which were originally expected to be capitalizable are now being expensed to the revenue account as stated earlier at paragraph 12.
43. **Finance and Corporate** – In November 2023 the Property Investment Panel agreed a provisional sum of £750,000 to cover the dilapidation repairs at Queensway. Following a tender process the amount required is now determined as £610,000 and was agreed via delegated approval in July 2024. It is the Council’s expectation that all costs shall be recovered from the former tenant in full.
44. Eling Tide Mill now has £40,000 following the reclassification and transfer from revenue to capital resources to support the essential repairs required at Eling Tide Mill toll bridge and quayside (paragraph 16).
45. **HRA** - Housing Decarbonisation – Budget provision of £200,000 for works on Parsonage Barn Lane have been covered within the overall major void refurbishment works project and therefore the specific decarbonisation works budget can be reduced.

Corporate plan priorities

46. Regular monitoring and reporting of our financial activity including adjusting budgets whilst maintaining a balanced medium term financial plan (MTFP), ensures we are being financially responsible and supports our Future New Forest transformation programme which underpins the delivery of all our priorities.

Options appraisal

47. In relation to the dilapidation costs regarding Queensway, options were considered as part of the delegated July 2024 decision, including do nothing, selling the freehold, leasing the property in its

current condition, repairing and reletting the site, and redeveloping the site.

48. The decision to forward fund the dilapidation repairs was considered the best course of action to return the property to an income generating asset without further delay and to support our claim to recover the full costs incurred.

Consultation undertaken

49. Internal consultation between finance officers, service managers and budget holders has determined the forecast data presented in the report.

Financial and resource implications

50. This is a financial report with budget implications already detailed and considered in the main body of the report.

Legal implications

51. There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

Risk assessment

52. The projected forecast is prepared based on estimates and assumptions in consultation with services. There are key risks in the projections across all service areas and both revenue and capital activity.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

53. There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report.

Equalities implications

54. There are no equality implications arising directly from this report.

Crime and disorder implications

55. There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

56. There are no data protection, information governance or ICT implications arising directly from this report.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Revised General Fund Budget 2024/25

Appendix 2 – Variation Analysis General Fund 2024/25

Appendix 3 – Revised Housing Revenue Account Budget 2024/25

Appendix 4 – Revised Capital Programme 2024/25

Appendix 5 – Variation Analysis General Fund 2024/25

Background Papers:

Cabinet 6 November 2024:

Financial Monitoring Report - (based on Performance April to September 2024 inclusive)

Cabinet 4 September 2024:

Financial Monitoring Report - (based on Performance April to June 2024 inclusive)

Cabinet 21 February 2024 – Budget Reports 24/25:

Housing Revenue Account Budget and the Housing Public Sector Capital Expenditure Programme 2024/25

Medium Term Financial Plan and Annual Budget 2024/25

FINANCIAL MONITORING 2024/25							
REVISED GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2024/25							
	Feb-24	Nov'24	February'25				
	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25	
	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	
	Original	Latest	New	New	New	Updated	
	Budget	Budget	Variations	Variations	Variations	Budget	
			Expend.	Income	Rephasings		
PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS							
Community, Safety and Wellbeing	3,468	3,451	15	0	0	3,466	
Environment and Sustainability	8,540	8,982	299	-40	0	9,241	
Finance and Corporate	4,220	4,360	-758	170	-70	3,702	
Housing and Homelessness	3,499	3,271	20	0	0	3,291	
Leader	1,174	1,261	10	0	0	1,271	
Planning and Economy	3,997	4,201	-22	-90	-250	3,839	
Multi Portfolio adjustments - To be allocated	0	367	0	0	0	367	
	24,898	25,893	-436	40	-320	25,177	
Reversal of Depreciation	-2,190	-2,190				-2,190	
Contribution (from) / to Earmarked Revenue Reserves	-410	-934	496	0	320	-118	
NET PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS	22,298	22,769	60	40	0	22,869	
Minimum Revenue Provision	2,269	2,269				2,269	
Contribution to Capital Programme Financing (RCCO)	1,250	1,175	-100			1,075	
Interest Costs	150	150				150	
Interest Earnings	-1,432	-1,832				-1,832	
New Homes Bonus	-22	-22				-22	
GENERAL FUND NET BUDGET REQUIREMENTS	24,513	24,509	-40	40	0	24,509	
COUNCIL TAX CALCULATION							
Budget Requirement	24,513	24,509	-40	40	0	24,509	
Less: Settlement Funding Assessment							
Lower Tier Service Grant	0	0				0	
Services Grant	-25	-28				-28	
Guarantee Grant (MHCLG)	-1,200	-1,233				-1,233	
Business Rates Baseline	-4,330	-4,330				-4,330	
	-5,555	-5,591	0	0	0	-5,591	
Covid Support Funding							
Public Sector Funding Support - Tranche 2		0				0	
Public Sector Funding Support - Tranche 3		0				0	
Public Sector Funding Support - Tranche 4		0				0	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Locally Retained Business Rates	-4,320	-4,320				-4,320	
Estimated Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit Business Rates	1,305	1,305				1,305	
Contribution from Business Rates Equalisation Reserve	-1,305	-1,305				-1,305	
Estimated Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit Council Tax	-179	-179				-179	
Contribution to/ from(-) Variation Reserves	0	40	40	-40	0	40	
COUNCIL TAX	14,459	14,459	0	0	0	14,459	
TAX BASE NUMBER OF PROPERTIES	72,371.50	72,371.50				72,371.50	
COUNCIL TAX PER BAND D PROPERTY	199.79	199.79				199.79	
GENERAL FUND BALANCE 31 MARCH	3,000	3,000				3,000	

FINANCIAL MONITORING 2024/25		February'25			
VARIATION ANALYSIS GENERAL FUND 2024/25		2024/25	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25
	Nov'24	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
	2024/25				
	Previous	New	New	New	Updated
	Variations	Variations	Variations	Variations	Budget
		Expend.	Income	Rephasings	
PORTFOLIO ADJUSTMENTS					
Community, Safety and Wellbeing					
Previously Reported - September Cabinet;					
Grants - Rephased into 24/25	25				
CCTV - Rephased into 24/25 (Proposed spend from £284k in reserve)	85				
Health and Leisure Centres AMR funding vired to ATC East Wing Roof	-127				
New Items;					
Implications of the 24/25 pay award		15			
	-17	15	0	0	15
Environment and Sustainability					
Previously Reported - September Cabinet;					
Cemeteries - Maintenance budget rephased into 24/25	29				
Climate and Nature Action - spend relates to Revenue not Capital	150				
Open Spaces - projected Trees overspend	50				
Recycling - additional Glass income - partially used to fund temp. posts	-150				
Recycling - additional Garden Waste income, partially offset by new round	-50				
Waste Strategy - Temporary posts met from Corporate Plan Priorities	153				
Previously Reported - November Cabinet;					
Car Parks - Projected income shortfall after new fees from Jan'25	200				
Street Scene - Operational issues - vehicle hire, sickness cover etc	90				
Waste and Recycling - fuel underspends due to price per litre	-30				
New Items;					
Implications of the 24/25 pay award		149			
Waste Transition expenditure review - Refuse & Recycling		27			
Cemeteries- Sway cemetery safety works - funded by Contingency		41			
Coastal - maintenance spend in Revenue not Capital		100			
Recycling - Garden Waste income - higher than anticipated			-40		
Bartec - Licence cost implications following project implementation		32			
Public Lighting - Electricity costs not as high as expected		-50			
	442	299	-40	0	259
Finance and Corporate					
Previously Reported - September Cabinet;					
Sustain. and Regen. Assets - Salisbury Rd, Totton	215				
Previously Reported - November Cabinet;					
Revenue and Benefits Service - salary underspends	-75				
Human Resources - Transforming HR report EMT March'24	52				
Above funded by Contingency	-52				
New Items;					
Eling Toll Bridge - remove maintenance scheme budget, see Capital		-40			
Waste Transition expenditure review - Queensway		3	9		
Implications of the 24/25 pay award		33			
Pay award 24/25 implications funded by Contingency		-235			
Release of residual Pay Award Contingency		-565			
Contingency used to fund Sway cemetery safety works		-41			
Commercial Investment Property Voids		87	161		
Fleet and Infrastructure Strategy - rephase into 25/26				-70	
	140	-758	170	-70	-658
Housing and Homelessness					
Previously Reported - September Cabinet;					
Homeless Assistance - Homes for Ukraine Grant	-228				
New Items;					
Implications of the 24/25 pay award		20			
	-228	20	0	0	20
Leader					
Previously Reported - September Cabinet;					
Prosperity Funds - UKSPF Schemes - Rephased into 2024/25	112				
Previously Reported - November Cabinet;					
Resident Insight - rephasing into 25/26	-25				
New Items;					
Implications of the 24/25 pay award		10			
	87	10	0	0	10

FINANCIAL MONITORING 2024/25					
VARIATION ANALYSIS GENERAL FUND 2024/25		Nov'24	February'25		
		2024/25	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25
		£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
		Previous	New	New	Updated
		Variations	Variations	Variations	Budget
			Expend.	Income	Rephasings
PORTFOLIO ADJUSTMENTS					
Planning and Economy					
Previously Reported - September Cabinet;					
Policy - Digital Planning Grant (DLUHC) - rephased into 24/25	100				
Economic Development - Initiatives budget rephased into 24/25	34				
Previously Reported - November Cabinet;					
Planning Fees Development Management - shortfall in income	150				
Planning Development Management - salary underspends	-80	-30			
Planning Skills Delivery Grant spend/grant	0				
New Items;					
Implications of the 24/25 pay award		8			
Planning - Surplus CIL Admin income			-90		
Policy - Local Plan Rephasing				-250	
	204	-22	-90	-250	-362
Portfolio adjustments - Non Direct					
Previously Reported - September Cabinet;					
AMR Scheme - North Wing Appletree Court. Rephased into 24/25	34				
AMR Scheme - East Wing Appletree Court. Rephased into 24/25	93				
AMR Scheme - East Wing Appletree Court, virement	95				
Previously Reported - November Cabinet;					
ICT - Azure - additional cloud storage costs	105				
Insurance Premium Implications	70				
Support Services - salary underspends	-30				
	367	0	0	0	0
TOTAL PORTFOLIO ADJUSTMENTS	995	-436	40	-320	-716
NON-PORTFOLIO ADJUSTMENTS					
Central Government Grants	-36				
Contribution to/from(-) Earmarked Reserves	-524	496		320	
Contribution to Capital Programme Financing (RCCO)	-75	-100			
Interest Earnings	-400				
TOTAL NON-PORTFOLIO ADJUSTMENTS	-1035	396	0	320	716
GRAND TOTAL ADJUSTMENTS (Credited to (-) / Debited from (+) Budget Reserves)	-40	-40	40	0	0

FINANCIAL MONITORING 2024/25				
REVISED HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET				
2024/25	Feb-24	Nov-24	February-25	
	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25
	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
	Original	Latest	New	Updated
	Budget	Budget	Variations	Budget
INCOME				
Dwelling Rents	-33,396	-33,396	-400	-33,796
Non Dwelling Rents	-775	-775	40	-735
Charges for Services & Facilities	-1,169	-1,169		-1,169
Contributions towards Expenditure	-60	-60	-18	-78
Interest Receivable	-441	-441		-441
Sales Administration Recharge	-33	-33		-33
Shared Amenities Contribution	-313	-313		-313
TOTAL INCOME	-36,187	-36,187	-378	-36,565
EXPENDITURE				
Repairs & Maintenance				
Cyclical Maintenance	1,886	1,886	53	1,939
Reactive Maintenance - General	3,400	3,400	52	3,452
Reactive Maintenance - Voids	1,521	1,521	125	1,646
Supervision & Management				
General Management	7,766	7,937	-277	7,660
Grounds Maintenance and Trees	936	1,026	11	1,037
Housing Schemes and Temporary Accommodation	1,150	1,150	7	1,157
Rents, Rates, Taxes and Other Charges	0	0		0
Provision for Bad Debt	150	150		150
Capital Financing Costs - Interest/Debt Management	5,137	5,137		5,137
Capital Financing Costs - Internal Borrowing	0	0		0
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	21,946	22,207	-29	22,178
HRA OPERATING SURPLUS(-)	-14,241	-13,980	-407	-14,387
Contribution to Capital - supporting Housing Strategy	9,700	9,700		9,700
Capital Financing Costs - Principal	4,541	4,541		4,541
HRA Total Annual Surplus(-) / Deficit	0	261	-407	-146
Contribution to/from(-) Earmarked Reserves		-61		-61
HRA TOTAL ANNUAL SURPLUS(-) / DEFICIT	0	200	-407	-207

FINANCIAL MONITORING 2024/25

REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25

	Portfolio	Feb-24	Nov-24	February'25		
		2024/25 £'000's Original Budget	2024/25 £'000's Latest Budget	2024/25 £'000's New Variations Expend.	2024/25 £'000's New Variations Rephasing	2024/25 £'000's Updated Budget
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	LEADER/ALL	208	230			230
Rural England Prosperity Fund	LEADER/ALL	300	531			531
Disabled Facilities Grants	HSG (GF)	1,500	1,500			1,500
Sustainability Fund - Unallocated	ENV & SUSTAIN	250	100			100
Strategic Regional Coastal Monitoring (22-27)	ENV & SUSTAIN	2,667	2,925			2,925
Barton Horizontal Directional Drilling Trials	ENV & SUSTAIN	260	200	-50		150
Hurst Spit Beach Shingle Source Study	ENV & SUSTAIN	100	50	-25		25
Milford Beach and Cliff Study	ENV & SUSTAIN	100	50		-50	
Milford - Sea Wall Construction Works	ENV & SUSTAIN	100	100	-100		
Waste Strategy Containers	ENV & SUSTAIN	1,025	1,088			1,088
St Georges Hall, Calshot	ENV & SUSTAIN		375			375
Asset Modernisation Programme - Public Convenience	F&C/E&S	300	225			225
New Depot Site: Hardley	FIN & CORP	4,372	6,349			6,349
Ringwood Depot: Extension and Works	FIN & CORP	250	250			250
V&P; Replacement Programme	FIN & CORP	2,102	3,102			3,102
V&P; Replacement Programme - Waste Strategy Vehicles	FIN & CORP	885	885			885
ATC East Wing Boiler Replacement	FIN & CORP	160	160			160
Commercial Property - Queensway - addit.works	FIN & CORP			610		610
Eling Toll Bridge and Quayside Repairs	FIN & CORP			40		40
Mitigation Schemes	PLAN & ECON	1,000	1,000			1,000
Infrastructure Projects	PLAN & ECON	1,000	1,000			1,000
TOTAL GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME		16,579	20,120	475	-50	20,545
Fire Risk Assessment Works	HRA	1,000	1,000			1,000
Major Structural Refurbishments	HRA	1,260	1,260			1,260
HRA - Major Repairs	HRA	8,600	8,600			8,600
Decarbonisation	HRA	2,170	2,170	-200		1,970
Estate Improvements	HRA	200	200			200
Council Dwellings - Strategy Delivery	HRA	18,200	18,200			18,200
Disabled Facilities Grants	HRA	950	950			950
TOTAL HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME		32,380	32,380	-200		32,180
GRAND TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME		48,959	52,500	275	-50	52,725

FINANCIAL MONITORING 2024/25

VARIATION ANALYSIS GENERAL FUND 2024/25

	Nov'24 2024/25 £'000's Previous Variations	February'25			
		2024/25 £'000's New Variations Expend.	2024/25 £'000's New Variations Income	2024/25 £'000's New Variations Rephasings	2024/25 £'000's Latest Budget
DIRECTORATE ADJUSTMENTS					
Corporate Resources & Transformation					
Previously Reported - September Cabinet;					
Grants - Rephased into 24/25	25				
Health and Leisure Centres AMR funding wired to ATC East Wing Roof	-127				
Sustainability and Regen. Assets - Salisbury Road, Totton Scheme	215				
AMR Scheme - North Wing Appletree Court. Rephased into 24/25	34				
AMR Scheme - East Wing Appletree Court. Rephased into 24/25	93				
AMR Scheme - East Wing Appletree Court, virement from Comm. Safety and Wellbeing	95				
Previously Reported - November Cabinet;					
Revenue and Benefits Service - salary underspends	-75				
Human Resources - Transforming HR report EMT March'24	52				
Above funded by Contingency	-52				
Resident Insight - rephasing into 25/26	-25				
ICT - Azure - additional cloud storage costs	105				
Insurance Premium Implications	70				
Support Services - salary underspends	-30				
New Items;					
Implications of the 24/25 pay award		43			
Waste Transition expenditure review - Queensway		3	9		
Pay award 24/25 implications funded by Contingency		-235			
Release of residual Pay Award Contingency		-565			
Contingency used to fund Sway cemetery safety works		-41			
Commercial Investment Property Voids		87	161		
TOTAL Corporate Resources & Transformation	380	-708	170	0	-538
Housing & Communities					
Previously Reported - September Cabinet;					
CCTV - Rephased into 24/25 (Proposed spend from £284k in reserve)	85				
Homeless Assistance - Homes for Ukraine Grant	-228				
New Items;					
Implications of the 24/25 pay award		35			
TOTAL Housing & Communities	-143	35	0	0	35
Place, Operations & Sustainability					
Previously Reported - September Cabinet;					
Cemeteries - Maintenance budget rephased into 24/25	29				
Climate and Nature Action - spend relates to Revenue not Capital	150				
Open Spaces - projected Trees overspend	50				
Recycling - additional Glass sales income - partially used to fund temporary posts	-150				
Recycling - additional Garden Waste income, partially offset by new round costs	-50				
Waste Strategy - Temporary posts met from Corporate Plan Priorities	153				
Prosperity Funds - UKSPF Schemes - Rephased into 2024/25	112				
Policy - Digital Planning Grant (DLUHC) - rephased into 24/25	100				
Economic Development - Initiatives budget rephased into 24/25	34				
Previously Reported - November Cabinet;					
Car Parks - Projected income shortfall after new fees from Jan'25	200				
Street Scene - Operational issues - vehicle hire, sickness cover etc	90				
Waste and Recycling - fuel underspends due to price per litre	-30				
Planning Fees Development Management - shortfall in income	150				
Planning Development Management - salary underspends	-80				
Planning Skills Delivery Grant spend/income	0				
New Items;					
Implications of the 24/25 pay award		157			
Eling Toll Bridge - remove maintenance scheme budget, see Capital		-40			
Waste Transition expenditure review - Refuse & Recycling		27			
Cemeteries- Sway cemetery safety works - funded by Contingency		41			
Coastal - maintenance spend in Revenue not Capital		100			
Recycling - Garden Waste income - higher than anticipated			-40		
Bartec - Licence cost implications following project implementation		32			
Public Lighting - Electricity costs not as high as expected		-50			
Fleet and Infrastructure Strategy - rephase into 25/26				-70	
Planning Development Management - salary underspends		-30			
Planning - Surplus CIL Admin income			-90		
Policy - Local Plan Rephasing				-250	
TOTAL Place, Operations & Sustainability	758	237	-130	-320	-213
TOTAL DIRECTORATE ADJUSTMENTS	995	-436	40	-320	-716
NON-DIRECTORATE ADJUSTMENTS					
Central Government Grants	-36				
Contribution to/from(-) Earmarked Reserves	-524	496		320	
Contribution to Capital Programme Financing (RCCO)	-75	-100			
Interest Earnings	-400				
TOTAL NON-DIRECTORATE ADJUSTMENTS	-1,035	396	0	320	716
GRAND TOTAL ADJUSTMENTS (Credited to (-) / Debited from (+) Budget Reserves)	-40	-40	40	0	0

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Cabinet – 5 February 2025

Adoption of the revised Statement of Community Involvement

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how the District Council will consult and involve others in planning matters. It covers both the preparation of local plans and planning guidance, and applications for planning permission.</p> <p>Whilst a required statutory document, it is also a statement of the council's commitment to the involvement of our communities in planning matters.</p> <p>Last revised in July 2020, it is important that the document is reviewed from time to time to ensure that it is up to date. This report seeks Cabinet approval to finalise the amendments to the SCI (Appendix 1) and adopt the amended SCI document.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is recommended that Cabinet recommend to Council the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to note the outcomes of the public consultation that took place for 6 weeks on the proposed amendments to the SCI and agrees the draft responses to the representations received (set out in Appendix 2). • to agree the changes to the SCI set out in Appendix 1 and formally adopts the amended SCI document; and • that any final editorial changes to the document prior to publication be agreed by the Strategic Director of Place, Operations and Sustainability in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy.

Reasons for recommendations	<p>The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the council to have a SCI.</p> <p>The SCI was last reviewed in 2020 and moderate changes are recommended to reflect changes in legislation, best practice and to aide clarity.</p> <p>The NFDC Corporate Plan puts community engagement central to its 'People' priority.</p>
Wards	All wards outside the National Park
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Derek Tipp – Planning and Economy
Strategic Director	James Carpenter – Place, Operations and Sustainability
Officer Contact	<p>Andrew Herring Senior Policy Planner 023 8028 5471 andrew.herring@nfdc.gov.uk</p>

Introduction and background

1. Planning directly affects the places where people live and work, the economy and residents' health and well-being. Meaningful public consultation and engagement on all aspects of planning is vital. It allows communities to have an input into the planning of their area. By maintaining community involvement at the centre of what the council does, we can gain a real understanding of our communities' priorities.
2. Following Cabinet approval in October 2024, a public consultation has been carried out on the proposed revisions to the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This report summarises the process and consultation responses received.
3. Just at the end of the consultation period a new National Planning Practice Framework (NPPF) was published. Officers have considered any implications arising from the NPPF in relation to the comments received and proposed.

Consultation response

4. The draft revised SCI was subject to 6 weeks of formal public consultation from Wednesday 23 October – Friday 6 December 2024.
5. For this consultation officers used a variety of mediums to engage with the wider public. This included contacting those on our planning database, publication on the council's website, promotion on social

media (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn), and direct news releases. A new online consultation platform called 'Go Vocal' was also used where comments could be made directly into a copy of the SCI document. The social media posts also included a helpful 1-minute summary of what an SCI was and why it was important. These posts were repeated during the consultation period.

6. Overall, there were 12 respondents to the public consultation. This compares to 13 received during the last revision to the SCI in 2020. It is not mandatory to consult on revisions to an existing SCI but it was considered good practice to do so. Whilst a generally low number of responses were received, it is comparable to the expected number for a non-statutory consultation.
7. Comments received during the consultation have been considered and some minor changes covered in the next section are proposed in the schedule in Appendix 2, are recommended. These have been incorporated in the document in Appendix 1 (previous agreed changes in October 2024 are shown in red underlined text, with yellow highlighted text showing changes made since the public consultation in October-December 2024).

Revisions to SCI

8. As reported and agreed at the 2 October 2024 Cabinet, there are number of proposed revisions to the SCI as set out in Appendix 1 (shown in red underlined text). In summary these revisions include:
 - Insertion of a number of weblinks;
 - Deletion of previous references to the Covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions;
 - Clarifications on statutory legislation and updates where there have been changes to the National Planning Policy Framework;
 - Updates in relation to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and how the council will involve others in allocating CIL to projects;
 - Modest revisions to provide further detail in relation to the different stages of Local Plan production (Section 2); and
 - More extensive updates to the part of the SCI dealing with Development Management and what the council will do at various stages of the planning application consent process (section 6 and Appendix 4 of the SCI).
9. As highlighted in Appendix 2, a number of the responses which are proposed to be taken on board relate to factual updates to legislation or expanding on definitions. Some of the comments received are noted but relate to matters outside the scope of the SCI such as time

limits for speaking at planning committee and amendments to statutory consultee lists (which are set out in legislation).

10. The commitments made and set out in the SCI, as proposed to be updated, represent the minimum that NFDC will do and how the council will engage with residents and wider public bodies.

Corporate Plan priorities

11. The existing SCI already helps to deliver all the priorities of the NFDC Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan puts community engagement central to its 'People' priority, and under its 'Place' priority the council aims to balance growth with conservation and sustainable development. This also closely aligns with the objective to foster economic growth while ensuring inclusivity and sustainability (under its 'Prosperity' priority).

Financial and resource implications

12. The costs of undertaking the preparation of the SCI, and its implications for consultation in relation to future plan-making and the development management function of the council are capable of being met within existing budgets.

Legal implications

13. The requirement to prepare the SCI is set out in Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
14. Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (as amended) requires that local planning authorities should review their SCIs at least once every 5 years to ensure that policies remain relevant and effectively address the needs of the local community.

Risk assessment

15. The SCI commits the council to undertake certain community engagement activities in its function as a local planning authority. Failure to undertake these activities as a minimum presents a risk of future local plans being found unsound and judicial challenge of future planning decisions with associated financial, reputational and planning consequences.

Environmental / Climate and Nature implications

16. Consulting the community on both plan making and proposals for planning applications helps to ensure that the Council delivers high quality development within its area that reflects the needs of local communities.

Equalities implications

17. The proposed revisions to the SCI will help to ensure that opportunities to engage with communities on planning matters across plan making and development management are equal. There are opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations through targeted and specific consultation in plan-making, which will in itself be subject to continuing monitoring and review. The development of an appropriate consultation and engagement strategy for plan-making consultations and in relation to development proposals through development management should lead to positive engagement.

Crime and disorder implications

18. None arising directly from this report.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

19. The Council will continue to utilise existing ICT software and processes to maintain data protection of individuals and organisations involved in the planning system.

New Forest National Park/Cranborne Chase National Landscape implications

20. The New Forest National Park Authority is required to produce its own Statement of Community Involvement to support the proposed review of its local plan. The proposed changes to the NFDC SCI are broadly in line with that of the National Park Authority, with similar methods used in how it consults and involves others in planning matters. There are no specific implications identified for the Cranborne Chase National Landscape.

Appendices

Appendix 1 –
Revised SCI (as amended following
public consultation)

Appendix 2 –
Statement of Consultation January
2025 (and NFDC response to
comments)

Statement of Community Involvement

Planning

~~DRAFT REVISED VERSION FOR CONSULTATION~~

~~(Revisions in red text)~~

~~October 2024~~

CABINET VERSION

February 2025

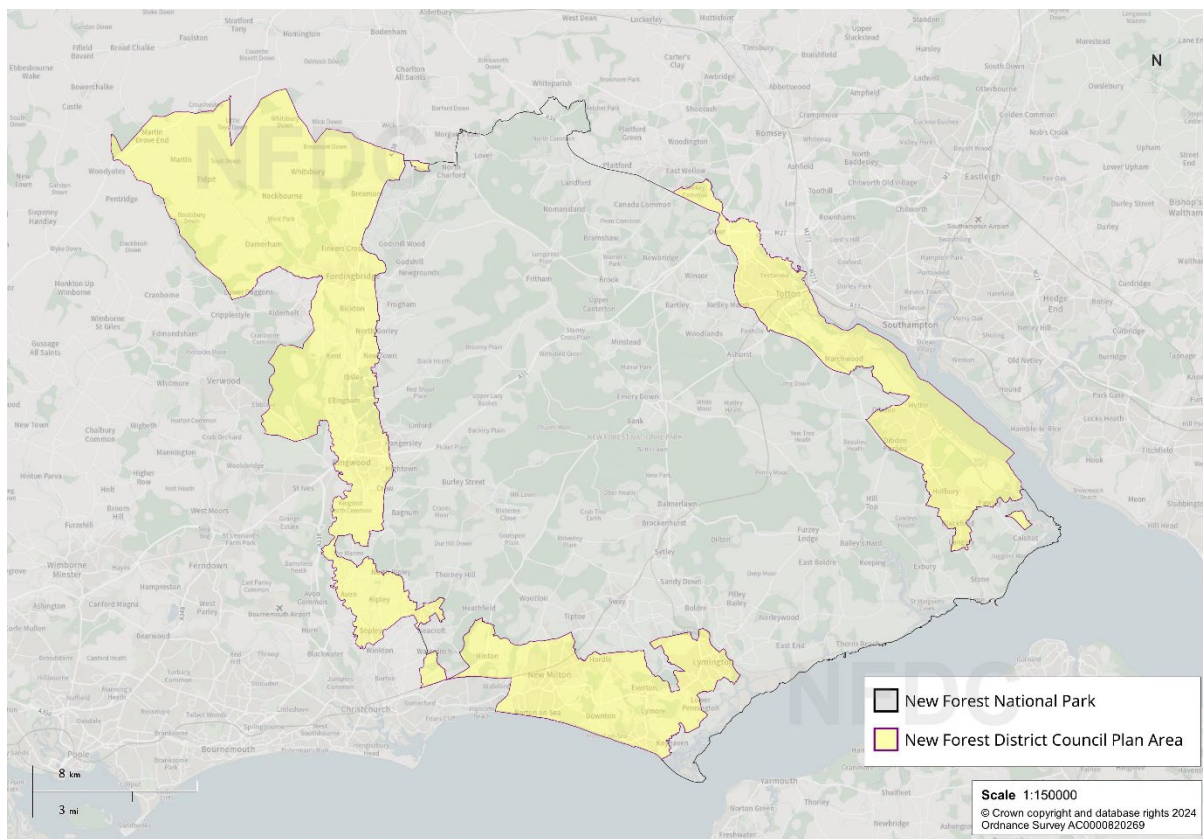
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Introduction

New Forest District Council is the local planning authority for the parts of the District outside of the New Forest National Park. As the local planning authority, it is responsible for producing the Local Plan and other planning documents for its area and for determining planning applications for most forms of development (Hampshire County Council is the planning authority for minerals and waste planning matters). Within the National Park the National Park Authority is the local planning authority. This document relates to the parts of New Forest District outside of the National Park (the area shaded **grey yellow** on the map below) referred to as the 'Plan Area' henceforth.



The council is committed to engage with local people, organisations and businesses to get their views on different aspects of its work. Planning directly affects the places where people live and work and meaningful public consultation and engagement on all aspects of planning is vital.

1 What is a Statement of Community Involvement?

- 1.1 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how the council will consult and involve others in planning matters in New Forest District outside the National Park. It covers both the preparation of local plans and planning guidance, and applications for planning permission. It is also a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

A brief guide to the planning system

- 1.2 Local planning authorities are responsible for producing Local Plans and other planning policy documents which set the framework under which decisions on planning applications are made. All local planning authorities are expected to have an up-to-date Local Plan for their area. The Plan guides new development, setting the overall planning strategy for the area and setting policies and proposals for what development can happen, and where. The Local Plan is the main planning policy document for the area but can be supplemented by Supplementary Planning Documents (which provide additional guidance on the implementation of policies in the Local Plan) and by Neighbourhood Plans (which are community-led plans).
- 1.3 The Government sets national planning policies in the 'National Planning Policy Framework' (NPPF). Local Plan policies must comply with this national framework. The Government also publishes national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which gives further guidance and advice on how local authorities are expected to prepare local planning documents and implement Government policy.
- 1.4 The current planning system has no hierarchy of plans between national and local planning policies. However, the Localism Act (2011) established a new 'Duty to Co-operate' which requires local planning authorities and other organisations to work together constructively in preparing their plans, to try to resolve cross boundary planning issues.

Planning in the New Forest

1.5 The council has an adopted Local Plan for the area. The key documents which make up the Local Plan for New Forest District (outside the National Park) are:

- The Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1: Planning Strategy, adopted in July 2020, which sets the planning strategy for housing and employment provision, protection of sensitive environments, town centres, and transportation for the area up until 2036. It replaces and updates parts of the adopted 2009 Core Strategy, and a small number of the more strategic policies in the Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management adopted in 2014.
- The Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management, adopted in April 2014, which sets out more detailed policies implementing the strategy, including identifying sites for new development. The remaining policies of the adopted 2009 Core Strategy and 2014 Local Plan Part 2 are either saved for continued use pending review as part of the Local Plan Review 2016-2036 Part Two, or are deleted, as set out in Appendix A of the Local Plan Part One. It includes allocations of specific sites for new housing, affordable housing and employment land. It also provides additional development management policies to assist the implementation of the Part One Local Plan.

1.6 The council has adopted several Supplementary Planning Documents. These include Local Distinctiveness SPDs, the Mitigation [For Recreational Impacts Strategy for on New Forest](#) European Sites SPD [\(2021\)](#) and Planning for Climate Change SPD (2024).

1.7 Full details of all current planning policy documents prepared by New Forest District Council are available on the Planning Policy page of the council's website: www.newforest.gov.uk/planningpolicy.

Working with others

The New Forest National Park and Cranborne Chase ~~Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)~~ National Landscape

1.8 The council attaches great importance to having a close working relationship with the New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA) and the Cranborne Chase National Landscape (CCNL). Given the geography of the Plan Area and its relationship with the National Park, it is essential to the proper planning of the area that there is collaboration between the two planning authorities. This includes matters that have an impact across the New Forest and will be addressed in the review of the Local Plan. These are addressed through regular liaison meetings with the National Park Authority. The council also has a duty to seek to further the purposes of the National Park and National Landscape have regard to the purposes of the National Park under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) as amended by Section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. Planning policies for the area recognise that development proposals within the Plan Area can have a significant impact on the National Park and the National Landscape, as well as on protected European nature conservation sites within the National Park. The council will also engage with the Cranborne Chase National Landscape AONB and have regard to the Planning Protocol agreed between the two parties¹.

Neighbouring authorities and Local Economic Partnerships

1.9 The Duty to Co-operate (DTC), brought into effect by the Localism Act (2011), aims to ensure that bodies engaged in planning work together on issues that are of more than local significance. The council will continue to work with a wide range of statutory and non-statutory bodies in fulfilling its planning duties and ensuring that issues of more than local significance are dealt with by working with its neighbours and other appropriate bodies.

¹ https://cranbornechase.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/PlanProtocolOct05_Sept061.pdf

1.10 The council will work with neighbouring authorities and other authorities in the sub-regions on matters of strategic significance, where cross-boundary working is essential to ensure an appropriate planning strategy for the wider area is established (including the work of ~~the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership~~, the Partnership for South Hampshire², and other neighbouring Local Enterprise Partnerships). This will include the joint commissioning of appropriate studies to assess housing and business needs locally and within the wider area.

1.11 See paragraphs 2.12 – 2.17 for further information on the Duty to Co-operate.

² <https://www.push.gov.uk/>

2 The process of Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Document preparation

2.1 Procedures for preparing development plan documents are set out in national regulations, currently the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The figure below sets out the stages in plan preparation, indicating consultation stages, as set out in the Regulations.

Figure 1 – Stages in Local Plan preparation

Stage:	What we will do:
Regulation 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define scope of document and critical issues • Evidence gathering, including targeted consultations on specific issues or studies (e.g. statutory bodies and infrastructure providers) • Public Consultation on emerging options <u>(at least 6 weeks)</u> • Public Consultation on draft Plan <u>(at least 6 weeks)</u>
Regulation 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of proposed Submission Plan (Submission <u>Draft</u> documents) <u>taking account of comments received at Regulation 18 stage</u> • <u>Public consultation (at least 6 weeks)</u>
Regulation 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Consultation on Plan to be submitted
Regulation 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of Plan and supporting documents (including Sustainability Appraisal Report) to Secretary of State • Submission of representations / <u>Statement of Consultation</u>
Regulation 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Examination, including Hearings

Regulation 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of Inspector's Report • Consideration of Inspector's recommendations
Regulation 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of the Local Plan

2.2 In the preparation of documents the council will be consulting and involving others at various stages of plan preparation, from evidence gathering and developing strategic approaches to preparing the Plan for Submission and public Examination by an independent Inspector. The methods and techniques used to involve the **statutory bodies and wider** community will vary depending on the type of planning document being prepared and the stage of preparation reached. More detail is given in Tables 1 and 2 **below**.

2.3 The Local Development Scheme sets out the programme for preparing local planning documents. As well as the Local Plan itself, Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), covering particular areas, sites or topics may be prepared. Examples of SPDs which have been prepared by New Forest District Council include the Lymington Local Distinctiveness SPD and the Mitigation **for Recreational Impacts on New Forest** **Strategy for** European Sites SPD (a full list of current SPDs is provided in the Local Development Scheme and on the council’s website). The process for preparing Supplementary Planning Documents is simpler than for the Local Plan, the main difference being that an SPD is not subject to public Examination by an independent Inspector. However, the procedure followed in preparing Supplementary Planning Documents includes targeted involvement and **public** consultation during the preparation of the document. The process is set out in the figure below.

Figure 2 – Stages in Supplementary Planning Document preparation

Stage:	What we will do:
<u>Internal preliminary work</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define scope of document and critical issues • Evidence gathering, including targeted consultations on the evidence base or specific studies (e.g. statutory bodies and infrastructure providers)

<u>Internal preliminary work</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of draft document
Regulation 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation on draft SPD document
Regulation 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representations received and considered
Regulation 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of SPD

2.4 Further details of how we will involve others in the production of SPDs is set out in section 3.

How we will involve and consult others on the preparation of the Local Plan

2.5 The National Planning Policy Framework requires that Local Plans are prepared with meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses. The final Plan should “be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees” (Paragraph 16). ~~aim to be a ‘collective vision and a set of agreed priorities for the sustainable development of the area’ (Paragraph 155).~~

2.6 The Town and Country (Local Planning (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) set out the procedure to be followed by local planning authorities in relation to the preparation of local plans and supplementary planning documents, including consultation with interested persons and bodies and the documents which must be made available at each stage. The Regulations can change over time and the council will comply with the relevant Regulations in force at the time.

2.7 The main means of finding out the latest news about progress with Plan preparation will be the council’s website www.newforest.gov.uk.

2.8 The council will use its website to:

- Provide information about progress with the preparation of planning documents

- Publish all current planning policy documents
- Give notice and details of current public consultations on planning policy documents under preparation
- Publish summaries of comments it has received on draft planning policy documents

2.9 The council will keep a database (Local Plan contacts database) of those wishing to be kept informed directly (normally by e-mail) about stages in plan preparation.

2.10 Table 1 below sets out how the council will involve others in the preparation of its Local Plan at various stages of plan preparation.

Table 3 - The key stages of involving and consulting on Development Plan Documents (DPD)

Stage:	What we will do:
Early preparation Evidence gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly Consult all those listed in Appendix 1 on the scope of the Plan: identifying matters / issues which may need particular attention in a new Plan • Gather relevant social, economic and environmental information to provide for background information and evidence • Engage in discussions and joint studies with neighbouring authorities
Production of draft plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a draft Plan based on evidence and views collected
Formal Consultation on draft plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a minimum period of six weeks for comments to be made on the draft Plan

Stage:	What we will do:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish the consultation document with supporting information and background studies on the council’s website as well as promotion of the consultation through other methods as appropriate (such as social media channels, news releases, and the councils website) • Give details of the consultation and how to comment in a news release and on the council’s website • Notify all those on the Local Plan contacts database of the opportunity to comment (including, where appropriate, local representative groups for those who do not have internet access). • <u>Various consultation methods may be used depending on the content of the documents but this could include:</u> holding hosting virtual exhibitions, digital consultations, publicising on social media and providing documents for inspection on the council website • Make all documents available for public inspection at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst or Publish a summary of the comments received on the website
Production of Plan for Submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take into consideration all comments received on the draft Plan in preparing the Plan for submission

Stage:	What we will do:
Publication of Plan for Submission to the Secretary of State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish the Plan with supporting information and background studies on the council’s website • Give details of the consultation and how to comment in a news release and on the council’s website, and by publicising on social media • Provide a minimum period of six weeks for representations to be made on the Plan • Notify all those who commented on the draft Plan that a revised Plan has been published and where the relevant documents can be inspected • Publish a summary of the representations received on the council’s website
Submission to Secretary of State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit for public Examination the Submission Plan, all supporting documents and all representations received on the Submission documents • Make all documents available for public inspection on the council’s website. • Make all documents available for public inspection at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on request • Give notice to those persons who requested to be notified of the submission of the local plan to the Secretary of State that it has been so submitted.
Examination by independent inspector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those making representations on the Plan will be invited by the Local Plan Inspector to respond to questions on matters identified

Stage:	What we will do:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If required, Hearing sessions will be held during the Examination on matters decided by the Inspector (the method for holding these will be a matter for the inspector to decide, subject to social distancing rules in place at that time) • Those indicating they wish to appear at a physical or virtual Hearing session will be given the opportunity to do so <p>(Note: the organisation and content of the Examination is a matter for the appointed Inspector)</p>
Formal Adoption by NFDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of Inspector’s Report and any Modifications to the plan required for Soundness • Adoption Statement published alongside the adopted DPD. • Notify all those who commented on the draft Plan that the DPD has been adopted.

Sustainability Appraisal

2.11 Alongside the preparation of the Local Plan the council will undertake a Sustainability Appraisal of the emerging Plan and its proposals. This work will consider the impact of proposals on environmental, social and economic factors, including internationally significant nature conservation sites, which will be a key consideration. The Sustainability Appraisal will be subject to targeted consultation at its ‘scoping’ stage, and wider consultation when published for comment alongside a consultation draft Local Plan and submission Local Plan.

Fulfilling the Duty to Cooperate

2.12 The “Duty to Co-operate” requires local authorities and other prescribed bodies to work together on planning issues, and particularly on strategic matters which have a significant impact on at least two planning areas.

- 2.13 New Forest District Council will work co-operatively with neighbouring planning authorities in Hampshire, Wiltshire and Dorset, and other relevant public bodies on matters relating to the development of appropriate planning strategies within the Plan Area and in neighbouring areas.
- 2.14 In addition to formal written consultations, this co-operation will involve discussions at both Officer, and as appropriate, Member level. Cross-boundary issues will be identified and, where possible, appropriate planning strategies will be agreed as a basis for preparing Local Plans and ensuring compatibility across administrative boundaries.
- 2.15 In south Hampshire a formal partnership of local authorities (Partnership for South Hampshire – PfSH) is well established as a vehicle for developing planning strategies for the area. The council will participate in and contribute to the work of PfSH at both Officer and Member level.
- 2.16 New Forest District Council will also cooperate with ~~Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and~~ Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) and have regard to their activities when preparing the Local Plan, so long as those activities are relevant to local plan making. For the New Forest District area ~~these are currently the Solent LEP, and this is~~ the Hampshire & Isle of Wight LNP³. Local Enterprise Partnerships have a key role to play in delivering local growth by directing strategic regeneration funds and in providing economic leadership through their Strategic Economic Plans. Local Nature Partnerships work strategically to help their local areas manage the natural environment and they are encouraged to work at a broader 'landscape scale'.
- 2.17 Working relationships on strategic planning matters with neighbouring authorities in Wiltshire and Dorset have been established and will be developed as each authorities plan preparation progresses.
- 2.18 In addition, NFDC is an active partner in the Cranborne Chase National Landscape partnership and will continue to work alongside it to implement the objectives of the CCNL Management Plan.

³ <https://hantswightlnp.wordpress.com/>

3 How we will involve and consult others on the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents

- 3.1 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide additional guidance on the implementation of Local Plan policies.
- 3.2 Although supplementary to the main policies, it is also important that the local community and interested organisations are involved in the preparation of these documents and have a chance to comment on the detail of how Local Plan policies and/or proposals are to be implemented. Supplementary Planning Documents are not subject to a formal examination by an independent Inspector.

Table 2 – The key stages of involving and consulting on Supplementary Planning Documents

Stage:	What we will do:
Awareness raising and evidence gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather relevant background information and evidence • Engage in selective discussions and targeted consultation as appropriate • Hold virtual exhibitions, digital consultations, publicising on social media and providing documents for inspection on the council website.
Production of draft plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a draft document based on evidence and views collected
Formal Consultation on draft plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish the consultation document with supporting information on the website • Contact those on the Local Plan contacts database by e-mail to inform of the draft publication and opportunity to comment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give details of the consultation and how to comment in a news release and on the council’s website • Provide a minimum period of four weeks for comments to be made on the draft SPD document (although the norm will be for a 6-week consultation period) • Write to all those specifically requesting postal notification of publication of a specific SPD • Make all documents available for public inspection at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst and on the council’s website. • Publish a summary of the comments received on the website
<p>Adoption by NFDC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised plan submitted with summary of comments received and how comments have been addressed • Comments received reported to members (with summary of comments) • Publication of Consultation Statement, cabinet / full council papers, and final document for adoption • Adoption Statement released alongside the adopted SPD.

4 Neighbourhood Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders

- 4.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced statutory Neighbourhood Planning in England. It enables communities to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan for their area (within certain limits and parameters set by the agreed strategy in the Local Plan). Through preparing a Neighbourhood Plan (or a Neighbourhood Development Order) local communities can have a greater say in deciding how the planned development is accommodated in their area. These can be taken forward by Town / Parish Councils.
- 4.2 Parish and Town Councils can use neighbourhood planning powers to establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in their neighbourhood through the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan or the granting of planning permission for a specific type of development through a Neighbourhood Development Order.
- 4.3 It is the role of the local planning authority to agree the (geographical) neighbourhood planning area. Additionally, the local planning authority must provide advice and assistance; hold an examination; and make arrangements for a referendum. NFDC has published a Neighbourhood planning protocol, and this is contained in Appendix 2 of this Statement. The protocol outlines how NFDC will undertake its statutory duties, and the level and extent of the technical advice and assistance that NFDC will provide.
- 4.4 Appendix 3 sets out the guidance specifically designed to support qualifying bodies, which includes Parish or Town Council, on the consultation process relating to the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan. It contains advice on when, who, how and where to consult to ensure effective community engagement. It suggests the qualifying body considers the following consultation mechanisms when developing a Plan or Order:
- Holding events/exhibitions (where allowed in line with government Covid19 guidance)
 - Adverts/posters
 - Letters/flyers to everyone in neighbourhood area

- Questionnaires/comments forms
- Use of websites, social media and e-mail
- Notice in parish newsletters/local magazines
- Visiting/contacting already established local groups.

4.5 Neighbourhood Plans / Orders must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan which the District Council will continue to produce.

4.6 They must also meet a number of conditions before they can be put to a community referendum and legally come into force. The conditions ensure that plans are legally compliant and take account of wider policy considerations (e.g. national policy and the Local Plan strategy). Neighbourhood Plans do not take effect unless there is a majority of support for it in a local Referendum and the Plan is adopted by the District Council.

4.7 It will be for those preparing a Neighbourhood Plan to decide how best to consult during the preparation of the document, but they must comply with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations in place at the time. More information about Neighbourhood Planning can be found at:

[Http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/neighbourhood-planning/](http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/neighbourhood-planning/)

5 How we will involve others on allocating the Community Infrastructure Levy to projects

~~5.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 require the Council to set out a list of those projects or types of infrastructure that it intends to fund, or may fund, through the levy. This list of projects may be revised from time to time following appropriate consultation.~~

~~5.2 The consultation process will involve providers of infrastructure including bodies such as HCC, the Police and Health Authorities, NFDC departments and Town and Parish Councils, as appropriate. A recommended list of projects (known as a 'Regulation 123 list') will then be prepared and subject to further consultation before being presented for approval by the Council's Cabinet at the start of the year. Requirements for who should be consulted are currently set out in Regulation 15 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (with amendments) and the Council will apply the relevant regulations in force at the time.~~

5.3 The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) require the council to publish annually an 'Infrastructure Funding Statement', which sets out those projects that it intends to fund via the levy as well as the receipts and expenditure from the previous year.

5.4 ~~Separately, In October 2023~~ the council has an adopted an Community Infrastructure Levy Expenditure Framework and Communications Strategy, which detail how the council would look to allocate CIL funding towards recreational habitat mitigation projects as well as local and strategic infrastructure projects. ~~The framework details who will be consulted as well as the time period for when bids will be sought.~~

5.5 Should the council review its Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule the requirements for who should be consulted are currently set out in Regulation 16 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) and the council will apply the relevant regulations in force at the time.

6 Community Involvement in Development Management

- 6.1 For many people, the most visible impact of the planning system is the regulation of development through planning applications. Applications are normally determined in accordance with the policies and proposals of the statutory development plan for the area unless there are other material considerations that justify departing from these policies. Whenever an application is determined contrary to the provisions of the development plan, there should be specific and justified material considerations for doing so. Community involvement in considering planning applications can be an important means of identifying other material considerations. Community involvement can also help shape proposals so that they are more acceptable and appropriate to the area where the development is occurring.
- 6.2 There are four main stages in the Development Management Process:
- Pre-application
 - Planning applications
 - Appeals
 - Enforcement
- 6.3 The following provides an overview of the council's publicity and consultation arrangements for these four elements of Development Management.

Pre-application Stage

- 6.4 The council welcomes and encourages discussion with applicants and developers before planning applications are submitted. Receiving considered advice prior to the formal submission of a planning application can ensure that the quality of a development is improved and that certainty in the outcome can be increased for the applicant. Applicants or developers are encouraged to consult with the community before submitting planning applications which are likely to generate public interest.

- 6.5 Whilst there is no statutory requirement for the council to engage with the local community at the pre-application stage ~~on pre-application schemes~~, paragraphs 39 to 46 of the NPPF states that early engagement ~~with consenting bodies~~ has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system ~~for all parties~~, and that good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community. Entering into a Planning Performance Agreement with the council provides an opportunity for the applicant to identify~~ing~~ the preferred approach to community engagement.
- 6.6 The council does not publicise or share pre-application enquiries with the public, or allow public comments on the pre-application stage.
- ~~6.7 Where pre-application advice is sought, the response to that application will be not be published, although this can be requested through the Freedom of Information Act (FOI). Where an FOI is sought, the applicant will be informed and agreement sought to release before it is done so.~~

Planning Application Stage

What happens when a planning application is received?

- 6.8 All planning applications and tree works are checked to ensure that necessary plans and details are provided to enable the application to be determined. ~~When Once~~ an application has been validated we will consult in accordance with the provisions in Appendix 4. ~~neighbours (those occupying properties that adjoin the site) are notified by letter. Consultees are also notified (as relevant depending on the nature of the application).~~ All applications are placed on the council's website for public view and full details of notification undertaken are provided at Appendix 4.

6.9 The minimum requirements for publicising and consulting on planning applications are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. We comply with the minimum requirement in all cases, in most cases we exceed this to ensure that our communities are as involved as possible. Irrespective of how the community hear about a proposal, anyone can submit comments on an application. The notification letter, site notice and press advertisement explain where the planning application can be viewed.

6.10 All applications are placed on the council's website for public view. ~~Full details of notification undertaken are provided at Appendix 4.~~ Comments are invited on planning applications for a period of 21 days, which is a statutory period set out by government. All comments received prior to the determination of an application, even if outside of the 21 day publicity period will be taken into consideration. In most cases a site notice is also provided, and this will be displayed for 21 days. When comments are submitted on planning applications through the website the name and address of the individual are also published. For further information regarding how the council handles personal data, please see our privacy notice⁴.

Who will we consult?

6.11 The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 specifies the stages at which statutory consultation will take place on planning applications and notifications. The Regulations set out that certain bodies must be consulted, depending on the type of application and/or constraints that affect the site. The relevant bodies consultees are ~~listed set out~~ in the table found in Appendix 4: 'Publicising Planning and related Application'. We will notify such bodies either by sending them the weekly list, an email or consultation letter, and by exploring further modern digital methods of publication. Statutory bodies are made up of both internal and external consultees.

⁴ www.nfdc.gov.uk/privacy

6.12 Schedule 1, paragraph 8, of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, states that there is only a statutory requirement for local planning authorities to notify Town and Parish Councils of planning applications received if the Town or Parish Council has requested that it be notified. NFDC goes further than the regulations by automatically sending the weekly lists of applications received, decisions made, and appeals received to all Town and Parish Councils.

How is a planning application determined?

6.13 Whilst a planning application is determined primarily against the Development Plan and National policies, material consideration is also given to:

- i) Representations of objections and support [\(for further guidance on how to comment see the council's website⁵\)](#)
- ii) Advice from external specialists such as Natural England or Historic England
- iii) Government guidance⁶
- iv) Comments from town and parish councils
- v) Any other material consideration

6.14 The planning case officer assessment of the application will be based on the above and their judgement on the impact the proposed development will have. The publicity requirements mean that we will not receive all the relevant views until about a month after the council register the application and this will be longer in some cases.

⁵ [View or comment on a planning application - New Forest District Council](#)

⁶ [Planning practice guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

- 6.15 The council will determine planning applications on the information submitted. There may however be some circumstances whereby, at the discretion of the council, amendments can be accepted prior to a determination to resolve outstanding issues. In these instances, the case officer will provide the necessary time in order to provide the applicant with an opportunity to amend the application depending on the degree of change. Under no circumstances should applicants amend an application following a consultation response they have read online.
- 6.16 Where the council receives significant amendments to a current planning application, that it can accept, it will re-publicise the application making it clear that amendments to the application have been proposed.
- 6.17 Following a review and analysis of all the information and submissions to a development proposal, a report is prepared on the acceptability of the development. The decision on whether to grant planning permission is made either under delegated powers by the Chief Planning Officer, which will be the case for [the](#) majority of applications, or by the Planning Committee. In cases where applications are to be considered by the Planning Committee, [we will write to those who have made representations to the application advising of the date, time and venue of the committee meeting and those people will have the opportunity to make a deputation to the committee.those who have already made written comments on the application can request to address the Committee at the relevant meeting.](#)
- 6.18 Once the decision is issued on planning applications the decision notice, plans and officer report are available to view online, but letters of representation will be removed one year after decision date.
- ~~6.19 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2015 introduced a prior approval arrangement for certain single storey extensions to dwelling houses with a statutory requirement being placed on the Council to serve notice on any owner or occupiers of adjoining properties and give them a minimum of 21 days to object. These prior approval notifications introduce a new procedure differing from that for planning applications.~~

Assisting the Local Planning Authority

~~6.206.19~~ The council expects planning applications to be determined within timescales set by national guidance unless an alternative period has been agreed (in writing) with an applicant to allow positive and proactive discussion. The national targets are as follows:

- (1) Major applications accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment – 16 weeks
- (2) Major applications - 13 weeks
- (3) Minor and other applications – 8 weeks

~~Post decision~~ Appeals against decisions or non-determination

~~6.216.20~~ Applicants have the right to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate against the refusal of a planning permission; for non-determination or against the imposition of a condition ~~to the Planning Inspectorate~~. There is no third-party right of appeal (i.e. for those who objected to a planning application). The Council will notify relevant parties who commented on the planning application of the appeal and advise them how they may make comments to the Planning Inspectorate. Information relating to the appeal will also be available to view on the Council's Online Planning Register.

~~Discharge of~~ Details submitted pursuant to planning conditions

~~6.226.21~~ The grant of planning permission is commonly subject to planning conditions which may require the submission of further information to the council for approval. This may address matters such as materials, landscaping, natural green space and green infrastructure and highway matters.

~~6.236.22~~ The Council will seek to deal with such applications within eight weeks from the date of receipt. The agreed discharge of condition details are subsequently published on the councils website. ~~Submissions made for approval of details are not subject to publicity.~~

Post decision Amended Plans

~~6.246.23~~ Post-decision amendments are only accepted if the [Council is satisfied that the change is not material.](#) ~~amendment is very minor and are considered on a case by case basis.~~ In cases where amendments are accepted, the amendments will not be the subject of publicity.

Enforcement

~~6.256.24~~ If members of the local community draw possible breaches of planning to the attention of the Council these will be investigated in accordance with the Local Enforcement Plan which is published on the Council Website⁷.

⁷ [LOCAL ENFORCEMENT PLAN 20221.pdf \(newforest.gov.uk\)](#)

Appendix 1 – Local Planning documents: Consultees

New Forest District Council has an electronic database used solely for the purpose of contacting interested organisations, groups, and individuals about the preparation of local planning documents. There are four types of consultee identified on the database, as set out below.

Type A – Specific Consultation bodies

In accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, this Council will consult the following organisations on parts of the Local Plan to the extent that it considers the document to be relevant to the organisation:

- All town and parish councils within New Forest District
- The New Forest National Park Authority
- Cranborne Chase National Landscape
- Hampshire County Council
- Dorset Council (Unitary Authority)
- Wiltshire Council
- Test Valley Borough Council
- Isle of Wight Council
- Melchet Park & Plaitford; Nursling & Rownhams; Romsey Extra; Wellow Parish Councils
- Bishopstone; Bower Chalke; Broad Chalke; Coombe Bisset; Downton; Landford; Odstock; Redlynch; Stratford Tony Parish Councils.
- Southampton City Council
- Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
- Burton; Hurn Parish councils
- ~~East Dorset District Council~~
- Eastleigh Borough Council

- Alderholt; Cranborne & Edmondsham; Sixpenny Handley with Pentridge; St Leonards & St Ives; Verwood Parish council
- The Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH)
- The Coal Authority
- ~~The Homes~~ [England and Communities Agency](#)
- The Environment Agency
- Natural England
- Network Rail
- The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (Historic England)
- ~~The Highways~~ [England Agency](#) [National Highways](#)
- The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Nature Partnership
- ~~NHS West Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Group~~ [NHS Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board](#)
- British Telecommunications PLC
- ~~Southern Electricity~~
- Scottish and Southern Energy
- Southern Gas Networks
- RWE npower
- EON PLC
- The National Grid Company PLC
- British Gas
- The Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire
- The Solent Local Enterprise Partnership
- ~~The Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership~~
- The Marine Management Organisation
- Wessex Water

- Southern Water
- ~~Sembcorp~~ Bournemouth Water PLC
- ~~Mobile UK The Mobile Operators Association~~ (which represents the UK's mobile telecommunications operators
 - ~~such as: Airwave, Dolphin Communications; Hutchinson 3G; Mercury; NTL;~~
 - ~~One2One; Orange; O2; T Mobile; Vodafone etc).~~

Type B – General Consultation bodies

In addition to the identified 'Specific' consultees set out above, the Regulations require the Council to also notify and consult additional bodies it considers appropriate.

The list below represents the type of different organisations which are likely to have an interest in the Local Plan process, and is not meant to be exhaustive.

The Council has created a contacts database which includes local groups and organisations in the categories below. However, the Council is dependent on up-to-date information being provided by these local groups and organisations in order to effectively contact them. The Council is keen to hear from other organisations that wish to be involved in the plan-making process, and will be happy to add local groups and organisations to its Local Plan contacts database on request.

Organisations likely to have an interest in the Local Plan process will include:

- Residents groups and associations.
- Amenity and conservation societies.
- Sports & recreation organisations.
- Schools & colleges.
- Disability organisations and groups.
- Older persons groups.

- Ethnic minority groups.
- Gypsies and travelling show people, including the Traveller Education Service.
- Churches and other religious organisations.
- Housing associations and registered social landlords.
- Tourism organisations.
- Youth groups and organisations.
- Businesses and chambers of trade/commerce.
- Developers and planning agents/architects.
- New Forest Verderers.
- New Forest Commoners.
- New Forest Commoners Defence Association.
- Forestry Commission.
- Port operators and harbour authorities at Southampton and Lymington.
- Transport operators and managers including Network Rail, train and bus companies.
- Coastal interests including commercial, leisure and amenity organisations.
- Major estates.
- The Ministry of Defence.
- Southampton and Bournemouth Airports.
- Other Government organisations not already listed in Type B

Type C – Statutory consultees for the Duty to co-operate

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, this Council will co-operate with the following organisations on matters in the Local Plan it considers to be of strategic significance.

- The Environment Agency.

- The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (known as Historic England).
- Natural England.
- The Civil Aviation Authority.
- ~~The National~~ Highways ~~Agency~~
- ~~The~~ Homes England ~~and Communities Agency~~.
- Each Primary Care Trust established under section 18 of the National Health Service Act 2006(16) or continued in existence by virtue of that section (in 2024 this includes the NHS ~~Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board~~ ~~West Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Group~~).
- The Office of Rail Regulation
- The Solent Local Transport Body / Solent Transport
- The Marine Management Organisation.
- The Solent Local Enterprise Partnership.
- ~~The Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership.~~
- The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Nature Partnership

Type D – Individuals

In addition to the above, any individual that has a particular interest in local planning, for example as a landowner or a local resident, can ask to be included in the Local Plan contacts database, and will receive notification of consultation stages in Local Plan preparation.

Anyone making a comment during public consultation stages of plan preparation will be added to the Local Plan contacts database and will receive further notifications (normally by e-mail) about the preparation of that document until the time it is adopted.

Appendix 2 – Neighbourhood Planning Protocol

Neighbourhood Planning support⁸

Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1 New Forest District Council supports the concept of Neighbourhood Planning and the potential it offers to communities to help shape the places where they live. In deciding whether or how to progress a Neighbourhood Plan, communities will need to consider how they would carry out the work required to deliver an effective and evidence-based Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2. There are a range of national and other published sources of information and advice on Neighbourhood Planning, and that advice is not repeated here (see appendix one for some useful links). The aim of this note is to define the nature, scope and limitations of support that will be provided by New Forest District Council Planning Services to Town and Parish councils for the purposes of the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 1.3. The note is also applicable to Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders.
- 1.4. Planning Services will coordinate the involvement of other parts of the Council as and when required, including involvement of Electoral Services at referendum stage.
- 1.5. The District Council is responsible for:
 - a. fulfilling certain statutory requirements at the beginning and end of the process (see section 3)
 - b. the provision of proportionate advice and assistance (see section 4)
- 1.6. This note outlines:
 - a. how the District Council will undertake its statutory duties

⁸ <https://www.newforest.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning>

- b. the level and extent of the technical advice and assistance that the District Council will provide

Context: Neighbourhood Planning and the District Local Plan

2.1 The primary focus and first priority of the District Council is the preparation and adoption of the Local Plan. The ability of the District Council to offer support and advice for Neighbourhood Planning will vary depending on the stage of the Local Plan and the workload of the Local Plan team.

2.2. The Local Plan Part One covers strategic matters including strategic housing allocations, and proposes strategic housing allocations in designated Neighbourhood Areas.

2.3. Other sites and policies will be progressed through the Local Plan Part Two, scheduled to commence in 2018. The content and coverage of the Local Plan Part Two for designated Neighbourhood Areas would consider the aims and scope of Neighbourhood Plans and their progress.

The statutory obligations of the District Council

3.1. The District Council will fulfil its statutory Neighbourhood Planning obligations as required by the prevailing regulations, which include

- i As soon as possible after receiving the Neighbourhood Area application, publicise and consult in accordance with the statutory timeframes (Regulation 6)
- ii To consider the consultation responses received, and (where appropriate) designate the Neighbourhood Area and publicise it on the NFDC website (Regulation 7)

3.2. Upon submission of a Plan Proposal by the Town/Parish Council to the District Council, the District Council will (liaising with the New Forest National Park Authority as appropriate):

- i Confirm to the Town or Parish Council whether or not the submission plan proposal complies with Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations

- ii Publicise and start consultation with the public on the submission plan proposal and other relevant documentation (Regulation 16)
- iii Contact the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service (or equivalent) and appoint an appropriately qualified and experienced examiner
- iv Submit the draft Neighbourhood Plan, supporting documents and representation to the Independent Examiner (Regulation 17) in a timeframe commensurate with the volume of representations received (Regulation 17)
- v Arrange an Examination hearing and date in consultation with the Town or Parish Council. If a public hearing is required as part of the Examination process (rather than written representations), the hearing will be virtual if circumstances necessitate. If a physical hearing is possible and appropriate, wherever possible the venue will be in the local area.
- vi Publish a 'Decision Statement' (Regulation 18/19) as soon as practicable following the receipt of the inspector's examination report
- vii Subject to the Examiner's recommendations, make arrangements for holding the referendum, by post or digital means if necessary.
- viii Adopt the Neighbourhood Plan (Regulation 19/20) at the first available meeting of the District Council following confirmation of majority support at referendum, and make it available through the District Council website.

District council advice and assistance

4.1. This section relates to the preparation of a draft Neighbourhood Plan by the Town / Parish Council prior to submission of a plan proposal to the District Council.

4.2. For each Neighbourhood Area, the District Council will identify an officer from the Policy and Plans Team as the first point of contact.

Initial meeting

At the request of the Town or Parish council and following designation of the Neighbourhood Area the liaison officer will host or attend an initial exploratory meeting on the first mutually acceptable date.

Neighbourhood plan objectives, scope and working arrangements

4.4. Before the District Council can provide technical advice or assistance on the preparation or proposed content of the Neighbourhood Plan the Town / Parish Council will first need to decide upon and provide a concise statement that sets out -

- the likely aims and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan e.g. what it is seeking to influence, change, manage, protect or deliver
- whether or not the Neighbourhood Plan will identify or allocate housing development sites large enough to accommodate ten or more homes
- what other policy areas or issues the Neighbourhood Plan will address
- proposed working and decision making arrangements and how they may be resourced
- an indicative timetable

4.5. The District Council accepts that the above matters may change over time.

Background Data and Evidence

4.6. Upon request the Council will make electronically available or provide access to the following, subject as applicable to licensing, Data Protection and commercial confidentiality -

- Published reports and studies in the Local Plan evidence base
- Mapping data (fees may be applicable)
- Any other specific, relevant and proportionate requests for existing planning and environmental information for the Neighbourhood Area that is held by the District Council.

4.7. The District Council will not be able to -

- Commission, tender for or carry out Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessments, Environmental Impact Assessments, Flood Risk Assessments, Housing Need surveys or other such assessments as may be necessary
- Commission, tender for or carry out research or forecasting for the Neighbourhood Area
- Search for, extract or interpret third party data for the Neighbourhood Area
- Prepare plans, maps or map-based analyses for the Neighbourhood Area.

Consultation and engagement

4.8. The Neighbourhood Plan process is intended to be local community led. It will be for the local Town or Parish Council to undertake their own Neighbourhood Plan public consultations and the District Council will generally not seek or expect to be involved other than as a consultee. Guidance specifically designed to support qualifying bodies, which includes Town or Parish Council, on the consultation process relating to the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan is set out in Appendix 3 of this Statement.

4.9. In addition to its statutory responsibilities the District Council will publicise the Neighbourhood Plan consultation on the District Council website with a link to the published draft Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy and plan writing

4.10. On request with advance notification and given sufficient time to respond the District Council will:

- Comment on proposed policy approaches (including possible alternatives)
- Provide initial advice on the application of sustainability appraisal to policy development
- Review draft policies before they are finalised for consultation or publication and provide informal advice on their clarity, robustness and compatibility with the National Planning Framework and with the adopted and emerging District Local Plan.

4.11. The District Council will not be able to:

- Write or edit Neighbourhood Plan policies, supporting text or supporting documents
- Undertake desk top publishing, design, printing, copying or distribution of Neighbourhood Plans or supporting documents.

Site allocation in Neighbourhood Plans

4.12. Where the Town / Parish Council has committed allocating sites for development as part of the Neighbourhood Plan, the District Council will on request and where resources are available to do so:

- Share and explain the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Site Assessment methodology
- Briefly review and comment on any local site selection or appraisal methodology
- Briefly review and comment on the draft results of a Town or Parish site assessment
- Provide initial advice on Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment including Habitats impact mitigation
- Advise what supporting technical assessments would be appropriate for any development site(s) proposed e.g. ecological surveys, flooding assessments
- Comment briefly on site technical studies.

4.13. Town and Parish Councils should encourage site promoters and land owners to seek pre-application advice from the District Council. Where appropriate some of the above matters may be provided in the form of pre-planning application advice.

4.14. The District Council will not be able to:

- Undertake site selection assessments on behalf of a Town or Parish Council preparing a Neighbourhood Plan
- Carry out site technical assessments or background studies for the Neighbourhood Plan

- Undertake detailed site design or masterplanning work unless contracted to do so by the Town or Parish Council.

Attendance of further meetings

4.15. On invitation and subject to availability District Council officers may attend further meetings of the working group at critical decision points leading to consultation on or submission of the Neighbourhood Plan, or the identification of sites for development. An agenda and relevant papers will be required two weeks in advance.

4.16. District Council officers will not be able to attend routine steering or working group meetings or meetings at weekends or concluding after 8.30pm.

Appendix 3 – Who should the Qualifying Body seek to engage with?

In preparing a Neighbourhood Plan the Qualifying Body will need to engage and consult with those living, working, with an interest in or affected by proposals and relevant consultees (such as infrastructure providers). The community engagement undertaken by the Qualifying Body will need to be explained in the Consultation Statement required under Section 15(2), Part 5 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012(as amended) and which is submitted with the Plan for consideration by the Independent Examiner. Failure to demonstrate that adequate engagement with the community and statutory consultees can lead to the Neighbourhood Plan being found to be unsound.

It is important to recognise the mix of people in your community to ensure that everyone has the chance to engage in the process. Grouping residents and businesses into ‘stakeholder’ groups will help you to identify what methods you need to use to ensure you obtain their views. Typical stakeholders groups include:

- Schoolchildren (aged 5-16)
- Young people (aged 16 – 30)
- Older people
- Commuters (people living in the community but working outside)
- Community groups and societies
- Single parent families
- Persons with disabilities
- Faith groups
- People employed in the community
- Local businesses and landowners
- Black and minority ethnic groups including gypsies and travellers
- Families

- Voluntary organisations acting in the area

Guidance for Parish/Town Council/Neighbourhood Forum (qualifying body) in engaging with their communities

Key Stage in the Neighbourhood Plan Process	Consultation for the Qualifying Body to consider undertaking	Methods of Consultation to consider
Stage 1: Designation of Neighbourhood Area (and if appropriate Neighbourhood Forum)	Before submitting an application to designate the neighbourhood area the parish/town council or neighbourhood forum may decide to consult with the local community about preparing a neighbourhood plan/order.	Not applicable
Stage 2: Preparing the Draft Neighbourhood Plan/Order	Ongoing consultation and engagement as the neighbourhood plan/order is being developed with the community (those living, working, with an interest in or affected by proposals, including landowners) and relevant consultees (such as infrastructure providers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adverts/posters - Letters/flyers to everyone in neighbourhood plan area - Questionnaires/comments forms - Use of websites, social media and e-mail - Notice in parish newsletters/local magazines

	<p>Engagement with other bodies whose interests may be affected by your neighbourhood plan. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hampshire County Council - Infrastructure providers - Natural England - Environment Agency - English Heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visiting/contacting already established local groups. - Public meetings - Focus groups - Stakeholder seminars - Open Days and workshops - Exhibitions - Press Notices <p>Whatever means of engagement with the community are used it is important to maintain a record of the activity and responses received to inform the Statement of Community Involvement required to be prepared by the Qualifying Body at Stage 3.</p>
<p>Stage 3: Pre-submission publicity and consultation:</p>	<p>At this stage Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 provides that the Qualifying Body bring the Pre-submission Plan to the attention of people who live, work or carry out business in the neighbourhood plan area and invite representations.</p>	<p>Inform local residents, local business and affected landowners of the plan, where to view it and how to make representations</p> <p>This can use such approaches as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Press Notices - Notice in parish newsletters/local magazines

	<p>Under Regulation 14 the Qualifying Body must also consult any “consultation body” whose interests may be affected by the proposals contained in the Pre-submission Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct communications by letter - Use of websites, social media and e-mail - Exhibition <p>The Pre-submission Plan can be made available to view online, at local libraries and other deposit locations such as Local Council offices and village/town halls.</p> <p>Formal letters must be sent to the relevant Consultation Body that may be affected by the Plan.</p>
<p>Stage 4: Submission of Neighbourhood Plan/Order to Borough Council:</p>	<p>None required</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>
<p>Stage 5: Independent examination</p>	<p>None required</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>

<p>Stage 7: Making the Neighbourhood Plan/ Order. Provided that more than 50% vote in favour at the referendum, the Plan will proceed to adoption by the District Council.</p>	<p>None required</p>	<p>Subject to strict limitations the Qualifying Body may draw attention to the referendum. The Council’s Electoral Services Section will give guidance on what the Qualifying Body can and cannot do in publicising the referendum.</p>
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Appendix 4 – Publicising Planning and related applications

Type of Development	Statutory Publicity Requirement	How the Council will publicise applications
<p>Major Development: Residential developments involving 10 or more homes, or where the site area is 0.5 hectares or more.</p> <p>Other development: 1000m² floor space or 1.0 hectares</p>	<p>Newspaper advertisement (14 days) and either Site notice (21 days) or Neighbour notification (21 days)</p>	<p>The Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish Public Notice in newspaper • Notify neighbours with adjoining boundaries to the application site properties • Display a site notice at or near the site (<u>exact location at case officer discretion</u>) • Consult relevant infrastructure providers
<p>Applications subject to Environmental Impact Assessment which are accompanied by an environmental statement</p>	<p>Newspaper advertisement (14 days) and Site notice (21 days)</p>	<p>The Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish Public Notice in newspaper • Notify neighbours with adjoining boundaries to the application site • Display a site notice at or near the site • Consult relevant infrastructure providers

Application that is a departure from the Local Plan	Newspaper advertisement (14 days) and Site notice (21 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish Public Notice in newspaper • Notify neighbours with adjoining boundaries to the application site properties • Display a site notice at or near the site
Application which would affect a right of way to which Part 3 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 applies	Newspaper advertisement (14 days) and Site notice (21 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish Public Notice in newspaper • Notify neighbours with adjoining boundaries to the application site • Display a site notice at or near the site
Minor Development: Residential development involving less than 10 homes. Other development: floor space is less than 1000m ²	Site Notice (21 days) Or Neighbour notification (21 days)	The Council will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify neighbours with adjoining boundaries to the application site • Display a site notice at or near the site
Change of use applications	Site Notice or Neighbour Notification	The Council will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify neighbours with adjoining boundaries to the application site • Display a site notice at or near the site

Householder developments	Site Notice or Neighbour Notification	<p>The Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify neighbours with adjoining boundaries to the application site • Display a site notice at or near the site
Development affecting the setting of a listed building	Press Advert Site Notice	<p>The Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish Public Notice in newspaper • Notify neighbours with adjoining boundaries to the application site • Display a site notice at or near the site
Listed Building consent for works affecting the exterior of the building	Newspaper advertisement (21 days) and Site notice (7 days)	<p>The Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish Public Notice in newspaper • Notify neighbours with adjoining boundaries to the application site. • Display a site notice
Development affecting the character of a conservation area.	Newspaper advertisement (21 days) and Site notice (7 days)	<p>The Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish Public Notice in newspaper

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify neighbours with adjoining boundaries to the application site • Display a site notice
Applications to vary or discharge conditions attached to a listed building consent or conservation area consent, or involving exterior works to a listed building.	Newspaper advertisement (21 days) and Site notice (7 days)	None
Prior approvals and prior notifications		
Prior Notification of Larger Homes Household Extensions	Neighbour notification (21 days)	The Council will notify neighbours with adjoining boundaries to the application site
Prior Notification of Demolition of a building	Site Notice must be posted by applicant (21 days from date of notification)	None
Prior Notification of Changes of Use	Site Notice or Neighbour Notification	The Council will display a site notice
Prior Approval of Agricultural or forestry development (Agricultural/Forestry)	None (If prior approval of details is required applicant must post site notice for 21 days)	None

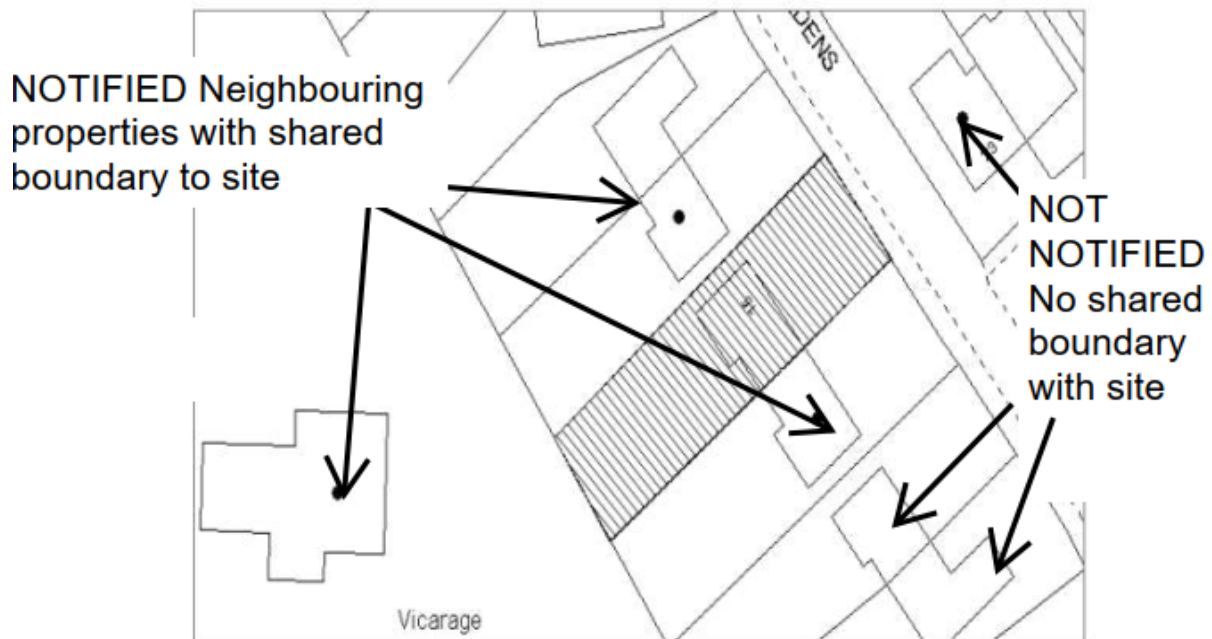
<p>Prior Approval for change of use (Class C, J, M, N, O, P, PA, Q, R, S, T)</p>	<p>Site Notice (21 days) or neighbour notification</p>	<p>The Council will: Display a site notice</p>
<p>Prior Notification for Telecommunication Equipment</p>	<p>Where development is not in accordance with the development plan or would affect a public right of way to which Part 3 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 applies: Site notice (21 days) and Advertisement in local newspaper.</p> <p>On sites of 1 hectare or more: Advertisement in local newspaper and Site notice or neighbour notification.</p>	<p>The Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notify neighbours with adjoining boundaries to the application site. - Display a site notice

	All other development not covered above: Site notice or neighbour notification.	
Advertisement Applications	None	The Council will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify neighbours in adjoining properties • Display a site notice
Applications for Works to Trees Protected by a Tree Preservation Order	Site Notice (21 days) - Where the Council considers that local people might be affected, or that there is likely to be a good deal of public interest - Obligatory in any case where the Council is the applicant	The Council will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify neighbours in adjoining and opposite boundaries to the application site. • Display a site notice
Notice of works to trees in conservation areas	None	The Council will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify neighbours with adjoining and opposite boundaries to the application site. • Display a site notice

Certificates of Lawfulness for Existing Use and Development	None	The Council will notify neighbours with adjoining boundaries to the application site
Certificates of Lawfulness for Proposed Use and Development	None	None

Appendix 5 – How we will notify neighbours

Once a planning application has been registered, we will notify by letter all properties with a common boundary to the site, including to the rear, as is shown in the example below.



Exceptions

We do not notify neighbours where the applications are for Certificates of Lawfulness for a Proposed Use or Development, Non-Material Amendments following a grant of planning permission, and Prior Notifications for Demolition of a building, erection of agricultural buildings and Prior Approvals for changes of use (Class C, J, M, N, O, P, PA, Q, R, S, T).

Additional properties may be notified as the planning case officers will check on their site visit that appropriate neighbour notification have been carried out.

In addition to notifying by letter properties with a common boundary we will display a site notice at or near the application site.

Wider neighbour notification/consultation

Wider neighbour notification will be undertaken where the development proposed is considered to have the potential for wider impacts, such as a major development leading to significant traffic increases or the proposed development being widely visible and potentially visually obtrusive.

Appendix 6 - Glossary

This annex provides supplementary information on some of the techniques mentioned in the Statement of Community Involvement, and on some of the acronyms found in the new planning system.

Appropriate Assessment - Part of the HRA process, considers the impacts of a plan or policy on the integrity of the European sites. Where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of mitigation options is carried out to determine adverse effects on the integrity of the site.

Council's website - www.newforest.gov.uk

DPD - Development Plan Documents, are the main planning policy documents in the Local Plan. These include the Core Strategy which sets out the main planning strategy for the area.

Duty to Co-operate - The 'Duty to Co-operate' is set out in the Localism Act and ensures that local planning authorities work with neighbouring authorities and other public bodies to address strategic issues that affect local plans and cross administrative boundaries.

European Sites – A collective name for internationally important nature conservation sites, including Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar Sites. Areas of international nature conservation importance that are protected under the Habitats Directive and the Ramsar Convention for the benefit of the habitats and species they support.

HRA (Habitat Regulations Assessment) - An assessment of the impacts of implementing a plan or policy on international protected sites for nature conservation (European Sites and Ramsar sites - wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention). Helps determine likely significant effect of a plan or project on international protected sites and, where appropriate, assess adverse impacts on the integrity of a site, and examines alternative solutions.

Local Plan contacts database – A list of names and contact details of specific consultees and others to be kept informed about the preparation of Development Plan Documents by NFDC

Local Development Scheme (LDS) - a sort of project plan for the preparation of the Local Development Framework. This sets out the timescales for preparing the Local Plan, including when each document will be consulted on.

NFDC – New Forest District Council

NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework, sets out the Government’s key economic, social and environmental objectives and the planning policies needed to deliver them. Came into force in March 2012 and streamlined the existing suite of national planning policy documents into a single document (removing previous Planning Policy Statements and Circulars).

NPPG - National Planning Practice Guidance, brings together many areas of English planning guidance into a new online format to accompany the NPPF. It contains 41 categories; from ‘Advertisements’ to ‘Water supply’. Each category contains sub-topics which when clicked on reveal a series of questions and answers.

Neighbour notification letters - Generally used for the advertising of planning applications, these inform property owners of planning applications submitted on adjoining property or land. The letters contain information about the proposed development, and explain how and when to comment.

Neighbourhood Plan - Communities can now set a vision for the future and establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in their neighbourhood in a document known as a Neighbourhood Plan. Can be detailed or general, depending on what local people want. Only become adopted policy if agreed by a majority in a local community referendum.

Plan Area – New Forest District Council area outside of the New Forest National Park (or part of that area) for which the District Council is the Local Planning Authority.

SA / SEA - Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment. In simple terms, a process of assessing the environmental, social and economic effects of policies and proposals in the Local Plan.

SCI - Statement of Community Involvement, a document which sets out how the Council will involve and consult the public and other organisations when preparing the Local Plan, and when determining planning applications.

SPD - Supplementary Planning Documents, another part of the Local Plan, these documents contain detailed guidance which supplements policies contained in Development Plan Documents.

Site notices - Planning applications are normally advertised using a notice posted in a convenient location near to the property or land to which the application relates. This notice both describes the proposed development, and gives details of how and when to comment.

Targeted consultation - This can take many forms, including sending early drafts of documents to specific organisations, or holding meetings with individuals or groups to discuss relevant issues. 'Targeted' means that the consultation will not be universal and will concentrate on those that the Council needs information or advice from at a particular stage in plan preparation.

Town & Parish Councils - The District is made up of 37 Town and Parish Councils. These local councils are able to prepare Neighbourhood Plans for their parish if they chose to do.

REVISED STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

STATEMENT OF CONSULTATION – JANUARY 2025

Consultation has been undertaken during the preparation of this document with consultees on the Council’s Local Plan database and through wider dissemination via social media channels, news release, and website announcements.

The revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been produced by NFDC Policy Officers, taking full account of changes in national planning policy, government legislation, and statutory planning instruments (e.g. planning regulations).

The SCI only relates to Planning and is a statutory document which sets out the consultation and engagement methods that we will use to involve interested residents, groups, organisations, businesses and other representatives and individuals in the planning process. It explains who will be consulted, when and how. The document describes how we will involve the community and stakeholders in the preparation and review of planning policy documents and the consideration of planning applications. This revised version will replace the previous SCI adopted in 2020.

Yellow highlight text shows those changes that will be made to the amended SCI having considered the comments received through the October – December 2024 consultation.

Formal Consultation

The draft revision was subject to 6 weeks of formal public consultation from Wednesday 23 October – Friday 6 December 2024 through the following elements:

- The revised SCI document was published for comment on the NFDC website and Go Vocal platform, and social media channels, alongside a News Release to local media.
- The District Council directly consulted the bodies and individuals listed in Annex A.

Summary of comments received

Most consultees welcome the message and general commitment to meaningful public engagement laid out in the SCI. However, there were criticisms that the SCI did not include enough tangible detail about how to meaningfully engage the public, with some feeling that the document may not result in noticeable benefits to the public. There were some specific recommendations regarding updates to legislation/organisation names, the inclusion of new organisations as statutory consultees, and specific ways to alter the methods of engagement.

Summary of issues raised in consultation and recommended responses from NFDC

The following table sets out the main issues raised during the consultation of a revised SCI in October 2024 – December 2024 together with the recommended response of NFDC.

Organisation	Section of draft SCI the comments relate to	Issue Summary	NFDC Recommended Response
Copythorne Parish Council	General	Copythorne Parish Council are content with the statement as written, and confirm their agreement to it.	Welcomed. No change required.
Cranborne Chase National Landscape (CCNL)	1.8; 2.15/16; Section 5; 6.22; Appendix 1, 1.2; Appendix 5	1.8: s.245 of LURA 2023 amended s.85 of CRoW Act 2000, from being a duty of regard, to being more pro-active and challenging. Amend 1.8 to cover that statutory change. 2.15/16: mention that NFDC is an active partner in CCNL partnership, statutorily the NL Management Plan is the Council's policy for management of the CCNL. Section 5: CIL payments from developments in CCNL should be used on projects within and to the benefit of the CCNL.	Agreed. Amend paragraph 1.8 accordingly. Agreed. New Paragraph after 2.17 to reflect this. Noted. NFDC will take account of CCNL needs in appraising CIL projects.

		<p>6.22: consultees should be reconsulted on post-decision amendments as what may be non-material to one officer, may be material in the context of the National Landscape.</p> <p>Appendix 1, para 1.2: Highways England is now known as National Highways.</p> <p>Appendix 5: consultation should take place on certificates of lawfulness, prior notifications for agricultural buildings/changes of use.</p>	<p>Noted. The criteria determining whether an amendment is deemed non-material is laid out in the Government's Planning Policy Guidance. Material amendments are consulted upon. No change to SCI needed.</p> <p>Agreed. Amend Appendix 1, paragraph 1.2 accordingly.</p> <p>Certificates of lawfulness and prior approvals are decided based on compliance to The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. If applications comply with the legislation, the council cannot refuse them. No change to SCI needed.</p>
CPRE Hampshire	General; 2.2; 2.10; Table 3; 1.8	<p>General: welcome the commitment in the introduction and reference to meaningful public consultation. Do not feel draft provides means / opportunity for meaningful / effective participation at sufficiently early stage of plan-making process.</p> <p>2.2: no explanation of meaning of 'targeted consultations'. Not in alignment with NPPF, para 16 (2.5) as community consultation should take place prior to the emerging options stage.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Agreed. Paragraph 2.2 and Tables 1 and 2 amended to explain the point at which</p>

		<p>Table 3/2.10: clarify who will be consulted on scope of Plan at early preparation stage and encourage/consider community input at this stage.</p> <p>Table 3: appears to be exclusive reliance on digital media consultation methods: should not be sole means of communication. Consultation methods in para. 4.4 in respect of Neighbourhood Plans should be used by NFDC to engage local communities in preparation of Local Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents.</p> <p>1.8: Should refer to enhanced duty in LURA 2023 to 'seek to further' purposes of National Park, rather than 'having regard to' (CRoW 2000)</p>	<p>targeted consultations are to take place and with who.</p> <p>Agreed. Minor amendment to Table 3 clarify the scope of consultation.</p> <p>Noted. Paragraph 4.4 in relation to Neighbourhood Plans only suggests the methods listed - it does not require them. No change to SCI required.</p> <p>Agreed. Paragraph 1.8 to be amended accordingly.</p>
Fordingbridge Town Council	General	<p>Document is generic in format, content and commitments. More consideration should be given to local factors, including how to engage hard-to-reach groups and those not traditionally involved. More commitment and consideration to innovative methods to achieve local ways of doing things. More should be said about bespoke consultation/ engagement with Parish/Town Councils, especially those most affected.</p> <p>NFDC should commit to biannual Parish/Town Forum meetings for NFDC briefings, including local plan progress and legislation changes.</p>	<p>Noted. The SCI does not prevent the council from utilising further measures, over and above the minimum set out in the SCI. Different consultations may require different approaches and the SCI allows flexibility to explore those methods. Where it needs to go further NFDC will do so.</p> <p>Noted.</p>

Hampshire County Council	Appendix 1, 1.6; General	<p>Appendix 1, 1.6: appreciate explicit inclusion of vulnerable and marginalised groups. Suggest setting out engagement with low-income families as well.</p> <p>General: greater efforts to engage with schools/universities to reach children/younger adults.</p> <p>Include <i>Hampshire County Council – Public Health</i> as a consultee / stakeholder.</p> <p>Replace NHS West Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Group with NHS Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board.</p> <p>Gunning principles are a measure of robust community engagement aims, and a legal consideration.</p>	<p>Noted. NFDC will seek to engage with all residents. Where it can identify methods to reach certain groups it will do so.</p> <p>Agreed. These groups are listed in Appendix 1 (para 1.6). NFDC will consider how best to engage with younger demographics. No change required.</p> <p>Agreed. It will be included under the existing 'Other Government organisations not already listed in Type B' category. No change required.</p> <p>Agreed. Amendment to Appendix 1 entry to be made.</p> <p>Noted.</p>
The Lymington Society	General	The Lymington Society welcomes the Council's commitment to meaningful public consultation and engaging with local people. However, they feel that the operation of the planning system does not reflect the previous SCI, and the current SCI does not do enough to overcome the disadvantage the community is at in the planning system.	Noted.

		<p>The Council should adhere to the Gunning Principles and fully respect the SCI when preparing Local Plans. Proper timescales for consultation should be followed. All sites included in the local plan proposal should be consulted on, with "conscientious consideration" given to all consultee responses before decisions are made.</p> <p>There should be more transparency given to pre-application discussions at an early stage so the community can be fully involved in major/controversial developments.</p> <p>Officers' recommendation on planning issues raised in connection with a planning application should be posted much earlier in the process to allow the community to fully assess the Officers' recommendation and respond accordingly (specific reference to committee).</p> <p>NFDC should compile a list of Amenity Societies to be made statutory consultees for major/controversial planning applications, and those involving listed buildings. These bodies should receive the weekly distribution list also sent to parishes.</p> <p>The current three-minute time limit at Planning Committee should be removed for larger or controversial planning applications.</p>	<p>NFDC publishes preparation of plan and document timetables as required in its Local Development Scheme.</p> <p>Noted. Early public engagement is encouraged by the NPPF and NFDC - but disclosures will be at the discretion of the applicant. By default discussions will be withheld from the public domain owing to commercial sensitivity.</p> <p>Noted. Beyond the remit of the SCI.</p> <p>Weekly list is already available, and any individual can be added to the distribution list.</p> <p>Noted. Not within remit of SCI. No change required.</p>
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<p>M.W. Private Individual</p>	<p>General</p>	<p>Greater effort should be given to ensuring that all who may be affected receive letters about planning applications – e.g. roads which will be affected by off-site parking provision.</p> <p>The Council should monitor businesses in residential areas.</p> <p>Disabled people should receive letters, and not be reliant on site notices.</p> <p>Ambulances/emergency vehicles should be consulted about their access routes.</p> <p>Allowances should be made for properties to have extra living space in purpose-built, eco-friendly outbuildings to accommodate multigenerational living, esp. elderly parents/carers.</p> <p>Site notices should be different colours depending on whether residential/commercial.</p>	<p>Noted. This is at the discretion of the case officer. No change needed.</p> <p>Noted. However, this is not within the remit of the SCI.</p> <p>Noted. However, it is not feasible to identify those individuals who might wish to see such notices. NFDC already goes beyond the statutory requirements by writing to adjacent neighbours <u>and</u> posting a site notice.</p> <p>Noted. This falls under the remit of Hampshire County Council (as the Highways Authority) or the Hampshire Fire Service, with whom NFDC consult on a case by case basis. No change needed.</p> <p>Noted. However, this is not within the remit of SCI.</p> <p>Noted. No change is deemed necessary.</p>
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		Site notices should be posted at each end of a road, if the whole road will be affected.	Noted. This is at the discretion of the case officer. NFDC sends letters and a site notice, which is over and above the requirements. On major development a news release will often be sent out. No change is deemed necessary.
New Forest National Park Authority	General	Suggest using a mechanism such as New Forest Association of Local Councils (NFALC) to improve the communication links to town and parish councils.	Agreed. NFDC will reach out directly to NFALC.
Southern Water	General	No comments.	Noted. No change required.
Transition Lymington	Appendix 3; General	<p>Appendix 3: Transition Lymington wish to be listed under 'Commuters' and/or 'Community groups and societies' and receive targeted communications related to the SO41 postcode and cycling/cycling-related road (and associated) infrastructure.</p> <p>General: develop a single SPD focused on Active Travel – currently, mentions of which are scattered across SPDs 1-3. This is likely to improve clarity, enhancing community group engagement, and ensure new development Transport Statements/Travel Plans are more evidence-based.</p>	<p>Noted. Transition Lymington will be consulted as part of the 'Community groups and societies' (Appendix 3).</p> <p>Noted. However, this is not within the remit of the SCI. The Local Plan Review will appraise the policy approach for this. No change required.</p>
Stephen Morris	General	<p>Critical of the format of public consultation.</p> <p>Planning system too complicated for the public to engage with.</p>	Noted. Most of the planning processes and inherent requirements are set nationally. No change required.

Fawley Parish Council	Appendix 5, 1.1	Neighbour notification area should be made wider, including those on the other side of the road. In the case of community assets, the wider community should also be notified.	Noted. Site notice deemed to be sufficient. No change needed.
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Annex A

List of bodies and individuals the Council directly consulted regarding the revised Statement of Community Involvement (October-December 2024)

Local residents, developers, and agents who have expressed a wish to be consulted on future planning matters. In addition:

Alderholt Parish Council
Ashurst & Colbury Parish Council
Beaulieu Parish Council
Bishopstone Parish Council
Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP)
Boldre Parish Council
Bowerchalke Parish
Burley Parish Council
Burton Parish Council
Bransgore Parish Council
Bramshaw Parish Council
Breamore Parish Council
Brockenhurst Parish Council
Broad Chalke Parish Council
Copythorne Parish Council
Coombe Bissett Parish Council
Campaign to Protect Rural England (Hampshire)
Cranborne Chase National Landscape

Damerham Parish Council
Denny Lodge Parish Council
Dorset Council
Downton Parish Council
East Boldre Parish Council
Eastleigh Borough Council
Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley Parish Council
Environment Agency
Exbury & Lepe Parish Council
Fawley Parish Council
Fordingbridge Town Council
Forestry England
Godshill Parish Council
Go South Coast (bus operator)
Hampshire County Council
Hampshire & Isle of Wight Police (Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner)
Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
Hale Parish Council
Health and Safety Executive
Historic England
Highways England

Homes England
Hordle Parish Council
Hurn Parish Council
Hyde Parish Clerk
Hythe and Dibden Parish Council
Isle of Wight Council
Landford Parish Council
Lymington and Pennington Town Council
Lyndhurst Parish Council
Martin Parish Council
Marine Management Organisation
Minstead Parish Council
Marchwood Parish Council
Melchet Park & Plaitford Parish Council
Ministry of Defence
Milford on Sea Parish Council
Mobile UK (mobile network operators)
Natural England
National Grid plc
National Gas
National Highways
National Trust
Netley Marsh Parish Council
New Forest National Park Authority
Network Rail
New Milton Town Council
NHS West Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Group
Nursling & Rownhams Parish Council
Odstock Parish Council
Partnership for South Hampshire

Redlynch Parish Council
Ringwood Town Council
Rockbourne Parish Council
Romsey Extra Parish Council
Sandleheath Parish Council
Sixpenny Handley & Pentridge Parish Council
Southern Water
Southampton City Council
South West Water
South Western Railway
Sopley Parish Council
Sport England
St Leonards & St Ives Parish Council
SSE (Scottish and Southern Energy)
Test Valley Borough Council
The Coal Authority
Totton & Eling Town Council
Theatres Trust
Verwood Town Council
Wellow Parish Council
Wessex Water
Whitsbury Parish Council
Wiltshire Council
Woodgreen Parish Council

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Cabinet – 5 February 2025

Asset Maintenance and Replacement Programme and General Fund Capital Programme 2025/26

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	This report provides the council's proposed revenue funded Asset Maintenance and Replacement programme (AMR) and General Fund Capital programme for 2025/26 and outline budgets to 2026/27.
Recommendation(s)	<p>It is recommended that Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Recommend to Council that the schedule of projects, as included in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 be approved within the 2025/26 budget, noting that this commits the Council to expenditure beyond 2025/26 whereby a project commences in 2025/26 and extends into future years; 2) Recommend to Council that the Vehicle and Plant replacement programme be approved for a 2-year period, covering purchases due in 2025/26 and 2026/27; 3) Recommend to Council that the Appletree Court scheme previously approved in August 2024 be removed from the Capital Programme, updating the Council's MTFP accordingly and note the new £200,000 allocation for a reduced scope of work in the revised Capital Programme under recommendation 1; and 4) Notes the intention to create an Asset Management Strategy.

Reasons for recommendation(s)	To support the council setting an annual balanced budget and presenting how its financial resources are to be allocated and utilised. To ensure the council continues to invest in and maintain its assets in order to carry out its duties and minimise risk.
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Jeremy Heron – Finance and Corporate
Strategic Director(s)	Alan Bethune – Strategic Director Corporate Resources and Transformation (Section 151 Officer)
Officer Contact	Paul Whittles Assistant Director - Finance 02380 285766 paul.whittles@nfdc.gov.uk

Introduction and background

1. This report provides the proposed revenue funded Asset Maintenance & Replacement programme (AMR) and General Fund Capital programme for 2025/26 and outline budgets to 2026/27.
2. The December 2024 Medium Term Financial Plan included a revenue budget allowance to cover the AMR programme for 2025/26 of £2.500 million for the General Fund and £390,000 for the HRA (total £2.890 million). This maintains the level of investment provided in 2024/25 and there are currently no further planned or approved adjustments to the overall programme budget over the period covered by the current Medium Term Financial Plan.
3. Service Managers were asked to come up with their proposed projects for 2025/26, whilst being realistic in terms of timeframes and deliverability. The programme sums now being proposed matches the funding allocated, after work via the Capital and Change Board (CCB) was required to reprioritise projects to align to the sums available, with priority given to statutory and health and safety items.
4. The proposed General Fund Capital Programme for 2025/26 totals £19.411 million. Projects are funded by a range of resources, including NFDC reserves (capital reserve and receipts received),

various grants, funds and Developer Contributions including the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and external borrowing as required. Full financing detail is covered in the Council's Capital Strategy.

5. The council is commencing the creation of an Asset Management Strategy to fully understand its requirements particularly in light of Local Government Reorganisation and further updates shall be brought back for consideration at future meetings.

Proposed Asset Maintenance and Replacement Programme 2025/26

6. The summary programme covering 2025/26 – 2027/28 is included as (**Appendix 1**). The budget is monitored at this overall summary level to allow for sufficient flexibility should more urgent projects come to light during the financial year.

Further Information Relating to Projects

Health & Leisure Centres Annual Maintenance Programme £750,000

7. During 2019, a full condition survey of the Council's 5 Leisure Centres was procured by the Council and carried out by a third-party specialist. The resultant report identified a works schedule covering a 15-year period to maintain the centres at the current standard/condition. Annually, this report will be reviewed and will inform the necessary maintenance required at the Leisure Centres. The prioritised programme of works, which will include the cyclical replacement of end-of-life plant with newer more efficient alternatives, will be agreed with the Strategic Director for Corporate Resources & Transformation.

Replacement fuel tank £130,000

8. Budget provision of £130,000 is being set aside within the programme to carry out works to remove the Marsh Lane depot fuel bunker from below ground and install a 3,000 litre above ground fuel tank at the same location within the service yard.

Offices and Depots £75,000

9. Further to the investment in the new depot at Hardley this budget will improve the welfare facilities for its staff at the Council's other depot sites. The project will include a review of changing facilities and mess rooms for front line staff to improve staff satisfaction with their workplace.

Appletree Court East wing roof £65,000

10. Budget provision of £65,000 is being set aside within the programme to strip back and reline the roof structure above the CCTV suite at Appletree Court.

ICT Equipment Replacement Programme £190,000

11. The Council invested significantly in new devices over the period 2017-2019 and has a cyclical replacement programme in place to ensure IT equipment remains fit for purpose. An annual budget of £150,000 is in place throughout the period covered by this Medium Term Financial Plan.
12. Furthermore, £40,000 has been included in 2025/26 to fund the replacement of wireless access points.

Vehicles & Plant Replacement Programme £1,650,000

13. Members will note that the replacement of Vehicles & Plant (V&P) occurs on both the revenue AMR programme and the Capital Programme. The Council's policy is to capitalise individual items with a value greater than £10,000 and then depreciate these over their estimated useful life. The capital programme therefore includes the cash amount required to purchase the V&P, and the revenue programme includes the depreciation charge. The depreciation charge to revenue then makes a direct contribution towards the capital cost through a charge known as the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). The significant capital outlay required will result in older less efficient vehicles being replaced with the latest more efficient models.
14. The 2025/26 programme includes cyclical replacement of 'standard' fleet vehicles and plant. The £1.650 million budget here does not relate to the additional vehicles or the capitalisation of the containers associated with the roll out of the waste strategy.

Programme Contingency £30,000

15. To provide cover for inevitable project variations as they arise, a programme contingency of £30,000 has been allowed for.
16. The programme as outlined above totals £2.890 million. Of this total, approximately £390,000 is rechargeable to the HRA leaving £2.500 million to be funded via the General Fund. In keeping with the amount currently provided for in the MTFP. The recharge to the HRA will be accommodated within the detailed budget planning for 2025/26.

Projects that didn't make it through to the final prioritised programme were as follows:

17. Milford on Sea and Hurst Spit coastal protection works; will need to be managed as part of broader Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) strategy and funding review.
18. Salisbury Arcade roof replacement; will need to be considered separately and funded from direct income receipts.
19. Litter bin replacements; considered non statutory, external funding options to be explored.
20. Public conveniences renovations; will be considered as part of broader future asset management strategy.
21. Maintenance of new open spaces; will be considered separately as part of a broader review of service delivery for all open spaces.
22. Careline digital upgrades; will be considered more broadly as part of separate service business case.

Other One-Off Funded Programmes

23. In December 2024 the Council was awarded £327,146 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) for 2025/26. This allocates £60,401 for capital expenditure and £266,745 for revenue expenditure.
24. Consideration is currently being given to how best to allocate the UKSPF resources and a separate Cabinet report will follow.
25. The Community Grants programme has a maximum budget of £100,000 for one-off capital grant applications for 2025/26. The Panel are aware this is a financial ceiling, and not a target. Currently the recommendation from the Task and Finish group to the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel is to award grants totalling £77,871.
26. The above will require financial resources, funded by the revenue budget or reserves and will be included on the Medium Term Financial Planning Reports through Cabinet.

General Fund Capital Programme 2025/26

27. The capital programme consists of projects funded by NFDC resources (capital reserve and receipts received), various grants, funds and Developer Contributions including the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

28. The proposed programme for 2025/26 totalling £19.411 million including the outline financing is included as (**Appendix 2**).
29. The project proposals for a 3-year period have been included for overall context. Where a project commences in (or continues into) 2025/26 and spans several financial years, a commitment to start in 2025/26 is a commitment to approve the funding required to complete over the period of the programme. Where a sum is included in future years, it is not requiring approval now but is included for completeness and overall programme context; approval for these items will come at the appropriate point in the budget setting cycle for the year in question. Due to the lead in time of the Vehicles and Plant Acquisition programme, the programme sums for 2025/26 and 2026/27 will be approved now to enable necessary work to commence in the year prior to when the new vehicle and plant will actually be delivered.

Further Information Relating to NFDC Funded Projects

Appletree Court accommodation refurbishment (2025/26 £200,000)

30. Further to Council approval in August 2024, a £1.75m budget was included in the council's capital programme to enable the modernisation of the east wing at Appletree Court and in turn facilitate the third party letting of the south wing and the generation of c£300,000 per annum in income.
31. Further to the government's devolution agenda and the likely local government reorganisation across Hampshire, concerns regarding the schemes ability to pay back the proposed investment in keeping with the original timeframe now exist.
32. Therefore, it is recommended that Council approve the removal of this previously approved scheme and adjust the Council's MTFP accordingly, particularly the removal of the previously anticipated income stream.
33. £200,000 will be reinstated in the capital programme to fund a reduced programme of works.

Sustainability and Climate Action (2025/26 £100,000; 2026/27 £100,000; 2027/28 £100,000)

34. The Council has maintained its commitment to an annual budget of £250,000 to support the Climate Strategy and action plan throughout the Medium Term Financial Plan. Subject to confirmation of the specific activity an element of this funding may need to be treated as revenue expenditure. It is currently assumed

£150,000 shall be considered revenue expenditure in 2025/26, leaving £100,000 to be capitalised.

Vehicles & Plant (2025/26 £2.463 million; 2026/27 £390,000; 2027/28 £908,000)

35. The significant Capital Outlay required will result in older less efficient vehicles being replaced with the latest more efficient models. For 2025/26 the replacement programme for the refuse and recycling part of the fleet focuses in the main on vehicles which can be utilised on our current service, whilst also being suitable for a future service, albeit in some cases with some retrospective modifications likely.

Vehicles and Plant – New Waste Strategy (2025/26 £3.709 million; 2026/27 £453,000; 2027/28 £84,000)

36. Preparations are underway for the commencement of the new wheeled bin Waste Service to go live from 2025.

Vehicles and Plant – New Waste Strategy Containers (2025/26 £4.550 million)

37. The procurement of wheeled bins and food caddies began in 2024/25 with the majority of costs planned to conclude in 2025/26.

Eling Tide toll bridge and quayside repairs (2025/26 £260,000)

38. To satisfy our statutory obligations regarding our Grade II listed building, repairs are required relating to the mill, bridge and the quayside walls to protect the ongoing operational use.

Further Information Relating to Part or Non-NFDC Funded Projects

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) (2025/26 £60,401)

39. The Council was awarded £60,401 from the UKSPF for capital works in 2025/26. Consideration is currently being given to how best to use these resources. NFDC Capital Contribution: £nil.

Disabled Facilities Grants (2025/26 £1.500 million; 2026/27 £1.500 million; 2027/28 £1.500 million)

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

South-East Strategic Coastal Monitoring (2025/26 £2.829 million; 2026/27 £2.216 million)

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

Hurst Spit Shingle Source Study (2025/26 £75,000)

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

Milford-On-Sea Beach and Cliff Study (2025/26 £230,000)

43. This project is a follow on from the Westover urgent works undertaken during 2020. The expected scope and coastal frontage will be broadened to consider the wider defended Milford frontage. The commencement and delivery of this project will be subject to the outcomes of the Christchurch Bay Strategy Study. NFDC Capital Contribution: £nil.

Barton Horizontal Directional Drilling Trials (2025/26 £135,000; 2026/27 £10,000; 2027/28 £15,000)

44. Works expected to take the form of test drainage trials to determine suitability and effectiveness of the system. The aim being to control and manage groundwater levels to reduce erosion risk. Regular monitoring will be required post completion of the project. NFDC Capital Contribution: 2025/26 £67,000; 2026/27 £5,000; 2027/28 £7,000 (50% match funding).

Developer Contributions / CIL (2025/26 £3.300 million; 2026/27 £3.900 million; 2027/28 £3.938 million)

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

Corporate plan priorities

46. The investments laid out in the body of the report are widespread and crosscutting, positively impacting many of the council's

corporate priorities including caring for our facilities, neighbourhoods and open spaces in a modern and responsive way, maximising the benefits of inclusive economic growth and investment, and being financially responsible.

Options appraisal

47. As detailed in the body of the report the Capital and Change Board considered a number of potential requests for funding prioritising those of a statutory and health and safety nature first.

Consultation undertaken

48. Internal consultation between finance officers, service managers and budget holders has determined the forecast data presented in the report.

Financial and resource implications

49. This is a financial report with budget implications already detailed and considered in the main body of the report.

Legal implications

50. Many of the maintenance projects ensure the Council is satisfying its health and safety, statutory and contractual obligations associated with its assets.

Risk assessment

51. None undertaken.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

52. Whilst constrained to the funding available a number of the schemes included in the council's AMR and Capital Programme, such as replacing old less efficient fleet vehicles and coastal protection work, make positive contributions to the environment.

Equalities implications

53. There are no equality implications arising directly from this report.

Crime and disorder implications

54. There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

55. There are no data protection, information governance or ICT implications arising directly from this report.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Asset Maintenance
and Replacement Programme
2025/26

Appendix 2 – Capital Programme
2025/26 – 2027/28

Background Papers:

None

GENERAL FUND ASSET MAINTENANCE AND REPLACEMENT (AMR) PROGRAMME

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Health & Leisure Centres	750	750	-	-
Office, Depots and Outlying Buildings	170	270	-	-
Programme Contingency	41	30	1,090	1,090
Cemeteries	40	-	-	-
Eling Experience	40	-	-	-
Water Safety	21	-	-	-
Public Conveniences	28	-	-	-
	1,090	1,050	1,090	1,090
ICT Replacement Programme	150	190	150	150
Vehicle and Plant (Depreciation/MRP)	1,650	1,650	1,650	1,650
	1,800	1,840	1,800	1,800
Less: Proportion allocated to the HRA	-390	-390	-390	-390
TOTAL GENERAL FUND AMR PROGRAMME	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500

	Portfolio	PROJECT REQUIREMENTS £			ORIGINAL 2025/26 PROJECT FINANCING £			
		2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	NFDC Resources / Loan	Better Care Fund	Grant / Income	Developer contributions / CIL
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	LEADER / ALL	60,000	-	-	-	-	60,000	-
Disabled Facilities Grants	HOU (GF)	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	-	1,500,000	-	-
Strategic Regional Coastal Monitoring (2025-2027)	ENV & SUSTAIN	2,829,000	2,216,000	-	-	-	2,829,000	-
Hurst Spit Beach Shingle Source Study	ENV & SUSTAIN	75,000	-	-	-	-	75,000	-
Milford Beach and Cliff Study	ENV & SUSTAIN	230,000	-	-	-	-	230,000	-
Barton Horizontal Directional Drilling Trials	ENV & SUSTAIN	135,000	10,000	15,000	67,000	-	68,000	-
Mitigation Schemes	PLAN & ECON	2,000,000	2,750,000	2,788,000	-	-	-	2,000,000
Infrastructure Schemes	PLAN & ECON	1,300,000	1,150,000	1,150,000	-	-	-	1,300,000
ATC Accommodation refurbishment	FIN & CORP	200,000	-	-	200,000	-	-	-
Sustainability Fund - Unallocated	ENV & SUSTAIN	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	-	-	-
Vehicle & Plant; Replacement Programme	FIN & CORP	2,463,000	390,000	908,000	2,463,000	-	-	-
Vehicle & Plant; Replacement Programme - Waste Strategy	FIN & CORP	3,709,000	453,000	84,000	2,809,000	-	900,000	-
Eling Tide Mill	ENV & SUSTAIN	260,000	-	-	260,000	-	-	-
Waste Strategy Container Roll Out	ENV & SUSTAIN	4,550,000	-	-	4,214,000	-	336,000	-
TOTAL GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME		19,411,000	8,569,000	6,545,000	10,113,000	1,500,000	4,498,000	3,300,000
								19,411,000
LOAN FINANCED				Vehicle & Plant	-9,013,000			
RESIDUAL NFDC RESOURCES					1,100,000			

Cabinet – 5 February 2025

Capital Strategy 2025/26

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>This report provides the council's proposed capital strategy for 2025/26.</p> <p>It provides a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management come together, with an overview of current activities and the implications for future financial sustainability.</p>
Recommendation(s)	<p>It is recommended that Cabinet:</p> <p>1) Recommend to Full Council that the Capital Strategy 2025/26 be approved, including the adoption of the Minimum Revenue Payment (MRP) statement.</p>
Reasons for recommendation(s)	To comply with the statutory guidance issued by the Government in January 2018 and the CIPFA 2021 Prudential and Treasury Management Codes requiring all local authorities to prepare a Capital Strategy.
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Jeremy Heron – Finance and Corporate
Strategic Director(s)	Alan Bethune – Strategic Director Corporate Resources and Transformation (Section 151 Officer)
Officer Contact	<p>Paul Whittles Assistant Director - Finance 02380 285766 paul.whittles@nfdc.gov.uk</p>

Introduction and background

1. The Capital Strategy is a high-level document, giving an overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury

management come together, with an overview of current activities and the implications for future financial sustainability.

2. The Capital Strategy confirms what the Council is intending to spend its money on over the medium term and how it intends to finance this expenditure.
3. The Council will supplement internal resources, when necessary, with external borrowing and in accordance with advice it receives from its contracted Treasury Management experts. Borrowing was utilised to support the 2024/25 capital programme and based on the current set of prudential indicators; external borrowing will continue to be required each year from 2024/25.
4. Over the period covered by 2025/26 to 2027/28, total capital expenditure is forecast at around £126 million. (General Fund £34.525 million; Housing Revenue Account (HRA) £91.480 million).
5. £50.231 million of capital expenditure is currently programmed during 2025/26 with £19.411 million relating to the General Fund and £30.820 million within the HRA.
6. 2025/26 activity is funded using £11.203 million of external funding (grants, developer contributions including CIL), £16.250 million of internal resources (reserves, capital receipts and revenue contributions) with the balance funded by debt.
7. The change to the levels of cash held and debt funding will require the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to be reviewed and adjusted accordingly to match the estimated interest earning and costs.
8. It is vitally important that the Council has regard to the relationship between the financing costs of the capital programme and the revenue General Fund, and Housing Revenue Account. This is covered within the report by the prudential indicators.
9. This Council has established a sound level of governance surrounding its capital investments and employs suitably qualified personnel in order to fulfil the objectives of the Strategy. External support and expertise is sought where necessary, and officers have the ability to communicate openly and freely with members of the Cabinet.

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

10. Where General Fund capital spend has been financed by loan (including internal borrowing) and has increased the Capital

Financing Requirement (CFR), the Council is required to make a provision to repay a proportion of the accumulated amount each year. This amount is charged to revenue and is called the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). This charge reduces the CFR each year and is based on the expected economic use period related to the capital expenditure.

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

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

Corporate plan priorities

12. The Capital Strategy provides a framework ensuring we use our resources appropriately, are financially responsible, and consequently supports and underpins the delivery of all our priorities.

Options appraisal

13. None undertaken.

Consultation undertaken

14. Internal consultation between finance officers, service managers and budget holders has determined the forecast data presented in the report.

Financial and resource implications

15. This is a financial report with budget implications already detailed and considered in the main body of the report.

Legal implications

16. There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

Risk assessment

17. None undertaken.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

18. There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report.

Equalities implications

19. There are no equality implications arising directly from this report.

Crime and disorder implications

20. There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

21. There are no data protection, information governance or ICT implications arising directly from this report.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Capital Strategy
2025/26

Background Papers:

None

Capital Strategy 2025/26

Introduction

1. This capital strategy gives a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.
2. Decisions made this year on capital and treasury management will have financial consequences for the Authority for many years into the future. They are therefore subject to both a national regulatory framework and to local policy framework, summarised in this report.
3. The report also includes the prudential indicators, as required by the Prudential Code.

Capital Expenditure and Financing

4. Capital expenditure is where the Council spends money on assets, such as property or vehicles, that will be used for more than one year. In local government this includes spending on assets owned by other bodies, and loans and grants to other bodies enabling them to buy assets.
5. The Council has some limited discretion on what counts as capital expenditure, for example assets costing below £10,000 are generally not capitalised and are charged to revenue in year.
6. In 2025/26, the Council is planning capital expenditure of £50.231 million as summarised below:
7. Table 1: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Expenditure in £ millions

	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Budget	2026/27 Budget	2027/28 Budget
General Fund services	6.371	17.079	19.411	8.569	6.545
Council housing (HRA)	26.382	32.380	30.820	30.160	30.500
Capital investments	0.115	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
TOTAL	32.868	49.459	50.231	38.729	37.045

8. The General Fund capital programme includes the cyclical replacement of vehicles and plant, and containers/vehicles for the new Waste Strategy.
9. Due to the ongoing comparatively high interest rate environment, no further expenditure on commercial and residential properties is assumed at this time (save for exceptional opportunities).
10. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a ring-fenced account which ensures that council housing does not subsidise, or is itself subsidised by, other local services. HRA capital expenditure is therefore recorded separately and includes the maintenance and decarbonisation of existing stock and the building and acquisition of new homes over the forecast period, in line with the Housing strategy.
11. **Governance:** Service managers bid annually in the early Autumn to include projects in the Council's capital programme. Bids are collated by the Chief Finance Officer and reviewed collectively by the Capital and Change Delivery Board. The Resources and Transformation Overview and Scrutiny Panel appraises the proposed programme and makes recommendations to the Cabinet. The final capital programme is then presented to Cabinet and to Council in February each year.
12. Full details of the Council's capital programme are available within the February 2025 Cabinet papers (Medium Term Financial Plan / Annual Budget 2025/26).
13. All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Council's own resources (revenue, reserves and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing). The planned financing of the above expenditure is as follows:

14. Table 2: Capital financing in £ millions

	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Budget	2026/27 Budget	2027/28 Budget
External sources	6.884	15.491	11.203	13.208	7.931
Capital Receipts	3.000	5.581	4.000	2.362	2.000
Capital Reserves	2.333	7.122	0.950	0.540	0.530
Revenue Contributions	11.999	10.775	11.300	10.600	10.900
Debt / Loan	8.652	13.756	22.778	12.019	15.684
TOTAL	32.868	52.725	50.231	38.729	37.045

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

16. Table 3: Replacement of debt finance in £ millions

	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Budget	2026/27 Budget	2027/28 Budget
Capital Expenditure Financed by Debt / Loan	8.652	13.756	22.778	12.019	15.684
Own resources - Net Debt Repayment	-2.768	-4.100	-2.490	-2.258	-1.798
Own resources - MRP Provi	-1.992	-2.695	-3.288	-3.920	-4.474
Movement in CFR	3.892	6.961	16.999	5.841	9.412

17. The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP, debt repayments and capital receipts used to replace debt. The CFR is expected to increase by £16.999 million during 2025/26. Based on the above figures for expenditure and financing, the Council's estimated CFR is as follows:

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

	31.3.2024 Actual	31.3.2025 Forecast	31.3.2026 Budget	31.3.2027 Budget	31.3.2028 Budget
General Fund services	5.454	6.744	14.487	12.770	11.163
Council housing (HRA)	133.816	139.921	149.612	157.606	169.060
Capital investments	20.973	20.538	20.103	19.668	19.233
Total CFR at Year End	160.242	167.203	184.203	190.044	199.456
Movement in CFR from one year to the next	3.892	6.961	16.999	5.841	9.412

19. **Minimum Revenue Provision:** Where General Fund capital spend has been financed by loan (internal borrowing), and has increased the CFR, the Council is required to make a provision to repay a proportion of the accumulated amount each year. This amount is charged to revenue and is called the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). This charge reduces the CFR each year and is based on the expected economic use period related to the capital expenditure.
20. Full Council is required to approve an MRP statement in advance of each financial year. The Council is recommended to approve the following MRP statement:
- “For capital expenditure that has been incurred, and which has given rise to a CFR, the MRP policy for expenditure other than that incurred on investment property and dwellings, shall be to charge revenue an amount equal to the depreciation of any asset financed by loan. The MRP policy specific to investment properties and dwellings financed by loan, shall be to charge revenue an amount equivalent to the sum of borrowing utilised, over a repayment period of 50 years.”***
21. For Council Housing and the refinancing settlement of 2012, the Council approved a business plan that charged amounts to revenue to ensure that any borrowings are reduced in accordance with the maturity of the debt outstanding. The proposed 2025/26 HRA budget confirms that new borrowing is required to provide the necessary finance to the Capital Programme.
22. **Asset management:** Service Managers from across the Council manage assets in their service delivery areas. The Council’s Service Manager for Estates and Valuation has overall responsibility for the

management of the Council’s property estate records, including liaising with the Council’s Accountancy department on statutory annual financial reporting. To ensure that property assets continue to be of long-term use, the Council will be producing an overarching Accommodation Strategy.

23. **Asset disposals:** When a capital asset is no longer needed, it may be sold so that the proceeds (capital receipts), can be spent on new assets or to repay debt. Repayments of capital grants, loans and investments also generate capital receipts. Council dwelling sales through the Right to Buy scheme also generate capital receipts. The Council plans to receive £3.450 million of capital receipts in the coming financial year as follows:

24. Table 5: Capital receipts in £ millions

	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Budget	2026/27 Budget	2027/28 Budget
Asset sales	2.861	4.220	3.450	2.462	1.150
Loans repaid	0.301	0.300	0.000	0.000	0.000
TOTAL	3.162	4.520	3.450	2.462	1.150

25. The majority of forecast asset disposals relate to Right to Buy receipts.
26. In 2014, the Council arranged £2m of prudential borrowing on behalf Lymington Harbour Commissioner. This was being repaid annually, with the final payment received in 2024/25.
27. In 2022/23, the Council provided a loan facility to the New Forest Enterprise Centre to finance planned maintenance works. The outstanding loan value at the end of 2023/24 is due to be repaid in full by 31 March 2025.

Treasury Management

28. Treasury management is concerned with keeping sufficient but not excessive cash available to meet the Council’s spending needs, while managing the risks involved. Surplus cash is invested until required, while a shortage of cash will be met by borrowing, to avoid excessive credit balances or overdrafts in the bank current account. The Council is typically cash rich in the short-term as revenue income is received before it is spent (‘spent’ in this context also includes the payment of collected council tax to the relevant

precepting authorities) but will become cash poor in the long-term as capital expenditure is incurred before being financed. The revenue cash surpluses are offset against capital cash shortfalls to reduce overall borrowing.

29. At the last balance sheet date (31/03/2024), the Council had £124.1 million borrowing at an average interest rate of 3.48% (due principally to the HRA refinancing settlement in 2012) and held £31.3 million treasury investments (including sums received from Central government for redistribution) earning an average rate of 5.19%.
30. **Borrowing strategy:** The Council's main objectives when borrowing are to achieve a low but certain cost of finance while retaining flexibility should plans change in future. These objectives are often conflicting, and the Council therefore seeks to strike a balance between cheaper short-term loans and long-term fixed rate loans where the future cost is known but higher.
31. The Council does not borrow to invest for the primary purpose of financial return and therefore retains full access to the Public Works Loans Board.
32. Projected levels of the Council's total outstanding debt are shown in table 6 below, compared with the capital financing requirement (see above).
33. Table 6: Prudential Indicator: Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement in £millions

	31.3.2024 Actual	31.3.2025 Forecast	31.3.2026 Budget	31.3.2027 Budget	31.3.2028 Budget
Debt - HRA settlement	114.0	109.9	105.8	101.7	97.6
Debt - Capital programme	0.0	22.1	48.2	61.5	79.3
Total debt	114.0	132.0	154.0	163.2	176.9
Capital Financing Requirement	160.2	167.2	184.2	190.0	199.5

34. Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short-term. As can be seen from table 6, the Council expects to comply with this for the duration of the current programme.
35. The figures shown in the Debt – Capital Programme row highlight the amount of external borrowing that is anticipated to be needed

from 31 March 2025, but this will be managed against actual overall cash balances, as part of the Treasury Strategy.

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

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

	2023/24 limit	2024/25 limit	2025/26 limit	2026/27 limit	2027/28 Limit
Authorised limit – total external debt	230.5	233.3	233.5	234.7	241.4
Operational boundary – total external debt	211.5	214.3	213.9	214.4	220.4

38. Further details on borrowing are included within the treasury management strategy.

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

40. The Council’s policy on treasury investments is to prioritise security and liquidity over yield, that is to focus on minimising risk rather than maximising returns. Cash that is likely to be spent in the near term is invested securely, for example with the government, other local authorities or selected high-quality banks, to minimise the risk of loss. Money that will be held for longer terms is invested more widely, including in bonds, shares and property, to balance the risk of loss against the risk of receiving returns below inflation. Both near-term and longer-term investments may be held in pooled funds, where an external fund manager makes decisions on which particular investments to buy and the Council may request its money back at short notice.

41. Table 8: Treasury management investments in £millions

	31.3.2024 Actual	31.3.2025 Forecast	31.3.2026 Budget	31.3.2027 Budget	31.3.2028 Budget
Near-term investments	22.2	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.9
Longer-term investments	9.1	9.1	9.1	9.1	9.1
TOTAL	31.3	10.0	10.0	10.1	10.0

42. Further details on treasury investments are included within the treasury management strategy

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

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

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

45. The Council has invested in commercial and residential property to support a sustainable local economy within the New Forest and encourage regeneration projects. The Council will invest in and will lend to its Wholly Owned Trading Company (WOTC) and will in return receive an income. Investment properties were valued at £30.3 million on the Council's balance sheet as at 31/03/24 and long terms loans to the WOTC totalled £3.713 million as at the same date.

46. To support the wider objective of economic sustainability and regeneration the Council accepts higher risk on commercial and

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

47. Expenditure on these approved strategies remains paused due to the interest return that can currently be received on cash balances, and as the Council is now in an external borrowing position, the interest charges are currently too high to satisfy the financial parameters of the business case requirements.
48. **Governance:** Decisions on commercial investments are made by an investment panel in line with the criteria and limits approved by Council in the Commercial Property Investment strategy. Decisions on residential investments are taken by the Board of Directors of the wholly owned trading company, in line with the criteria and limits approved by Council in the Residential Property Strategy. Property and most other commercial investments are also capital expenditure and purchases have therefore also been pre-approved as part of the capital programme.
49. Further details, including the risk management on commercial and residential investments are outlined in these respective strategy documents;
 - Commercial Property Investment Strategy 2022
 - Residential Property Investment Strategy

Other Liabilities

50. In addition to debt of £124.1 million detailed above, the Council is committed to making future payments to cover its pension fund liability (valued at £12 million as at 31/03/2024), It has also set aside £2.6 million in provisions, with £2.1 million of this to cover risks of business rate appeals.

51. **Governance:** Decisions on incurring new discretionary liabilities are taken by the Chief Finance Officer. The risk of liabilities crystallising and requiring payment is monitored by Accountancy and reported when necessary.
52. Further details on liabilities are shown within the Council’s draft balance sheet on page 18 of the 2023/24 draft Annual Financial Report, further supported by notes to the accounts originally published May 2024 (to be confirmed following conclusion of the external audit by the 28 February 2025 backstop date):
53. [Annual Financial Report - 2023-24](#)
54. Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue, offset by any investment income receivable (In relation to the finance costs incurred within the General Fund, the income to be generated from Commercial and Residential property will exceed the additional MRP and interest charges, but as this income is to be used to directly contribute towards the funding of services, the income is not netted off against the finance costs within the table 9.) . The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from Council Tax, business rates and general government grants for the General fund, and the income receivable from rents within the HRA.
55. Table 9: Prudential Indicator: Proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream

	31.3.2024 Actual	31.3.2025 Forecast	31.3.2026 Budget	31.3.2027 Budget	31.3.2028 Budget
General Fund; Financing costs (£'000)	-0.29	1.03	1.98	2.56	2.91
General Fund; Proportion of net revenue stream	-1.3%	4.2%	7.6%	9.9%	11.6%
HRA; Financing costs (£'000)	4.1	5.0	6.0	6.8	8.0
HRA; Proportion of net revenue stream	12.6%	13.7%	16.1%	17.7%	20.1%

56. The Financing costs of both the General Fund and HRA are set to increase as a result of the required Capital Financing Requirement, reducing cash balances (and assumed interest rates) for investment and costs of external borrowing. Financing costs for the General Fund will increase from 2024/25 to 2025/26 principally as a result of increased prices of Vehicles and Plant, and the allowance for borrowing charges as a result of the Capital Financing Requirement. The further increase to 31/3/2028 is principally down to expected

reductions in treasury management earnings and the capital expenditure requirements associated with the roll out of the new waste strategy, and the MRP / financing thereof. There is a working assumption that the additional revenue costs associated with regards to Food Waste collection will be supported with government funding.

57. **Financial Sustainability:** Due to the very long-term nature of capital expenditure and financing, the revenue budget implications of expenditure incurred in the next few years will extend for up to 50 years into the future. The Chief Finance Officer is satisfied that the proposed capital programme is appropriate according to required projects aligned to service delivery. The medium-long term affordability remains reliant on service change savings being delivered, and government transitional support (with regards to the waste strategy roll-out & the large decarbonisation requirements within the HRA).

Knowledge and Skills

58. The Council employs professionally qualified and experienced staff in senior positions with responsibility for making capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions. For example, the Chief Finance Officer, Assistant Director – Finance, the Principal Service Accountant and the Principal Corporate Accountant are all qualified accountants with several years' experience between them. Senior Estates, Valuation & Facilities Officers are highly experienced in commercial property transactions and facilities management and are supported by experienced and professionally qualified surveyors and valuers (members of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors).
59. Where Council staff do not have the knowledge and skills required, use is made of external advisers and consultants that are specialists in their field. The Council currently employs Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers and has a Service Level Agreement with Hampshire County Council's Treasury Management department for day-to-day treasury management activities. The Council instructs external surveyors, valuers, architects and quantity surveyors to provide specialist advice on specific projects, where required. This approach is more cost effective than employing such staff directly and ensures that the Council has access to knowledge and skills commensurate with its risk appetite.

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Cabinet – 5 February 2025

Scheme of Members’ Allowances – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) and Scheme to Apply from 1 April 2025

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>The Council’s Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), tasked with reviewing the Council’s Scheme of Members’ Allowances, was commissioned to undertake a review of the Council’s scheme following the implementation of the Electoral Review of the District Council. The review sought to reflect on the reduction in the number of councillors together with revisions to the Council’s governance arrangements that coincided with the implementation of the review, in May 2023.</p> <p>This report presents the recommendations of the IRP (Appendix 1) and a revised scheme based upon those recommendations for consideration by the Council (Appendix 2). The recommendations include a new basic allowance of £7,888, with a minor change to the Leader’s Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) multiplier. This in turn makes minor changes to the range of SRAs payable, as they derive their value as a percentage of the Leader’s SRA. No fundamental amendments have been proposed by the IRP.</p> <p>The IRP recommends the promotion of the Dependent Carers’ Allowance and the Parental Leave Policy, to encourage prospective councillor candidates and to remove some barriers from sections of the community for standing or re-standing for election as a councillor. This may also serve as a useful tool for local political parties and organisations in their recruitment of prospective candidates.</p>

Recommendation	1. That the Cabinet considers the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) and makes recommendations to the Council for the Scheme of Members' Allowances to Apply from 1 April 2025.
Reasons for recommendation	<p>To ensure that the Council reflects the impact of changes to electoral and governance arrangements, within the remuneration of councillors.</p> <p>To implement a scheme that will apply for a period of up to four years commencing 1 April 2025.</p> <p>To comply with the provisions of the Local Government (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.</p>
Wards	All
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Jill Cleary – Leader
Strategic Director	Alan Bethune, Corporate Resources and Transformation (S151)
Officer Contact	<p>Matt Wisdom Service Manager – Democratic and Support Services 023 8028 5072 matt.wisdom@nfdc.gov.uk</p> <p>Tanya Coulter Assistant Director – Governance (Monitoring Officer) 023 8028 5532 Tanya.coulter@nfdc.gov.uk</p>

Introduction and background

1. On 21 February 2022, the Council commissioned an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) comprising Mark Palmer, Julia Abbott, Martin James and Roger Farrall, to undertake two reviews of the Council's Scheme of Members' Allowances.

2. The IRP's terms of reference are as follows:-
 - a. To review New Forest District Council's Members' Allowances Scheme when requested by the Cabinet, but at least every four years, and to make recommendations to the Cabinet for any changes to the Scheme that the Panel considers appropriate, within existing budgets.
 - b. To make recommendations for the level of any further allowances that might be referred to the Panel by the Cabinet from time to time.
 - c. As and when requested by the Cabinet, to sit as the Independent Remuneration Panel for Parish and Town Councils in the District, and to make appropriate recommendations to Parish and Town Councils on the level of allowances to apply to their Councillors, within existing budgets.
3. The first review was completed in 2022, with the further review planned for the Autumn of 2024, once the new Council had been in operation for approximately 18 months. This review, which is the subject of this report, was commissioned to reflect on the new governance arrangements of the Council and to take a closer inspection of the impact in the reduction in the Council's size from 60 to 48 councillors.

The Review

4. The IRP met over two days on 22 and 23 October 2024 and conducted a series of interviews with a wide selection of councillors, also meeting with the Chief Executive. The IRP commissioned a survey of all councillors and reviewed the responses in detail, which were received from 24 out of 48 councillors. The IRP report arising from its deliberations is attached in full at Appendix 1.
5. In summary, the recommendations recalculate the basic allowance using a notional time input of 13 hours per week, which is an increase from 12 as set under the previous review. This one hour increase a week reflected on the reduction in the number of councillors arising from the Electoral Review, and the consequential increase in the number of local electors served by each councillor. A public service discount is then applied, which recognises the non paid, public duty aspect of the councillor role. In this instance, a public service discount of 30% continues to be recommended. Consideration was given to the increased training and development programme offered to councillors, which they heard directly from councillors about a revitalised commitment to learning and development since May 2023.

6. Having calculated the hours per week and applied a public service discount, the IRP continued to use the median full time gross wage per hour for the NFDC area, at £16.67 per hour. This results in a basic allowance of £7,888 per annum.
7. The Leader's SRA is recommended to reduce from 317% to 310%. This is essentially a 'no change' recommendation, factoring in the new basic allowance.
8. No other changes to the SRA multipliers are proposed, which derive their value as a percentage of the Leader's allowance. The recommendations continue in respect of no more than 50% of the total number of councillors being eligible to receive an SRA, and that an individual councillor may not receive more than one SRA at any one time.
9. It is recommended that the indexation to the local government pay award continues. Once a settlement is finalised each year, Members' Allowances will increase in line with this settlement, backdated to the beginning of the financial year in question. If the pay award is not increased by a percentage but rather a fixed lump sum, allowances will be increased by percentage received by staff at SCP point 49.

Corporate plan priorities

10. This timely IRP Review promotes the Future New Forest objectives by ensuring that the Council's modernised governance and electoral arrangements are reflected in the remuneration of councillors.

Options appraisal

11. In accordance with the Regulations, the Cabinet and Council must have regard to the recommendations of the IRP when adopting a Scheme of Members' Allowances.
12. The Council could make amendments to the scheme as currently recommended. Whilst it has been the practice of this Council to adopt the independent recommendations in full, this is a matter for Members to consider.

Consultation undertaken

13. All councillors have had the opportunity to feed their views into the review, through the questionnaire process. 24 out of 48 councillors responded to the questionnaire. 16 councillors were interviewed by the IRP, representing a third of the Council across differing roles and responsibilities. The Chief Executive also spoke directly to the IRP.

14. Group Leaders were briefed as the process and recommendations developed, alongside the input of the Council's Statutory Officers.

Financial and resource implications

15. By implementing the recommendations of the IRP in full, there will be a total cost increase of c.£15,000 to the overall Members' Allowances budget. Provision has been made within the Medium Term Financial Plan process. As this review was prompted by the Electoral Review of the District Council, those financial implications are in the context of the ongoing annual saving of c.£95,000 in basic allowances alone, achieved from the Electoral Review itself.
16. The Chairman of the HR Committee SRA is not payable to the Leader of the Council who is already in receipt of the Leader's SRA, which equates to a saving of £2,445 per annum.

Legal implications

17. The Local Government (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 make it mandatory for local authorities to receive a report from an Independent Remuneration Panel before making or amending their schemes of members' allowances.
18. Where a scheme allows for the adjustment of allowances to be determined by reference to an index, the application of that index must be reviewed at least every four years. Whilst a four-year period has not elapsed since the index applicable to this Council's scheme of allowances was last reviewed, the Council has sought to ensure that recommendations are made in response to significant changes to the electoral and governance arrangements of the Council.

Risk assessment

19. A formal risk assessment for the setting of a Members' Allowances Scheme is not considered necessary, having regard to the implications outlined throughout the report.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

20. The IRP recommends the continued inclusion of a travel allowance for electric vehicles on the current HM Revenue and Customs rate of 45p a mile. This sits alongside the allowance provision for bicycles and public transport, promoting the use of sustainable travel for Council business.

Equalities implications

21. The IRP recommendations include continuing with a parental leave policy, which stands to remove barriers to becoming a councillor, including encouraging younger prospective councillors with family commitments to stand for election. Furthermore, based on patterns of caring responsibilities, the policy is likely to remove specific barriers for women to fulfil their role as a councillor, based on the findings of the Fawcett Society report (Does Local Government Work for Women, 2018), which cited that a 'lack of maternity, paternity provision or support' is a real barrier for women aged 18-44 to fulfil their role as a councillor.
22. The report also recommends continuing with a dependent carers allowance.
23. The IRP requests that the Council and political groups through their recruitment processes, promote both of these policies to encourage prospective councillor candidates and to remove some barriers from sections of the community for standing or re-standing for election as a councillor.

Crime and disorder implications

24. There are none arising directly from the report.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

25. There are none arising directly from the report.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – IRP Report November 2024
Appendix 2 – Draft Scheme of Members' Allowances

Background Papers:

[Scheme to Apply from 1 April 2022 and IRP Arrangements IRP 2022](#)
Questionnaire Responses
Comparative Data



**The report of the Independent Remuneration Panel
appointed to review the allowances paid to Councillors
of New Forest District Council**



November 2024

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Background	IRP Review of Councillor Allowances Responses to the Questionnaire 2024	
Background	Comparative data of allowances paid to councillors of the other Hampshire District and Borough Councils (South East Employers, Members Allowances Survey 2024)	

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 ("the 2003 Regulations"), as amended, require all local authorities to appoint an independent remuneration panel (IRP) to advise on the terms and conditions of their scheme of councillors' allowances.

1.1.2 New Forest District Council formally appointed the following persons to undertake this process and make recommendations on its future scheme.

Julia Abbott- Retired Academic Professional and local resident of Hampshire
Roger Farrall- Former senior Local Government Officer and local resident of Hampshire

Martin James- Retired Human Resources Specialist and local resident of Hampshire

Mark Palmer- Development Director, South East Employers (Chair)

1.1.3 Our terms of reference were in accordance with the requirements of the 2003 Regulations, together with "Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local Authority Allowances" issued jointly by the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Inland Revenue (July 2003). Those requirements are to make recommendations to the Council as to:

- (a) the amount of basic allowance to be payable to all councillors.
- (b) the level of allowances and whether allowances should be payable for:
 - (i) special responsibility allowances.
 - (ii) travelling and subsistence allowance.
 - (iii) dependants' carers' allowance.
 - (iv) parental leave and.
 - (v) co-optees' allowance and
 - (vi) Independent persons allowance

and the amount of such allowances.

- (c) whether payment of allowances may be backdated if the scheme is amended at any time to affect an allowance payable for the year in which the amendment is made.
- (d) whether adjustments to the level of allowances may be determined according to an index and if so which index and how long that index should apply, subject to a maximum of four years before its application is reviewed.

2. CURRENT SCHEME

- 2.1.1 The last review of councillors' allowances was undertaken by the IRP for the Council in March 2022. This review was prompted by a recommendation following the 2022 review that following the implementation of the Boundary Commission review that reduced the number of councillors from sixty to forty-eight then the IRP should meet two years after the implementation of the review. This was to ascertain if the reduction in councillors had impacted on the workload and hours of work of the councillor role. This will relate to the recommended Basic Allowance.
- 2.1.2 The Scheme currently provides that all councillors are each entitled to a total basic allowance of £7,612 per annum. The basic allowance is subject to an indexation linked to the NJC for Local Government Services Staff Salary increase. In addition, some councillors receive special responsibility allowances for undertaking additional duties.
- 2.1.3 Councillors may also claim the cost of travel and subsistence expenses and for expenditure on the care of children or dependants whilst on approved duties.

3. PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING OUR REVIEW

3.1 The Public Service Principle

- 3.1.1 This is the principle that an important part of being a councillor is the desire to serve the public and, therefore, not all of what a councillor does should be remunerated. Part of a councillor's time should be given voluntarily. The consolidated guidance notes the importance of this principle when arriving at the recommended basic allowance.¹ Moreover, we found that a public service concept or ethos was articulated and supported by all of the councillors we interviewed and in the vast majority of responses to the questionnaire completed by councillors as part of our review.
- 3.1.2 To provide transparency and increase an understanding of the Panel's work, we will recommend the application of an explicit Public Service Discount (or PSD). Such a PSD is applied to the time input necessary to fulfil the role of a councillor. Further explanation of the PSD to be applied is given below in Section 4.

3.2 The Fair Remuneration Principle

- 3.2.1 Alongside the belief that the role of the elected Councillor should, in part, be viewed as unpaid voluntary service, we advocate a principle of fair remuneration. The Panel in 2024 continues to subscribe to the view promoted by the independent Councillors' Commission:

Remuneration should not be an incentive for service as a councillor. Nor should lack of remuneration be a barrier. The basic allowance should

¹ The former Office of Deputy Prime Minister – now the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government Inland Revenue (now HM Revenue & Customs), *New Council Constitutions: Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local Authority Allowances*, London: TSO, July 2003, paragraph 68.

² Rodney Brooke and Declan Hall, *Members' Remuneration: Models, Issues, Incentives and Barriers*. London: Communities and Local Government, 2007, p.3.

encourage people from a wide range of backgrounds and with a wide range of skills to serve as local councillors. Those who participate in and contribute to the democratic process should not suffer unreasonable financial disadvantage as a result of doing so.²

3.2.2 We are keen to continue to ensure that our recommended scheme of allowances provides reasonable financial compensation for councillors. Equally, the scheme should be fair, transparent, logical, simple, and seen as such.

3.2.3 Hence, we continue to acknowledge that:

- (i) allowances should apply to roles within the Council, not individual councillors.
- (ii) allowances should represent reasonable *compensation* to councillors for expenses they incur and time they commit in relation to their role, not *payment* for their work; and
- (iii) special responsibility allowances are used to recognise the *significant additional responsibilities which attach to some roles*, not merely the extra time required.

3.2.4 In making our recommendations, we have therefore sought to maintain a balance between:

- (i) the voluntary quality of a councillor's role.
- (ii) the need for appropriate financial recognition for the expenses incurred and time spent by councillors in fulfilling their roles; and
- (iii) the overall need to ensure that the scheme of allowances is neither an incentive nor a barrier to service as a councillor.

3.2.5 The Panel also sought to ensure that the scheme of allowances is understandable in the way it is calculated. This includes ensuring the bandings and differentials of the allowances are as transparent as possible.

3.2.6 In making our recommendations, we wish to emphasise that any possible negative impact they may have is not intended and should not be interpreted as a reflection on any individual councillor's performance in the role.

4. CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Basic Allowance

4.1.1 A Council's scheme of allowances must include provision for a basic allowance, payable at an equal flat rate to all councillors. The guidance on arriving at the basic allowance states, "*Having established what local councillors do, and the hours which are devoted to these tasks the local authorities will need to take a view*

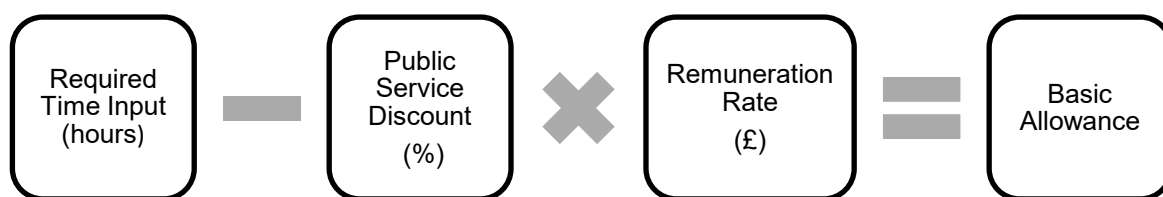
on the rate at which, and the number of hours councillors ought to be remunerated.”³

4.1.2 In addition to the regular cycles of Council and committee meetings, a number of working groups involving councillors may operate. Many councillors are also appointed by the Council to a number of external organisations.

4.1.3 We recognise that councillors are responsible to their electorate as:

- Representatives of a particular ward.
- Community leaders.
- Decision makers for the whole Council area.
- Policy makers for future activities of the Council.
- Scrutineers and auditors of the work of the Council; and
- Other matters required by Government.

4.1.4 The guidance identifies the issues and factors an IRP should have regard to when making a scheme of allowances.⁴ For the basic allowance we considered three variables in our calculation: the time required to execute the role effectively; the public service discount; and the rate for remuneration.



4.1.5 Each of the variables is explained below.

Required Time Input

4.1.6 We ascertained the average number of hours necessary per week to undertake the role of a councillor (with no special responsibilities) from questionnaires and interviews with councillors and through reference to the relevant information. In addition, we considered further information about the number, range, and frequency of committee meetings.⁵

4.1.7 Discounting attendance at political meetings (which we judged to be centred upon internal political management), we find that the

³ The former Office of Deputy Prime Minister – now the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, and Inland Revenue (now HM Revenue and Customs), *New Council Constitutions: Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local Authority Allowances*, London: TSO, July 2003, paragraph 67.

⁴ The former Office of Deputy Prime Minister – now the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and Inland Revenue (now HM Revenue and Customs), *New Council Constitutions: Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local Authority Allowances*, London: TSO, July 2003, paragraphs 66-81.

⁵ The summary responses to the questionnaires are available as background papers.

average time commitment required to execute the role of a councillor with no special responsibilities is 13 hours per week.

Public Service Discount (PSD)

4.1.8 From the information analysed, we found councillors espoused a high sense of public duty. Given the weight of evidence presented to us concerning, among other factors, the levels of responsibility, the varied nature of the role, the need for learning and development, and the increasing accessibility and expectations of the public, we recommend a Public Service Discount of 30 per cent to the calculation of the basic allowance. This percentage sits within the mid-range of PSDs applied to basic allowances by councils.

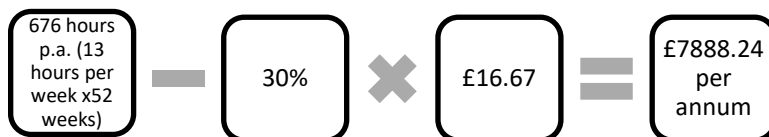
Remuneration Rate

4.1.9 After establishing the expected time input to be remunerated, we considered a remuneration rate. We came to a judgement about the rate at which the councillors ought to be remunerated for the work they do.

4.1.10 To help identify an hourly rate for calculating allowances, we utilised relevant statistics about the local labour market published by the Office for National Statistics. We selected the average (median), full-time gross⁶ wage per hour for the New Forest District Council area £16.67⁷ per hour.

Calculating the basic allowance

4.1.11 After determining the amount of time required each week to fulfil the role (13 hours), the level of PSD to be applied (30%) and the hourly rate to be used (£16.67), we calculated the basic allowance as follows:



4.1.12 The gross Basic Allowance before the PSD is applied is **£11,268.92**. Following the application of the PSD this leads to a basic allowance of **£7888.24** per annum.

4.1.13 This amount is intended to recognise the overall contribution made by councillors, including their work on council bodies, division work and attendance on external bodies.

⁶ The basic allowance, special responsibility allowance, dependants' carers' allowance, and co-optees' allowance are taxable as employment income.

⁷ The Nomis official labour market statistics: Hourly Pay – Gross median (£) For full-time employee jobs by place of residence: UK December 2023.

4.1.14 We did also note the levels of basic allowance currently allocated by other comparative District and Borough Councils across Hampshire, (see table below and background papers).

Council	Hampshire District and Borough Councils: Basic Allowances (£) 2024⁸
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council	8,046
East Hampshire District Council	7,298
Eastleigh Borough Council	8,349
Fareham Borough Council	8,003
Gosport Borough Council	7,968
Hart District Council	5,064
Havant Borough Council	6,136
New Forest District Council	7,612
Rushmoor Borough Council	6,441
Test Valley Borough Council	8,951
Winchester City Council	6,956
Average	7,331

4.1.15 The Panel wished to ensure the level of basic allowance goes some way as not to constitute a barrier to candidates from all sections of the community standing, or re-standing, for election as councillors. However, the Panel acknowledges that the recommended allowance in itself will not act as a single incentive to encourage people to stand for council and other areas of the Members Allowance Scheme the Dependant Carers' Allowance and Parental Leave Policy can also be promoted to encourage prospective councillor candidates. The Panel was of the view the approach undertaken in this review of a transparent and clear formula for calculating the Basic Allowance will assist a future Panel in recommending a Basic Allowance.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND that the Basic Allowance payable to all members of New Forest District Council be £7888 per annum

⁸ Figures drawn from the South East Employers, Members' Allowances Survey 2024 (October 2024).

4.2 Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs)

- 4.2.1 Special Responsibility Allowances are awarded to councillors who perform significant additional responsibilities over and above the roles and expenses covered by the basic allowance. These special responsibilities must be related to the discharge of the council's functions.
- 4.2.2 The 2003 Regulations do not limit the number of SRAs which may be paid, nor do they prohibit the payment of more than one SRA to any one councillor. They do require that an SRA be paid to at least one councillor who is not a member of the controlling group of the Council. As the guidance suggests, if the majority of councillors receive a SRA, the local electorate may rightly question the justification for this.⁹
- 4.2.3 We conclude from the evidence we have considered that the following offices bear *significant* additional responsibilities:
- Leader of the Council
 - Deputy Leader of the Council
 - Portfolio Holders (4)
 - Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Panels (3)
 - Chairman of Planning Committee
 - Chairman of General Purposes and Licensing Committee
 - Chairman of Audit Committee
 - Major Opposition Group Leader
 - Deputy Leader of Major Opposition Group
 - Minority Group Leader
 - Chairman of the Council
 - Vice Chairman of the Council
 - Chairman of Human Resources (HR) Committee
 - Co-Opted Members
 - Independent Persons

One SRA Only Rule

- 4.2.4 To improve the transparency of the scheme of allowances, we continue to feel that no councillor should be entitled to receive at any time more than **one SRA**. If a councillor can receive more than one SRA, then the public are unable to ascertain the actual level of remuneration for an individual councillor from a reading of the Scheme of Allowances.
- 4.2.5 Moreover, the One SRA Only Rule avoids the possible anomaly of the Leader receiving a lower allowance than another councillor. If two or more allowances are applicable to a councillor, then the higher-valued allowance would be received. The One SRA Only Rule is common practice for many councils. Our calculations for the SRAs are based on this principle, which should be highlighted:

⁹ The former Office of Deputy Prime Minister – now the Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government and *New Council Constitutions: Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local Authority Allowances*, London: TSO, July 2003, paragraph 72.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND that that no councillor shall be entitled to receive at any time more than one Special Responsibility Allowance and that this One SRA Only Rule be adopted into the new Scheme of Allowances.

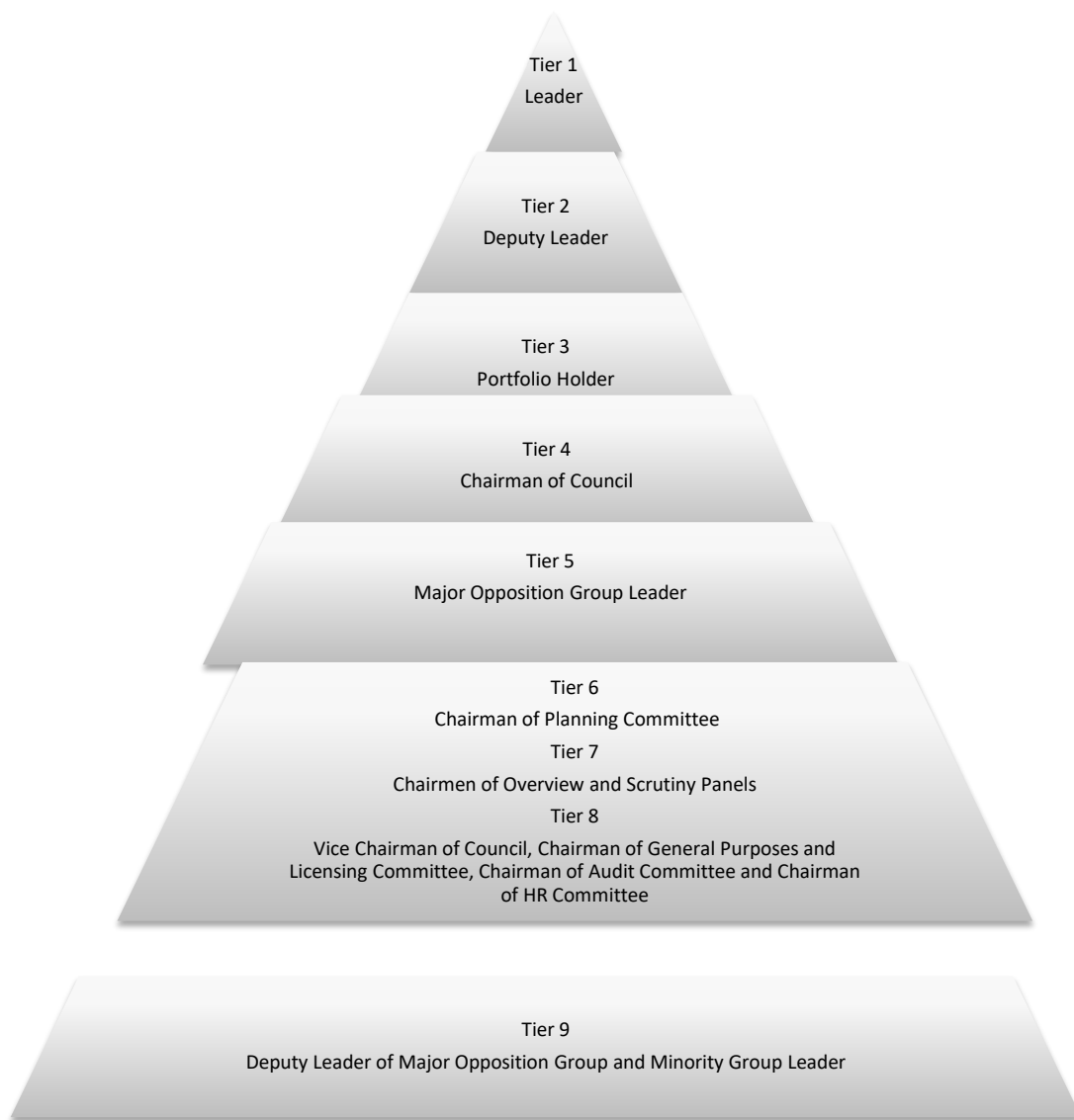
The Maximum Number of SRA's Payable

- 4.2.6 In accordance with the 2006 Statutory Guidance (paragraph 72) the Panel is of the view that the Council should adhere to the principal that no more than **50%** of Council Members (24) should receive an SRA at any one time

Calculating SRAs

- 4.2.7 The Panel supported the criteria and formula for calculating the Leader of the Council allowance based on a multiplier of the Basic Allowance; this role carries the most significant additional responsibilities and is the most time consuming.
- 4.2.8 We applied a multiplier of the basic allowance to establish the Leader's SRA. Other SRAs are then valued downwards as a percentage of the Leader's allowance. This approach has the advantage that, when future adjustments to the SRAs are required, changing the Leader's SRA will have a proportionate and easily calculable effect on the other SRAs within the scheme.

We grouped together in Tiers those roles that we judged to have a similar level of responsibility. The outline result of this approach is illustrated in a pyramid of responsibility:



The rationale for these nine tiers of responsibility is discussed below.

Leader (Tier One)

- 4.2.9 The Council elects for a four-year term of office a Leader who is ultimately responsible for the discharge of all executive functions of the Council. The Leader is the principal policy maker and has personal authority to determine delegated powers to the rest of the Cabinet. The Leader is also responsible for the appointment (and dismissal) of members of the Cabinet and their respective areas of responsibility.
- 4.2.10 The multiplier we applied to calculate the Leader's SRA is 310% (3.1 x times) the basic allowance. If the recommended option of a basic allowance with a PSD of 30% is adopted, this results in a Leader's Allowance of £24,453.

WE RECOMMEND that the Leader of the Council should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 310% of the recommended basic allowance, £24,453.

Deputy Leader (Tier Two)

- 4.2.11 The Deputy Leader usually acts on the Leader's behalf in their absence and is a required role as part of the Leader and Cabinet model of governance. From the information we gathered, we consider this additional responsibility should be reflected in the level of allowance. Therefore, we recommend the Deputy Leader's SRA be set at 60% of the Leader's SRA. If our recommendations concerning the basic allowance and the Leader's SRA are adopted, this results in an allowance of £14,672.

WE RECOMMEND that the Deputy Leader receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 60% of the recommended Leader's Allowance, £14,672.

Portfolio Holders (Tier Three)

- 4.2.12 Portfolio Holders, Cabinet Members appointed by the Leader of the Council have significant delegated decision-making responsibilities and this responsibility has increased.
- 4.2.13 The Panel was of the view that it is important to provide the Leader with greater flexibility to appoint a Cabinet that is best able to respond to the current and future challenges. The panel is therefore of the view that the Special Responsibility Allowance for a Cabinet Member should be 50% of the Leader's Allowance, £12,227.

WE RECOMMEND that a Portfolio Holder (Cabinet Member) should continue to receive an allowance of 50% of the recommended Leader's Allowance, £12,227.

Chairman of the Council (Tier Four)

- 4.2.14 The role of the Chairman of the Council is highly visible across the District Council area and undertakes a high number of civic engagements that raise the profile of the Council and the district. Following the 2022 review the Chairman's Allowance was recommended to be amalgamated into the Scheme of Allowances for Members. We continue to recommend that the role of the Chairman of the Council be recognised at Tier Four and receive an allowance of £9,781, 40% of the Leader's Allowance.

WE RECOMMEND that the Chairman of the Council continue to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 40% of the recommended Leader's Allowance, £9,781.

Major Opposition Group Leader (Tier Five)

- 4.2.15 From the evidence gathered, including questionnaire responses and face to face interviews, we continue to consider the Major Opposition Group Leader to be a significant role and the 2003 Regulations require that the a member of the opposition group receive a Special Responsibility Allowance. The Major Opposition Group Leader has to both ensure democratic accountability and the holding to account of the administration but also manage and develop a Group of a significant size, fourteen councillors. The Panel is therefore of the view that the Major Opposition Group

Leader should continue to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 37.5% of the Leader's Allowance, £9,170.

WE RECOMMEND that the Major Opposition Group Leader receive a Tier Five Special Responsibility Allowance of 37.5% of the recommended Leader's Allowance, £9,170. The Panel further recommends that the qualification for receiving the Special Responsibility Allowance, 20% of Council membership should continue.

Chairman of Planning Committee (Tier Six)

- 4.2.16 The Chairman of the Planning Committee continues to be a role of significant responsibility and the Planning Committee continues to be regarded by councillors in response to the questionnaire as the most significant of the Council Committees in respect of community impact and workload. The Planning Committee has regular meetings, additional site visits and a high level of public engagement. The role of the Chairman of the Planning Committee requires a significant time and workload commitment from the Chairman. The Panel therefore recommends that the Chairman of the Planning Committee should continue to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 35% of the Leader's Allowance, £8,559.

WE RECOMMEND that the Chairman of the Planning Committee should continue to receive a Tier Six Special Responsibility Allowance of 35% of the recommended Leader's Allowance, £8,559.

Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels (Tier Seven).

- 4.2.17 Overview and Scrutiny is a key role of the Council ensuring accountability and the holding to account of the decisions of Cabinet and external organisations. Overview and Scrutiny can also lead on policy development. It has a significant statutory role supported by legislation. The Council has also reduced the number of Panels from four to three. The Panel is therefore of the view that the Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels should continue to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 25% Leader's Allowance, £6,113.

WE RECOMMEND that the Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels receive a Tier Seven Special Responsibility of 25% of the recommended Leader's Allowance, £6,113.

Vice Chairman of Council, Chairman of General Purposes Committee, Chairman of Audit Committee and Chairman of Human Resources (HR) Committee (Tier Eight)

- 4.2.18 The role of Vice Chairman of Council like that of the Chairman continues to be a high-profile role that has an impact across the district and Council and a workload based on the number and frequency of civic engagements. The Panel is of the view that the role of Vice Chairman should continue to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance based on 10% of the Leader's Allowance, £2,445.
- 4.2.19 The role of Chairman of the General Purposes and Licensing Committee continues to be regarded as a Tier Eight role and

should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance based on 10% of the Leader's Allowance, £2,445.

- 4.2.20 The Chairman of the Human Resources Committee should continue to receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 10% of the Leader Allowance, £2,445.
- 4.2.21 The role of the Audit Committee is evolving in many councils and this has included the recruitment of an Independent Person for the Audit Committee to provide critical friend challenge and accountability. New Forest District Council has not as yet made any changes to the terms of reference of the Audit Committee or appointed an Independent Person to the Committee. The Panel is therefore of the view that at this stage the Chairman of the Audit Committee should continue to receive an allowance of 10% of the Leader's Allowance, £2,445.

WE RECOMMEND that the Vice Chairman of Council, Chairman of General Purposes and Licensing Committee, Chairman of Audit Committee and Chairman of the Human Resources (HR) Committee should receive a Tier Seven Allowance, 10% of the recommended Leader's Allowance, £2,445.

Minority Group Leader, Deputy Leader of Major Opposition Group (Tier Nine)

- 4.2.22 The Leaders of the Minority Groups are still a role of importance and the Panel continued to be of the view that the Leader(s) of the Minority Group(s) should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance. The Panel is of the view that the current Minority Group Leader's should receive a Tier Nine allowance, based on 20% of the recommended Major Opposition Group Leader's Allowance, £1,834.
- 4.2.23 The Panel also continued to be of the view that the Deputy Leader of the Major Opposition Group should receive a Tier Nine allowance of £1,834, 20% of the Major Opposition Group Leader's Allowance. The Panel was again informed that the role had responsibilities commensurate of receiving a Special Responsibility Allowance.

WE RECOMMEND that the Minority Group Leader(s), should receive a Tier Nine Allowance, 20% of the recommended Major Opposition Group Leader's Allowance, £1,834. WE FURTHER RECOMMEND that the Deputy Leader of the Main Opposition Group should also receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 20% of the recommended Major Opposition Group Leader's Allowance, £1,834. WE ALSO RECOMMEND that the qualification for these Allowances continue as approved within the current Scheme of Allowances.

Co-Optee's Allowance

- 4.2.24 The Panel continues to recommend that the Co-Optees allowance be based on an hourly rate of £16.67 per hour (Nomis median hourly rate for full time employees by place of residence for the New Forest District Council area, December 2023). The Panel is aware that the Council currently has no Co-Optees. The Panel is also of the view that this allowance should also include payment for reasonable preparation time.

WE RECOMMEND that the Co-Optees Allowance should be based on an hourly rate of £16.67 per hour. The allowance should be awarded on a per meeting basis and include payment for reasonable preparation time.

Independent Persons Allowance

- 4.2.25 The Council currently does not have a payment for the Independent Persons within the Scheme of Allowances, however an annual payment of £353 per annum is made to the three Independent Persons. The Panel is of the view that current payment should continue within the recommended Scheme of Allowances.

WE RECOMMEND that the Independent Persons continue to receive an annual Allowance of £353 per annum.

4.3 Travelling and Subsistence Allowance

- 4.3.1 A scheme of allowances may provide for any councillor to be paid for travelling and subsistence undertaken in connection with any of the duties specified in Regulation 8 of the 2003 Regulations (see paragraph 5.10). Similarly, such an allowance may also be paid to Co-opted/Independent Members of a committee or sub-committee of the Council in connection with any of those duties, provided that their expenses are not also being met by a third party.

WE RECOMMEND that travelling and subsistence allowance should be payable to councillors, Independent Persons and Co-optees in connection with any approved duties. The amount of travel and subsistence payable shall continue to be at the maximum levels payable to council staff in line with HM Revenue and Customs' rates. We propose no changes to the current travel and subsistence allowances.

WE FURTHER RECOMMEND that a travel allowance for electric vehicles should continue to be promoted based on the current HM Revenue and Customs' rate of 45p per mile.

4.4 Dependant Carers' Allowance

- 4.4.1 The dependant carers' allowance should ensure that potential candidates are not deterred from standing for election to council and should enable current councillors to continue despite any change in their personal circumstances. The current scheme awards reimbursement for Child Care at the rate of the Real Living Wage, **£12.60 per hour** and more specialist care at the actual cost.
- 4.4.2 The Panel is of the view that the Dependant Carers' Allowance should continue to be reimbursed at the rate of the Real Living Wage for Childcare for children under 16 years of age living with the councillor.
- 4.4.3 The Panel continues to be of the view that the cost of more specialist care should be reimbursed at the actual cost incurred by the councillor upon production of receipts. In respect of specialist care provision medical evidence that this type of care provision is

required should also be provided and approved by an appropriate officer of the Council.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND that the Dependent's Carers' Allowance for childcare be based on the Real Living Wage rate, £12.60 per hour. Specialist care should be based at cost upon production of receipts. In the case of specialist care a requirement of medical evidence that this type of care be required, the allowance should have no daily or monthly maximum claim when undertaking Approved Councillor Duties.

WE ALSO RECOMMEND that the Council should continue to actively promote the allowance to prospective and new councillors both before and following an election. This may assist in supporting a greater diversity of councillor representation.

4.5 Parental Leave

4.5.1 There is no uniform national policy to support councillors who require parental leave for maternity, paternity, or adoption leave. According to the Fawcett Society (Does Local Government Work for Women, 2018) a *'lack of maternity, paternity provision or support'* is a real barrier for women aged 18-44 to fulfil their role as a councillor. The Panel was pleased to see the Council approve and adopt a Parental Leave Policy that has been included in the Scheme following the 2022 review.

4.5.2 We continue to be of the view that support should be provided for parental leave and the nature of that support should be left to the Council to determine .

4.5.3 A parental leave policy can assist in supporting the diversity of Councillors, the Panel continues to recommend that the Members' Allowance Scheme include support for a parental leave policy that includes:

- All Councillors shall continue to receive their Basic Allowance in full for a period up to six months in the case of absence from their Councillor duties due to leave related to maternity, paternity, adoption shared parental leave or sickness absence
- Councillors entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance shall continue to receive their allowance in full for a period of six months, in the case of absence from their Councillor duties due to leave related to maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental leave or sickness absence
- Where for reasons connected with sickness, maternity leave, adoption leave, paternity leave or shared parental leave a Councillor is unable to attend a meeting of the Council for a period of six months, a dispensation by Council can be sought in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972
- If a replacement to cover the period of absence under these provisions is appointed by Council or the Leader (or in the case of a party group position the party group) the replacement shall be entitled to claim a Special Responsibility Allowance pro rata for the period over which the cover is provided.

- If a Councillor stands down, or an election is held during the period when a Councillor is absent due to any of the above and the Councillor is not re-elected or decides not to stand down for re-election, their Basic Allowance and any Special Responsibility Allowance will cease from the date they leave office.

WE RECOMMEND that the current approach outlined above continues to be adopted. The policy on Parental Leave for Councillors approved should continue to be actively promoted to prospective and current Councillors alongside the Dependents' Carers Allowance to enhance and further increase the diversity of councillor representation.

4.6 Indexing of Allowances

- 4.6.1 A scheme of allowances may make provision for an annual adjustment of allowances in line with a specified index. The present scheme indexes the allowances to the National Joint Council Local Government pay award and the basic allowance, special responsibility allowances and Independent Persons allowance is adjusted annually at this rate.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND that an annual indexation of the basic allowance, each of the SRAs and the Independent Persons Allowance should continue to be based on the current formula. The allowances should be increased annually in line with the percentage increase in the NJC Local Government pay award. The indexation should be linked to the percentage increase based on Spinal Column Point 49 of the Councils pay scale from April 2025 for a period of up to four years. After this period, the Scheme shall be reviewed again by an independent remuneration panel.

4.7 Revocation of current Scheme of Allowances / Implementation of the new Scheme

- 4.7.1 The 2003 Regulations provide that a scheme of allowances may only be revoked with effect from the beginning of a financial year, and that this may only take effect on the basis that the authority makes a further scheme of allowances for the period beginning with the date of revocation.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND that the new scheme of allowances to be agreed by the Council be implemented with effect from the beginning of the 2025-26 financial year, at which time the current scheme of allowances will be revoked.

4.8 Backdating of the Recommended Scheme of Allowances

- 4.8.1 The 2003 Regulations allow for the recommended scheme of allowances to be backdated to the beginning of the financial year if required. The Panel therefore recommends that the Scheme be backdated to the beginning of the 2025-26 financial year.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND that the new scheme of allowances be backdated to the beginning of the 2025-26 financial year.

5. OUR INVESTIGATION

5.1 Background

- 5.1.1 As part of this review, a questionnaire was issued to all councillors to support and inform the review. Responses were received from 24 of the 48 current councillors (50% response). The information obtained was helpful in informing our deliberations.
- 5.1.2 We interviewed sixteen current councillors, the Independent Person and one officer using a structured questioning process. We are grateful to all our interviewees for their assistance.

5.2 Councillors' views on the level of allowances

- 5.2.2 A summary of the councillors' responses to the questionnaire are held as a background paper.

6. APPROVED COUNCILLOR DUTIES

- 6.1.1 The Panel reviewed the recommended duties for which allowances should be payable and recommend that no changes be made.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMEND: That the Approved Councillor Duties as outlined in the Members' Allowance Scheme remain unchanged.

**Mark Palmer (Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel)
Director: Development and Governance, South East Employers
November 2024**

Appendix 1: Summary of Panel's Recommendations

Allowance	Current Amount for 2024-25	Number	Recommended Allowance (30% PSD)	Recommended Allowance Calculation
Basic (BA)				
Total Basic:	£7,612	48	£7,888	

Special Responsibility:				
Leader of the Council	£24,129	1	£24,453	300% of BA
Deputy Leader	£14,478	1	£14,672	60% of Leader's Allowance
Portfolio Holder (Cabinet Member)	£12,065	4	£12,227	50% of Leader's Allowance
Chairman of the Council	£9,651	1	£9,781	40% of Leader's Allowance
Major Opposition Group Leader	£9,048	1	£9,170	37.5% of Leader's Allowance
Chairman of Planning Committee	£8,445	1	£8,559	35% of Leader's Allowance
Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Panels	£6,032	3	£6,113	25% of Leader's Allowance
Vice Chairman of the Council	£2,413	1	£2,445	10% of Leader's Allowance
Chairman of Audit Committee	£2,413	1	£2,445	10% of Leader's Allowance
Chairman of General Purposes & Licensing Committee	£2,413	1	£2,445	10% of Leader's Allowance
Chairman of Human Resources Committee	£2,413	1	£2,445	10% of Leader's Allowance
Minority Group Leaders	£1,810	2	£1,834	20% of Major Opposition Group Leader's Allowance
Deputy Leader of Major Opposition Group	£1,810	1	£1,834	20% of Major Opposition Group Leader's Allowance
Co-Optees Allowance	£16.67 per hour	0	£16.67 per hour	NOMIS hourly rate for New Forest by Place of Residence-2023
Independent Persons	£353	2	£353	

APPENDIX 2

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

This scheme will be known as the New Forest District Council Members' Allowances Scheme, and shall have effect from **1 April 2025**

A list of definitions is given in Appendix 1. The basis for the calculation of the opposition group allowances is set out in Appendix 2. Appendix 3 deals with 'Approved Duties' for the payment of travel, subsistence and dependant carer's allowances.

1. Basic Allowance

- 1.1 Each Councillor shall receive a basic allowance of **£7,888** per annum. Where the term of office of a Councillor begins or ends otherwise than at the beginning of the year to which the scheme relates, their entitlement to this allowance shall be calculated on a pro-rata basis.

2. Special Responsibility Allowance

- 2.1 The following annual Special Responsibility Allowances shall be paid:

Leader of the Council	£24,453	317% of BA
Deputy Leader of the Council	£14,672	60% of Leader's Allowance
Portfolio Holders	£12,227	50% of Leader's Allowance
Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Panels	£6,113	25% of Leader's Allowance
Chairman of Planning Committee	£8,559	35% of Leader's Allowance
Chairman of General Purposes & Licensing Committee	£2,445	10% of Leader's Allowance
Chairman of Audit Committee	£2,445	10% of Leader's Allowance
Chairman of HR Committee	£2,445	10% of Leader's Allowance
Major Opposition Group Leader	£9,170*	37.5% of Leader's Allowance
Deputy Leader of Major Opposition Group	£1,834*	20% of Major Opposition Group Leader's Allowance
Minority Group Leader	£1,834*	20% of Major Opposition Group Leader's Allowance
Chairman of the Council	£9,781	40% of Leader's Allowance
Vice Chairman of the Council	£2,445	10% of Leader's Allowance
Independent Persons (Under Localism Act 2011)	£353	

* in accordance with standing provision on group size in Appendix 2

- 2.2 Where a member serves in a role with 'Special Responsibility' as listed in the table at 2.1 above for only part of a year, his or her entitlement to the allowance shall be calculated on a pro-rata daily basis.

3. Limitation on Payment of Special Responsibility Allowances

- 3.1 A Councillor may receive only one special responsibility allowance at any one time.

4. Dependant Carer's Allowance

- 4.1 A dependant carer's allowance shall be paid to those Councillors who incur expenditure for the care of dependant relatives or children whilst the Councillor is undertaking approved duties, subject to the allowances being payable as follows –

- (a) care for dependent children under 16, living at home with the Councillor - £12.60 per hour (indexed to the current living wage outside of London) as defined by the Living Wage Foundation) with a cap on the number of hours members may claim being aggregated to 52 hours per month;
- (b) the cost of more specialist care should be reimbursed at the actual cost incurred by the councillor upon production of receipts. In respect of specialist care provision medical evidence that this type of care provision is required should also be provided and approved by an appropriate officer of the Council.
- (c) Councillors claiming the allowance declaring that the minder or carer is not an immediate member of the family and is over 16 years of age.

(See Appendix 3 for list of approved duties)

5. Co-optees' Allowance

- 5.1 £16,67 per hour. (NOMIS hourly rate for New Forest by Place of Residence 2023). To be paid per meeting and inclusive of reasonable preparation time.

6. Parental Leave

- 6.1 All Councillors shall continue to receive their Basic Allowance in full for a period up to six months in the case of absence from their Councillor duties due to leave relate to maternity, paternity, adoption shared parental leave or sickness absence.
- 6.2 Councillors entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance shall continue to receive their allowance in full for a period of six months, in the case of absence from their Councillor duties due to leave related to maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental leave or sickness absence.
- 6.3 Where for reasons connected with sickness, maternity leave, adoption leave, I ta leave or shared parental leave a Councillor is unable to attend a meeting of the Council for a period of six months, a dispensation by Council can be sought in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 6.4 If a replacement to cover the period of absence under these provisions is appointed by Council or the Leader (or in the case of a party group position the party group) the replacement shall be entitled to claim a Special Responsibility Allowance pro rata for the period over which the cover is provided.
- 6.5 If a Councillor stands down, or an election is held during the period when a Councillor is absent due to any of the above and the Councillor is not re-elected or

decides not to stand down for re-election, their Basic Allowance and any Special Responsibility Allowance will cease from the date they leave office.

7. Travel Allowances

7.1 If part of a Councillor's journey on Council business includes some of their normal work commute, Councillors should not include their home to work mileage in their mileage claim. For example, if a member lives in Fawley and works in Winchester, and on their way home from Winchester attends a meeting in Lyndhurst, the councillor should claim only the extra mileage to attend at Lyndhurst.

7.2 Travel allowances will be paid for approved duties, as set out in Appendix 3 to this scheme. Mileage rates will be the Inland Revenue's approved annual mileage allowance payments (AMAP) which are currently:

Motor Vehicles	45p/mile
Electric Vehicles	45p/mile
Motor Cycles	24p/mile
Bicycles	20p/mile

7.3 Where members travel together on approved duties, the member using his/her motor vehicle will be entitled to an additional allowance of 5p/mile per member passenger.

7.4 Where public transport is used, the most cost-effective method of travel, making use of "special offer" rates where possible, must be used. The cost of standard rate only will generally be reimbursed. Exceptional payments may be authorised by the Chief Executive.

7.5 Taxis may be used only in special circumstances and should have the prior approval of the Chief Executive, the Executive Head of Governance and Regulation or the Service Manager - Democratic Services and Member Support.

8. Subsistence Allowances

8.1 Reasonable subsistence allowances will be paid for the "Approved Duties"

8.2 set out in Appendix 3 to this Scheme, on condition that:

- (a) refreshments are not provided as part of the meeting/function attended.
- (b) meal allowances will be paid only where a member is undertaking an approved duty which involves his/her absence from home or his/her normal place of work for a period exceeding four hours; and
- (c) all claims are accompanied by receipts. The requirement for receipts may be waived at the discretion of the Chief Executive, the Executive Head of Governance and Regulation or the Service Manager – Democratic Services and Member Support in the case of claims submitted electronically.

9. Overnight Accommodation

- 9.1 There is no set allowance for overnight accommodation. However, Councillors should endeavour to stay in accommodation which provides good value for money but, if the reason for requiring overnight accommodation is to attend a training event, conference, or similar event, Councillors may stay overnight at the venue being used for that event. Receipts must be provided with all claims for reimbursement of accommodation costs. If a Councillor stays overnight with a friend or family member, an amount of £25 per night will be reimbursed.

10. Automatic Uprating of Allowances

- 10.1 The annual adjustment index for the Basic, Special Responsibility, Co-opted and Dependants' Carers' allowances, shall be the local government employees' national pay award annual percentage increase backdated to 1 April each year subject to the following: -
- (i) backdating will not apply to Councillors who resign or who otherwise cease to be members of the Council after 1 April in any year, or who are not re-elected to the Council in the years of the ordinary election of Councillors; and
 - (ii) where different percentage increases apply to pay bands, the index shall be the award applicable to Spinal Column Point (SCP) 49.
- 10.2 The mileage rates shall be adjusted annually, with effect from 1 April each year, by any adjustments to the Inland Revenue's AMAP rates.
- 10.3 The subsistence rates shall be adjusted annually, with effect from 1 April each year, by any adjustments to the New Forest District Council's employees' subsistence scheme.

11. Backdating of Allowances

- 11.1 Where an amendment is made which affects an allowance payable under this scheme, the entitlement to such allowance may, with the agreement of the Council, apply with effect from the beginning of the year in which the amendment is made.

12. Payments

- 12.1 Payment of the annual basic, special responsibility and co-optee's allowances shall be made in 12 equal monthly instalments paid in arrears on the 20th day of each month or thereabouts, subject to compliance with the part-year payment provisions set out above. Payment of travel and subsistence claims received by the first day of the month shall be made on the 20th day of the month or thereabouts.

13. Time Limit for Submission of Claims

- 13.1 Any claims submitted for the payment of:
- (a) dependant carer's allowance; or
 - (b) travelling and subsistence allowance;
- must be made within two months from the date on which the entitlement to the allowance arises.

14. Suspension/Repayment of Allowances

- 14.1 Where a member is suspended or partially suspended from his responsibilities or duties as a member of an authority in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 or regulations made under that Part, the part of the basic, special responsibility, or co-optee's allowance payable in respect of the period for which he/she is suspended or partially suspended in respect of the responsibilities or duties from which he/she is suspended or partially suspended will be withheld.
- 14.2 Where the allowances referred to in paragraph 13.1 have already been paid to the member and where the member concerned is:
- (a) suspended or partially suspended from his responsibilities or duties as a member of the authority in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 or regulations made under that Part; or
 - (b) ceases to be a member of the authority; or
 - (c) is in any other way not entitled to receive the allowance in respect of that period.

such part of the allowance as relates to any such period shall be repaid to the Council.

15. Members of other authorities

- 15.1 Where a member is also a member of another authority, he/she may not receive allowances from more than one authority in respect of the same duties.

16. Renunciation

- 16.1 A member may by notice in writing given to the Chief Executive, elect to forego all or any part of his or her entitlement to allowances payable under this scheme.

DEFINITIONS

In this scheme -

"Councillor" means an elected member of the New Forest District Council;

"Co-optee" means a member of a panel, committee or sub-committee of the Authority who is entitled to vote;

"Immediate member of the family" means a member of the Councillor's own household living at the same address as the Councillor and the dependant requiring care;

"Leader of the Council" means the Councillor elected by the Council to fill that office;

"Leader of Major Opposition Group" means the Councillor notified to the Chief Executive by the opposition group having the largest number of members on the Council, as the Councillor elected as that Group's Leader;

"Deputy Leader of Major Opposition Group" means the Councillor notified to the Chief Executive by the Opposition Group having the largest number of members on the Council, as the Councillor elected as that Group's Deputy Leader;

"Minority Group Leader" means the Councillor notified to the Chief Executive by a group having a lesser number of members than the Major Opposition Group as the Councillor elected as that Group's Leader;

"Member" in relation to co-optee's, travel or subsistence allowances means an elected member of the New Forest District Council or a person who is a member of a committee or sub-committee of the authority;

"Portfolio Holder" means a Councillor appointed by the Leader of the Council to be responsible for a particular portfolio as a member of the Executive;

CALCULATION OF OPPOSITION GROUP ALLOWANCES

1.

Allowance	Calculation
Leader of Main Opposition Group*	£9,170 - on condition that the size of the Main Opposition Group consists of at least 20% of the Council membership, which equates to 10 seats. If it falls below the 20%, then the SRA is reduced by 25%, which equates to £7,336
Leader of Minority Opposition Group*	£1,834
Deputy Leader of Main Opposition Group*	£1,834 - Subject to the Group reaching the qualification criteria of 20% of Council Membership (10 seats).
<p>*Opposition Groups of Equal Size</p> <p>If the situation arises where two or more Opposition Groups are of equal size, then the sum of the SRAs that would be payable to Opposition Group Leaders of differing group sizes (Leader of Main Opposition Group plus Leader of Minority Opposition Group) should be divided equally between each Opposition Group Leader. For instance, where both Opposition Groups have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 members each - the SRA payable to each Group Leader would be £5,502 (£9,170 + £1,834 = £11,004 divided by 2) • 9 or fewer members each - the SRA payable to each Group Leader would be £4,585 (£7,336 + £1,834 = £9,170 divided by 2) 	

1. APPROVED DUTIES FOR THE PAYMENT OF TRAVEL, SUBSISTENCE AND DEPENDANT CARER'S ALLOWANCES

As a general principle, members may claim only for travel allowances when representing the District Council on official business. If in doubt, a member should seek the relevant officer's advice before the journey is undertaken. Any decision by the Chief Executive, an Executive Head or a Service Manager will be final. Travel allowances will be paid for:-

- (a) Attendance at a meeting of the Authority or of any Committee, Sub-Committee or Panel of the Authority, or of any other body to which the Authority makes appointments or nominations, or of any Committee or Sub-Committee of such a body;
- (b) The attendance at any other meeting, the holding of which is authorised by the Authority, or a Committee or Sub-Committee of the Authorities, or a joint committee of the Authority and one or more Local Authority within the meaning of Section 270(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, or a Sub-Committee of such a Joint Committee provided that:
 - (i) where the Authority is divided into two or more political groups, it is a meeting to which members of at least two such groups have been invited; or
 - (ii) if the Authority is not so divided, it is a meeting to which at least two members of the Authority have been invited;
- (c) The attendance at a meeting of any Association of Authorities of which the Authority is a member;
- (d) The attendance at a meeting of the Executive or a meeting of any of its Committees;
- (e) The attendance at the opening of tender documents, where the attendance of a member has been specifically requested by the Chief Executive, an Executive Head or a Service Manager;
- (f) The performance of any duty in connection with the discharge of any function of the Authority conferred by or under any enactment and empowering or requiring the Authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises;
- (g) Portfolio Holders', Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Committee Chairmen's visits to Council venues, partner organisations or appropriate sites on issues directly related to their portfolios or the work of the Panel/Committee;
- (h) Journeys by Overview and Scrutiny Panel or Committee members working on projects assigned to them by the Panel or Committee;
- (i) Journeys to planning or similar enquiries, or court proceedings, where the member is appearing to give evidence for the Council;
- (j) Journeys made by the political group leaders in their roles as group leaders;

- (k) Journeys to approved training sessions, conferences and courses (“approved” for this purpose will mean a session arranged by the Council or in respect of which the Council is bearing the cost);
- (l) In appropriate circumstances, journeys made for the purpose of resolving constituents’ problems;
- (m) Attendance at meetings of parish or town councils in the member’s role as a District Councillor (except where the member is also attending as a parish/town councillor);
- (n) Journeys to political group meetings called by the leader of the political group and designated by him/her as being necessary for the conduct of Council business;
- (o) Journeys undertaken by members of the Planning Committee and local members to view sites that are the subject of planning or tree work applications, when the member considers a visit essential;
- (p) Journeys by Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen and opposition group spokespersons to attend pre-meeting briefings;
- (q) Civic duties in the role of Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Council.

provided in all cases that the journeys are necessary for the carrying out of a duty which has been assigned to a member, either generally or specifically

Council – 24 February 2025

The 2025/26 Council Tax

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>The Council sets the Council Tax annually in line with legislative requirements.</p> <p>The recommendation is to increase this Council's Band D equivalent by £5.98 (2.993%), with the average Band D equivalent for all precepting authorities to increase by £109.67 (5.000%) in 2025/26.</p>
Recommendation(s)	<p>The Council is recommended to resolve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That it be noted that on 4 December 2024 the Council calculated the Council Tax Base for the year 2025/26, as set out in paragraph 19. 2. To calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2025/26 (excluding Parish Precepts) is £15,094,300. 3. That the amounts be calculated for the year 2025/26 in accordance with Sections 31A, 31B and 34 to 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011, as set out in paragraph 21. 4. That it be noted that Hampshire County Council (including Adult Social Care), the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and Isle of Wight and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service have issued precepts for 2025/26 to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government

	<p>Finance Act 1992, for each category of dwellings in the Council's areas as set out in paragraph 22.</p> <p>5. That the Section 151 Officer be given delegated authority to implement any variation to the overall level of Council Tax arising from the final notification of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and Isle of Wight precept.</p> <p>6. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at paragraph 21(h) and 22, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011), hereby sets the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2025/26 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings, as set out in paragraph 24.</p> <p>The detail in respect of these recommendations is contained in full at paragraphs 19 – 24.</p>
Reasons for recommendation(s)	The council is required to set the Council Tax annually. This report enables members to calculate and set the Council Tax for 2025/26.
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Jeremy Heron – Finance and Corporate
Strategic Director(s)	Alan Bethune – Strategic Director Corporate Resources and Transformation (Section 151 Officer)
Officer Contact	Paul Whittles Assistant Director – Finance (Deputy Section 151 Officer) 02380 285766 paul.whittles@nfdc.gov.uk

Introduction and background

1. Members are required to calculate and set the Council Tax for 2025/26.
2. The level of tax is determined by the spending needs of this Council, Hampshire County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service and the Town and Parish Councils. Although the District Council has no control over the expenditure of the other organisations, it has to ensure that the Council Tax is set at the right level to meet the combined budgets.
3. Members will have considered earlier in this agenda the recommended General Fund revenue budget for 2025/26, which is outlined in paragraph 14. Any changes made at that stage could change the Council Tax figures shown in this report.
4. The recommended Council Tax for every District Council area is shown in paragraph 24 of this report.
5. Appendix 1 attached to this report supplements the prescribed layout of the recommendations by showing how the figures used in paragraph 21 have been arrived at.

The 2025/26 Council Tax Bill

6. This report recommends a Council Tax level of £2,302.91 for 2025/26. This is an average figure based on a band 'D' property and is an increase of £109.67 (5.000%) over the equivalent figure for 2024/25.
7. Each dwelling falls into one of eight valuation bands (A to H) for tax purposes. More details are given in Appendix 2.
8. The tax level is based upon the 2025/26 budgets of all precepting authorities in this area. The District, County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner and Fire and Rescue Service elements of the total tax bill are the same throughout the area but the Town/Parish Councils each determine their own tax levels. There are 8 bands of Council Tax for each of the 37 Town/Parish areas, giving 296 separate tax figures.
9. If the recommendations in this report are accepted there will be a range of Band D Council Tax levies from £2,178.90 to £2,356.62. The average figures are as follows: -

	2024/25	2025/26	INCREASE	
	AVERAGE £	AVERAGE £	£	%
New Forest District Council	199.79	205.77	5.98	2.993
Hampshire County Council	1,533.24	1,609.83	76.59	4.995
Hampshire and Isle of Wight:-				
Police and Crime Commissioner	261.46	275.46	14.00	5.355
Fire and Rescue Service	82.84	87.84	5.00	6.036
	2,077.33	2,178.90	101.57	4.889
Parish/Town Councils	115.91	124.01	8.10	6.988
	2,193.24	2,302.91	109.67	5.000

10. The proposed 2025/26 Council Tax for all areas is shown in paragraph 24 of this report.
11. There is a discount of 25% where only one adult lives in a dwelling, reductions for disabled persons whose homes have certain facilities, and a Council Tax Reduction scheme for persons with low incomes. From 1 April 2025 there is a 100% premium for furnished properties which are not occupied as anyone's main residence and for properties that have been empty for more than 1 year. There are specific exceptions to these premiums, for example where the property is being actively marketed for sale or rent.
12. Council Tax bills can be payable by 10 monthly instalments from 1 April, however taxpayers can request payments over 12 months. The date of the first instalment only may have to be delayed slightly to ensure that there is a statutory period of 14 days between the date the bills are issued and the date the first payment becomes due.
13. More detailed information on the Council Tax, including a summary of how it is spent is available on our website:
www.newforest.gov.uk/counciltax.

New Forest District Council

14. The proposed 2025/26 General Fund budget requirement, elsewhere on this agenda, totals £25,509,000. After deducting retained Business Rates, Government support and collection fund adjustments of £10,414,700, the District Council needs to raise £15,094,300 through Council Tax. This requires a District Council Tax of £205.77 for a

Band D property, which means there is an increase of £5.98 (2.993%) over the equivalent figure for 2024/25.

Hampshire County Council

15. Hampshire County Council met on the 13 February 2025 and set its precept upon this Council at £118,089,080. This results in a Band D Council Tax of £1,609.83, which represents an increase of £76.59 (4.995%) over the equivalent 2024/25 figure.

Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and Isle of Wight

16. The Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and Isle of Wight set a precept of £20,206,368 upon this Council. This results in a Band D Council Tax of £275.46, which represents an increase of £14.00 (5.355%) over the equivalent 2024/25 figure.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service

17. Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service met on the 5 February 2025 and set its precept upon this Council at £6,443,503. This results in a Band D Council Tax of £87.84, which represents an increase of £5.00 (6.036%) over the equivalent 2024/25 figure.

Town and Parish Councils

18. The Town and Parish Council precepts (Council Tax Requirements) for 2025/26 are detailed in Appendix 3 and total £9,097,076. This is an increase of £708,659 from 2024/25 and results in an average Band D Council Tax for 2025/26 of £124.01, an increase of £8.10 (6.988%) from 2024/25.

Details of Recommendations

19. On 4 December 2024 the Council calculated the Council Tax Base for the year 2025/26:
 - (a) for the whole Council area as 73,355.00 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")]; and
 - (b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates as in the attached Appendix 3.
20. The Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2025/26 (excluding Parish Precepts) is £15,094,300.

21. The following amounts have been calculated for the year 2025/26 in accordance with Sections 31A, 31B and 34 to 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011: -
- (a) £166,085,426 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
 - (b) £141,894,050 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
 - (c) £24,191,376 being the amount by which the aggregate at 21(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 21(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B(1) of the Act).
 - (d) £329.78 being the amount at 21(c) above (Item R), all divided by the Council Tax Base, Item T (19(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
 - (e) £9,097,076 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per the attached Appendix 3).
 - (f) £205.77 being the amount at 21(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 21(e) above by Item T (19(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year specifically for the District Council. There are no non-parished areas.

(g)

LOCAL COUNCIL AREA	£
ASHURST & COLBURY	267.02
BEAULIEU	241.72
BOLDRE	240.49
BRAMSHAW	237.43
BRANSGORE	327.91
BREAMORE	235.16
BROCKENHURST	282.93
BURLEY	234.02
COPYTHORNE	228.70
DAMERHAM	253.42
DENNY LODGE	247.54
EAST BOLDRE	250.69
ELLINGHAM HARBRIDGE & IBSLEY	249.57
EXBURY & LEPE	205.77
FAWLEY	375.08
FORDINGBRIDGE	349.74
GODSHILL	265.62
HALE	258.09
HORDLE	280.20
HYDE	236.49
HYTHE & DIBDEN	368.20
LYMINGTON & PENNINGTON	348.67
LYNDHURST	288.67
MARCHWOOD	373.57
MARTIN	265.02
MILFORD-ON-SEA	284.74
MINSTEAD	249.26
NETLEY MARSH	248.92
NEW MILTON	337.67
RINGWOOD	329.90
ROCKBOURNE	296.37
SANDLEHEATH	240.49
SOPLEY	298.71
SWAY	270.45
TOTTON & ELING	383.49
WHITSBURY	226.31
WOODGREEN	248.45

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 21(f) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 19(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings

in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

- (h) These are the District plus Town/Parish Council elements only. See below and paragraph 24 for the full amounts of Council Tax.

LOCAL COUNCIL AREA	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
ASHURST & COLBURY	178.01	207.68	237.35	267.02	326.36	385.69	445.03	534.04
BEAULIEU	161.15	188.00	214.87	241.72	295.44	349.15	402.87	483.44
BOLDRE	160.33	187.04	213.77	240.49	293.94	347.37	400.82	480.98
BRAMSHAW	158.29	184.66	211.05	237.43	290.20	342.95	395.72	474.86
BRANGSORE	218.61	255.04	291.48	327.91	400.78	473.64	546.52	655.82
BREAMORE	156.77	182.90	209.03	235.16	287.42	339.67	391.93	470.32
BROCKENHURST	188.62	220.05	251.50	282.93	345.81	408.67	471.55	565.86
BURLEY	156.01	182.01	208.02	234.02	286.03	338.03	390.03	468.04
COPYTHORNE	152.47	177.87	203.29	228.70	279.53	330.34	381.17	457.40
DAMERHAM	168.95	197.10	225.27	253.42	309.74	366.05	422.37	506.84
DENNY LODGE	165.03	192.53	220.04	247.54	302.55	357.55	412.57	495.08
EAST BOLDRE	167.13	194.98	222.84	250.69	306.40	362.10	417.82	501.38
ELLINGHAM HARBRIDGE & IBSLEY	166.38	194.11	221.84	249.57	305.03	360.49	415.95	499.14
EXBURY & LEPE	137.18	160.04	182.91	205.77	251.50	297.22	342.95	411.54
FAWLEY	250.05	291.73	333.41	375.08	458.43	541.78	625.13	750.16
FORDINGBRIDGE	233.16	272.02	310.88	349.74	427.46	505.18	582.90	699.48
GODSHILL	177.08	206.59	236.11	265.62	324.65	383.67	442.70	531.24
HALE	172.06	200.73	229.42	258.09	315.45	372.79	430.15	516.18
HORDLE	186.80	217.93	249.07	280.20	342.47	404.73	467.00	560.40
HYDE	157.66	183.93	210.22	236.49	289.05	341.59	394.15	472.98
HYPHE & DIBDEN	245.47	286.37	327.29	368.20	450.03	531.84	613.67	736.40
LYMINGTON & PENNINGTON	232.45	271.18	309.93	348.67	426.16	503.63	581.12	697.34
LYNDHURST	192.45	224.52	256.60	288.67	352.82	416.96	481.12	577.34
MARCHWOOD	249.05	290.55	332.07	373.57	456.59	539.60	622.62	747.14
MARTIN	176.68	206.12	235.58	265.02	323.92	382.80	441.70	530.04
MILFORD-ON-SEA	189.83	221.46	253.11	284.74	348.02	411.29	474.57	569.48
MINSTEAD	166.17	193.87	221.57	249.26	304.65	360.04	415.43	498.52
NETLEY MARSH	165.95	193.60	221.27	248.92	304.24	359.55	414.87	497.84
NEW MILTON	225.11	262.63	300.15	337.67	412.71	487.74	562.78	675.34
RINGWOOD	219.93	256.59	293.25	329.90	403.21	476.52	549.83	659.80
ROCKBOURNE	197.58	230.51	263.44	296.37	362.23	428.09	493.95	592.74
SANDLEHEATH	160.33	187.04	213.77	240.49	293.94	347.37	400.82	480.98

LOCAL COUNCIL AREA	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
SOPLEY	199.14	232.33	265.52	298.71	365.09	431.47	497.85	597.42
SWAY	180.30	210.35	240.40	270.45	330.55	390.65	450.75	540.90
TOTTON & ELING	255.66	298.27	340.88	383.49	468.71	553.93	639.15	766.98
WHITSBURY	150.87	176.02	201.17	226.31	276.60	326.89	377.18	452.62
WOODGREEN	165.63	193.24	220.85	248.45	303.66	358.87	414.08	496.90

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 21(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

22. Hampshire County Council (including Adult Social Care), the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and Isle of Wight and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service have issued precepts for 2025/26 to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated below:

PRECEPTING AUTHORITY

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL	1,073.22	1,252.09	1,430.96	1,609.83	1,967.57	2,325.31	2,683.05	3,219.66
HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT:-								
POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER	183.64	214.25	244.85	275.46	336.67	397.89	459.10	550.92
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE	58.56	68.32	78.08	87.84	107.36	126.88	146.40	175.68
	<u>1,315.42</u>	<u>1,534.66</u>	<u>1,753.89</u>	<u>1,973.13</u>	<u>2,411.60</u>	<u>2,850.08</u>	<u>3,288.55</u>	<u>3,946.26</u>

23. The recommendations request that the Section 151 Officer be given delegated authority to implement any variation to the overall level of Council Tax arising from the final notification of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and Isle of Wight precept.

24. Further to the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 21(h) and 22 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011), hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2025/26 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings shown below: -

LOCAL COUNCIL AREA	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
ASHURST & COLBURY	1,493.43	1,742.34	1,991.24	2,240.15	2,737.96	3,235.77	3,733.58	4,480.30
BEAULIEU	1,476.57	1,722.66	1,968.76	2,214.85	2,707.04	3,199.23	3,691.42	4,429.70
BOLDRE	1,475.75	1,721.70	1,967.66	2,213.62	2,705.54	3,197.45	3,689.37	4,427.24
BRAMSHAW	1,473.71	1,719.32	1,964.94	2,210.56	2,701.80	3,193.03	3,684.27	4,421.12
BRANSGORE	1,534.03	1,789.70	2,045.37	2,301.04	2,812.38	3,323.72	3,835.07	4,602.08
BREAMORE	1,472.19	1,717.56	1,962.92	2,208.29	2,699.02	3,189.75	3,680.48	4,416.58
BROCKENHURST	1,504.04	1,754.71	2,005.39	2,256.06	2,757.41	3,258.75	3,760.10	4,512.12
BURLEY	1,471.43	1,716.67	1,961.91	2,207.15	2,697.63	3,188.11	3,678.58	4,414.30
COPYTHORNE	1,467.89	1,712.53	1,957.18	2,201.83	2,691.13	3,180.42	3,669.72	4,403.66
DAMERHAM	1,484.37	1,731.76	1,979.16	2,226.55	2,721.34	3,216.13	3,710.92	4,453.10
DENNY LODGE	1,480.45	1,727.19	1,973.93	2,220.67	2,714.15	3,207.63	3,701.12	4,441.34
EAST BOLDRE	1,482.55	1,729.64	1,976.73	2,223.82	2,718.00	3,212.18	3,706.37	4,447.64
ELLINGHAM HARBRIDGE & IBSLEY	1,481.80	1,728.77	1,975.73	2,222.70	2,716.63	3,210.57	3,704.50	4,445.40
EXBURY & LEPE	1,452.60	1,694.70	1,936.80	2,178.90	2,663.10	3,147.30	3,631.50	4,357.80
FAWLEY	1,565.47	1,826.39	2,087.30	2,348.21	2,870.03	3,391.86	3,913.68	4,696.42
FORDINGBRIDGE	1,548.58	1,806.68	2,064.77	2,322.87	2,839.06	3,355.26	3,871.45	4,645.74
GODSHILL	1,492.50	1,741.25	1,990.00	2,238.75	2,736.25	3,233.75	3,731.25	4,477.50
HALE	1,487.48	1,735.39	1,983.31	2,231.22	2,727.05	3,222.87	3,718.70	4,462.44
HORDLE	1,502.22	1,752.59	2,002.96	2,253.33	2,754.07	3,254.81	3,755.55	4,506.66
HYDE	1,473.08	1,718.59	1,964.11	2,209.62	2,700.65	3,191.67	3,682.70	4,419.24
HYTHE & DIBDEN	1,560.89	1,821.03	2,081.18	2,341.33	2,861.63	3,381.92	3,902.22	4,682.66
LYMINGTON & PENNINGTON	1,547.87	1,805.84	2,063.82	2,321.80	2,837.76	3,353.71	3,869.67	4,643.60
LYNDHURST	1,507.87	1,759.18	2,010.49	2,261.80	2,764.42	3,267.04	3,769.67	4,523.60
MARCHWOOD	1,564.47	1,825.21	2,085.96	2,346.70	2,868.19	3,389.68	3,911.17	4,693.40
MARTIN	1,492.10	1,740.78	1,989.47	2,238.15	2,735.52	3,232.88	3,730.25	4,476.30
MILFORD-ON-SEA	1,505.25	1,756.12	2,007.00	2,257.87	2,759.62	3,261.37	3,763.12	4,515.74
MINSTEAD	1,481.59	1,728.53	1,975.46	2,222.39	2,716.25	3,210.12	3,703.98	4,444.78
NETLEY MARSH	1,481.37	1,728.26	1,975.16	2,222.05	2,715.84	3,209.63	3,703.42	4,444.10
NEW MILTON	1,540.53	1,797.29	2,054.04	2,310.80	2,824.31	3,337.82	3,851.33	4,621.60
RINGWOOD	1,535.35	1,791.25	2,047.14	2,303.03	2,814.81	3,326.60	3,838.38	4,606.06
ROCKBOURNE	1,513.00	1,765.17	2,017.33	2,269.50	2,773.83	3,278.17	3,782.50	4,539.00
SANDLEHEATH	1,475.75	1,721.70	1,967.66	2,213.62	2,705.54	3,197.45	3,689.37	4,427.24
SOPLEY	1,514.56	1,766.99	2,019.41	2,271.84	2,776.69	3,281.55	3,786.40	4,543.68
SWAY	1,495.72	1,745.01	1,994.29	2,243.58	2,742.15	3,240.73	3,739.30	4,487.16
TOTTON & ELING	1,571.08	1,832.93	2,094.77	2,356.62	2,880.31	3,404.01	3,927.70	4,713.24
WHITSBURY	1,466.29	1,710.68	1,955.06	2,199.44	2,688.20	3,176.97	3,665.73	4,398.88
WOODGREEN	1,481.05	1,727.90	1,974.74	2,221.58	2,715.26	3,208.95	3,702.63	4,443.16

Corporate plan priorities

25. The setting of the Council Tax is a legal requirement and supports our corporate priorities by ensuring we are financially responsible and manage our finances prudently.

Options appraisal

26. Sections 31A, 31B and 34 to 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011, set out the requirements for the calculation of the Council Tax for tax setting purposes. Therefore, there are no alternative options.

Consultation undertaken

27. Consultation was undertaken during the Budget Setting process, which informed the Council Tax rates to be set.

Financial and resource implications

28. The calculation of the Council Tax is the final part of the annual budget cycle. The level of Council Tax is determined by the spending needs of this Council, Hampshire County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service and the Town and Parish Councils. Although the District Council has no control over the expenditure of the other organisations, it has to ensure that the Council Tax is set at the right level to meet the combined budgets.
29. This Council's budget allows for the necessary cost of Council Tax administration and collection.

Legal implications

30. There is a legal requirement to set the Council Tax. Members should be aware of the provisions of Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, which applies to members where:
 - (a) they are present at a meeting of the Council, the Cabinet or a Committee and at the time of the meeting an amount of Council Tax is payable by them and has remained unpaid for at least two months; and

(b) any budget or Council Tax calculation, or recommendation or decision which might affect the making of any such calculation, is the subject of consideration at the meeting.

31. In these circumstances, any such members shall at the meeting and as soon as practicable after its commencement disclose and the fact that Section 106 applies to them and shall not vote on any question concerning the matter in (b) above. It should be noted that such members are not debarred from speaking on these matters. Failure to comply with these requirements constitutes a criminal offence, unless any such members can prove they did not know that Section 106 applied to them at the time of the meeting or that the matter in question was the subject of consideration at the meeting.

Risk assessment

32. There are no risk assessments required.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

33. There are no environmental or climate and nature implications arising from this report.

Equalities implications

34. There are no potential equality and diversity implications arising directly from this report.

Crime and disorder implications

35. There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

36. There are no additional data protection, information governance or ICT implications arising directly from this report.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Source of Figures shown in Paragraph 21 of the Report

Appendix 2 – Valuation Bands

Appendix 3 – Summary of Local Council Tax Requirements

Background Papers:

Cabinet 4 December 2024:

Council Tax 2025/26 – Setting The Tax Base

Cabinet 19 February 2025:

Medium Term Financial Plan and Annual Budget 2025/26

APPENDIX 1

SOURCE OF FIGURES SHOWN IN PARAGRAPH 21 OF THE REPORT

(a) (b) (c)

For the purposes of the recommendation, the estimated total net revenue expenditure of the Council for 2025/26 has to be shown i.e. including General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budgets and Town/Parish Council precepts: -

	Expenditure	Income	Council Tax Requirement
	£	£	£
General Fund	119,941,510	104,847,210	15,094,300
HRA	37,046,840	37,046,840	0
Town/Parish Precept	9,097,076	0	9,097,076
	166,085,426	141,894,050	24,191,376
	(a)	(b)	(c)

(d) This is the combined District Council and Town/Parish Council Tax at Band D: -

	£
District	205.77
Average Town/Parish	124.01
	329.78

(e) £9,097,076 is the total of the Town/Parish Council precepts as shown in Appendix 3.

(f) £205.77 is the District Council Tax at Band D. The sequence of figures in 21 (a) to (f) is intended to start from estimated total net 2025/26 expenditure, deduct grants and precepts and arrive at the net District Council Tax figure.

(g) This shows the Combined District and Town/Parish Council Tax for each area at Band D.

(h) Shows the figures in (g) for each valuation band.

APPENDIX 2

VALUATION BANDS

All dwellings have been valued by the Inland Revenue for the purpose of Council Tax. Valuations are based on property prices at April 1991. There are eight valuation bands and each dwelling has been placed into one of these bands according to its assessed value at that time. Band A is the lowest. The higher the band, the higher the charge will be. See the table below: -

BAND	RANGE OF VALUES	PROPORTION
A	Values not exceeding £40,000	£1.00
B	Values exceeding £40,000 but not exceeding £52,000	£1.17
C	Values exceeding £52,000 but not exceeding £68,000	£1.33
D	Values exceeding £68,000 but not exceeding £88,000	£1.50
E	Values exceeding £88,000 but not exceeding £120,000	£1.83
F	Values exceeding £120,000 but not exceeding £160,000	£2.17
G	Values exceeding £160,000 but not exceeding £320,000	£2.50
H	Values exceeding £320,000	£3.00

For every £1.00 of Council Tax for a band 'A' property, a band 'B' property will be charged £1.17 - and so on. Any discounts and reductions would make the difference less than this.

Taxpayers in band 'A' who fulfil the criteria for a reduction under the Disability Reduction Regulations will receive a reduction on their bill equivalent to the difference between the band 'A' and band 'B' charge.

APPENDIX 3

SUMMARY OF LOCAL COUNCIL REQUIREMENTS

LOCAL COUNCIL	2025/26			
	COUNCIL	TAX BASE	COUNCIL	COUNCIL
	TAX		TAX PER	TAX
	REQUIREMENT		BAND D	INC. / (-) DEC.
	£	PROPERTIES	£	FROM
				2024/25
				£
ASHURST AND COLBURY	58,325	952.20	61.25	0.71
BEAULIEU	19,469	541.60	35.95	-1.24
BOLDRE	38,000	1,094.50	34.72	3.43
BRAMSHAW	11,000	347.40	31.66	2.06
BRANSGORE	227,728	1,864.50	122.14	12.71
BREAMORE	5,566	189.40	29.39	-0.58
BROCKENHURST	151,992	1,969.80	77.16	6.37
BURLEY	23,464	830.50	28.25	4.09
COPYTHORNE	28,365	1,236.90	22.93	1.03
DAMERHAM	12,012	252.10	47.65	2.23
DENNY LODGE	6,767	162.00	41.77	3.13
EAST BOLDRE	17,500	389.60	44.92	2.00
ELLINGHAM HARBRIDGE AND IBSLEY	28,500	650.70	43.80	5.83
EXBURY AND LEPE	0	121.40	0.00	0.00
FAWLEY	783,159	4,625.60	169.31	14.03
FORDINGBRIDGE	370,987	2,576.90	143.97	5.35
GODSHILL	13,778	230.20	59.85	0.32
HALE	14,100	269.50	52.32	1.14
HORDLE	184,000	2,472.10	74.43	3.77
HYDE	16,400	533.90	30.72	-0.83
HYTHE AND DIBDEN	1,220,121	7,511.60	162.43	9.03
LYMINGTON AND PENNINGTON	1,102,662	7,716.40	142.90	12.39
LYNDHURST	125,000	1,507.80	82.90	1.74
MARCHWOOD	347,884	2,073.20	167.80	9.04
MARTIN	11,725	197.90	59.25	4.70
MILFORD-ON-SEA	239,400	3,031.50	78.97	5.91
MINSTEAD	16,700	384.00	43.49	5.03
NETLEY MARSH	36,134	837.40	43.15	15.54
NEW MILTON	1,416,727	10,741.00	131.90	7.09
RINGWOOD	683,620	5,507.30	124.13	7.16
ROCKBOURNE	15,202	167.80	90.60	2.38
SANDLEHEATH	10,490	302.10	34.72	2.00
SOPLEY	37,800	406.70	92.94	1.20
SWAY	113,354	1,752.60	64.68	10.52
TOTTON AND ELING	1,695,975	9,542.80	177.72	12.50
WHITSBURY	2,200	107.10	20.54	-0.47
WOODGREEN	10,970	257.00	42.68	0.85
	9,097,076	73,355.00	124.01	

Council – 24 February 2025

Allocation of seats and appointments to committees and panels

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>Following the events leading up to the by-election to the Bransgore, Burley, Sopley and Ringwood East ward and the election of Cllr Richard Frampton, it is necessary to review the representation of political groups on committees and panels.</p> <p>Having regard to the current number of Members on the Council returning to 48, and applying the necessary principles of proportionality in order, some changes are required to the Council’s previously agreed position. Those changes are being considered by Group Leaders and proposals will be reported in advance of the Council meeting.</p>
Recommendations	<p>That the Council:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. considers the allocation of seats to committees and panels in accordance with the principles set out in the report, and in doing so, agrees to the allocation set out in the table in Appendix 1 (to follow); and 2. appoints councillors to individual committees and panels, as identified in Appendix 2 (to follow), for the remainder of the four year period ending May 2027.
Reasons for recommendations	To comply with the provisions of Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, relating to the duty to allocate seats to political groups, following a division on the Council.
Wards	All / Bransgore, Burley, Sopley and Ringwood East
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Jill Cleary, Leader

Strategic Director	Alan Bethune, Corporate Resources and Transformation (S151)
Officer Contacts	<p>Matt Wisdom Service Manager – Democratic and Support Services 023 8028 5072 Matt.wisdom@nfdc.gov.uk</p> <p>Tanya Coulter Assistant Director – Governance 023 8028 5532 Tanya.coulter@nfdc.gov.uk</p>

Introduction and background

1. In accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, it is necessary to review the representation of political groups on committees, whenever there is a division on the Council. Since the last Ordinary Council meeting, a vacancy on the Council arose, which has since been filled at the recent by-election for Bransgore, Burley, Sopley and Ringwood East. There are now 48 serving councillors with a change in the composition of the Green Group, and a second non-aligned Member. For the purpose of the review, “committees” includes the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Panels but excludes the Cabinet.
2. There are four statutory principles of political balance which have to be applied in filling appointments to committees. These are contained in Section 15(5) of the Act.
3. The principles that have to be applied are as follows:-
 - (a) that not all seats on the body are allocated to the same political group;
 - (b) that the majority of the seats on the body are allocated to a particular political group if the number of persons belonging to that group are a majority of the Authority’s membership;
 - (c) subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) above, that the number of seats on the ordinary committees of a relevant Authority which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the ordinary committees of that Authority as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the Authority; and

- (d) subject to paragraphs (a) to (c) above, that the number of seats on the body which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the same number of all seats on that body as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the Authority.
4. Once the Council has determined the allocation of committee places between the political groups, the Council must then appoint the nominees of the political groups to the committees.
 5. Those members who are not members of political groups have no legal entitlement to an allocation of seats on committees. However, once the political groups' entitlement has been reached, any remaining seats may be filled by members not belonging to a political group. Such Members are classed as being non-aligned.
 6. These provisions need not be applied if a different position is agreed without any member of the authority voting against.
 7. It should be noted that, although the legislative position refers to "political" groups, this also includes the Independent Group. Although not affiliated with a political party, the Independent Group have formed a group in accordance with the legislation.

Current position

8. The political balance of the Council now stands as follows:-

Conservative Group	26	(54.17%)
Liberal Democrat Group	14	(29.17%)
Independent Group	4	(8.33%)
Green Group	2	(4.17%)
Labour and Co-operative (Non-aligned)	1	
Non-aligned	1	
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 48	

Appointments to committees and panels

9. There are 84 seats to which appointments should be made under the principles of proportionality.
10. The application of the percentages outlined at paragraph 8 provides for the following allocation of whole seats to political groups across the overall Council position:-

Conservative Group	46
Liberal Democrat Group	25
Independent Group	7
Green Group	4
Unallocated	2
<hr/>	
Total	84

11. Having regard to the overall position outlined at paragraph 10, the application of the percentages outlined at paragraph 8 requires the rounding up or down of calculated figures to give whole numbers on committees. The Council should, as far as practicable, ensure fairness on each committee, including across the wider allocation in making these adjustments, whilst taking into account the proportionality rules in their stated order, as far as practicable.
12. The final recommended allocations will be circulated as an Appendix 1 in advance of the Council meeting, once the political groups have had the opportunity to review the implications for individual committees and panels.
13. At the last review undertaken in December 2024, the Council also resolved to allocate a seat to the non-aligned Member on the Appeals Committee. The Council's Constitution makes provision for the allocation of seats to Members who are not members of a political group, as nearly as possible in proportion to the number of those members on the Council. It is now the case that a seat each can be allocated to the two non-aligned Members, having first complied with the legislative principles for the allocation of seats.
14. The nominees of the political groups to the committees and panels will be circulated to follow at Appendix 2. It should be noted that if Members seek to make any amendments, this may affect the calculations and subsequently the nominees.

Corporate plan priorities

15. The recommendations support the Council in delivering all corporate plan priorities by maintaining the Council's ability to function as a collective body in accordance with relevant legislation.

Options appraisal

16. The Council can choose to agree an alternative allocation that does not satisfy the proportionality requirements, providing that this is agreed without a single Member of the Council voting against.

Consultation undertaken

17. Consultation has been undertaken with the Council's Statutory Officers, the Portfolio Holder (Leader) and all other Group Leaders.

Financial and resource implications

18. There are no financial or resourcing implications arising specifically from this report.

Legal implications

19. The proportionality requirements, as outlined in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 have been followed in reaching the recommendations.

Risk assessment

20. It is not deemed necessary to complete a formal risk assessment in respect of this procedural report.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

21. There are no environmental or climate and nature implications arising directly from the review of political proportionality.

Equalities implications

22. There are no equalities implications arising, although the process of reviewing proportionality ensures that the democratically elected position of the Council is reflected in the Council's approach to committee and panel business.

Crime and disorder implications

23. There are none arising from this report.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

24. There are none arising from this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Table of allocations – to follow.

Appendix 2 – Appointments to Committees and Panels (Wishes of the Political Groups) – to follow.

Background Papers:

Local Government and Housing Act 1989