

NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting: CABINET

Date and Time: WEDNESDAY, 5 FEBRUARY 2025 AT 10.00 AM

Place: COUNCIL CHAMBER - APPLETREE COURT, BEAULIEU ROAD, LYNDHURST, SO43 7PA

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PUBLIC INFORMATION:

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.

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PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Members of the public may speak in accordance with the Council's [public participation scheme](#):

- (a) on items within the Cabinet's terms of reference which are not on the public agenda; and/or
- (b) on individual items on the public agenda, when the Chairman calls that item. Speeches may not exceed three minutes.

Anyone wishing to attend the meeting, or speak in accordance with the Council's public participation scheme, should contact the name and number shown above no later than 12.00 noon on Friday, 31 January 2025.

Kate Ryan
Chief Executive

Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, Hampshire. SO43 7PA
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AGENDA

Apologies

1. MINUTES

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2024 as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

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

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

4. FINANCIAL MONITORING (BASED ON PERFORMANCE APRIL TO DECEMBER 2024 INCLUSIVE) (Pages 3 - 18)

5. DRAFT AIR QUALITY STRATEGY (Pages 19 - 72)

6. HOUSING LANDLORD ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) STRATEGY (Pages 73 - 118)

7. ADOPTION OF THE REVISED STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (Pages 119 - 192)

8. LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – ISSUES AND SCOPE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT (Pages 193 - 260)

9. COMMUNITY GRANT FUNDING 2025/26 (Pages 261 - 288)

10. ASSET MAINTENANCE AND REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME AND GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 (Pages 289 - 300)

11. CAPITAL STRATEGY 2025/26 (Pages 301 - 316)

12. SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES - REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL (IRP) AND SCHEME TO APPLY FROM 1 APRIL 2025 (Pages 317 - 354)

To:

Councillors

Jill Cleary (Chairman)
Steve Davies (Vice-Chairman)
Geoffrey Blunden

Councillors

Jeremy Heron
Dan Poole
Derek Tipp

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	2024/25
	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
	Previous	New	New	New	Updated
	Variations	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 vired 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

Draft Air Quality Strategy

Purpose	To review the draft Air Quality Strategy and provide any recommendations ahead of approval for public consultation.
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	New Forest District Council has no declared Air Quality Management Areas and as directed by The Environment Act 2021; the council must proceed to publish an Air Quality Strategy to ensure air quality remains a high priority. Following the consultation process, and consideration of the responses, the draft Air Quality Strategy will be recommended for adoption.
Recommendation	That Cabinet supports the process for implementing the Air Quality Strategy and approves the draft Strategy for public consultation.
Reasons for recommendation(s)	It is a legal requirement to develop an Air Quality Strategy by Local Authorities with no declared Air Quality Management Areas.
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Dan Poole – Portfolio Holder for Community, Safety and Wellbeing
Strategic Director(s)	Richard Knott – Housing & Communities
Officer Contact	<p>Rachel Higgins Environmental Protection Team Manager 02380 285339 rachel.higgins@nfdc.gov.uk</p> <p>Joanne McClay Service Manager - Environmental and Regulation 02380 285325 joanne.mcclay@nfdc.gov.uk</p>

Introduction

1. This report advises on the development of a draft Air Quality Strategy (AQS) for New Forest District Council and provides an overview of the content of the draft Strategy. The report and draft AQS were presented to EMT and Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel prior to proceeding to Cabinet, where recommendations are sought for supporting the process to implement the AQS for New Forest District Council and approval for public consultation of the draft Strategy.
2. Following consideration of the draft AQS at Cabinet a public consultation will be undertaken for a period of 8 weeks. After consideration of comments received, a finalised AQS will be progressed for adoption in mid-2025.

Background

3. Local Authorities have a statutory duty through the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) regime to review and assess local air quality in their district in accordance with legislation, Government policy and guidance. Where an air quality objective is being, or likely to be, exceeded, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) must be declared.
4. New Forest District Council (NFDC) - Environmental Protection, has undertaken the review and assessment of local air quality proactively since 1998 using a combination of desktop, monitoring and modelling techniques. All assessments have been submitted as required to Government and all necessary action taken.
5. The Environment Act 2021 updated the LAQM regime to require local authorities from 2023 with no declared AQMA's to produce an AQS for their district.
6. In August 2023, after consultation with Defra and other relevant stakeholders, NFDC revoked its remaining AQMA (Lyndhurst) due to pollutant concentrations meeting the air quality objectives within the AQMA for 8 consecutive years. Officers have subsequently progressed work to develop a draft AQS.
7. The draft AQS has been developed with the assistance of air quality consultants Ricardo-AEA Ltd and relevant stakeholders. The stakeholders included officers from NFDC (planning, climate change and health and well-being), New Forest National Park (planning), Hampshire County Council (public health and transport), local industry (Exxonmobil) and the Environment Centre. All stakeholders

proactively contributed to the development and text of the draft AQS.

8. NFDC is one of the two Local Authorities in Hampshire (without an AQMA) who are leading on developing an AQS, due in part to our local air quality expertise and the priority to continue to improve air quality across the district.

Overview of draft Air Quality Strategy

9. The aim of the AQS is to continue to improve local air quality beyond the air quality objectives set by Government. This will be achieved through the identification of specific action areas for development in partnership with relevant stakeholders.
10. The AQS is a working document which provides a framework of action areas for development, with the aim for an evidence-based approach to assess and improve local air quality where relevant.
11. The Strategy identifies areas of alignment with other strategies, plans and policies at a national, regional and local level, for example with the Hampshire Public Health Strategy 2023-2026 (Hampshire CC) and the Climate Change and Nature Emergency Annual Update 2023/24 (NFDC).
12. The draft AQS advises on air pollution and the harm to human health and provides details on air quality within the New Forest district. Ricardo has undertaken air quality modelling to identify the potential sources of airborne pollutants within the New Forest district.
13. The modelling work provided the base evidence for the development of some of the priority action areas of the AQS, for example, the focus on wood burning and transport emissions. Other action areas were identified by officers and stakeholders as areas requiring further development to obtain improvements in public health, such as improving public awareness and behaviour change, and reducing health inequalities with regards to exposure to air pollution.
14. Six action areas are identified within the draft AQS which are:
 - Public awareness and behaviour change
 - Reducing health inequalities
 - Improving our understanding of particulate matter pollution
 - Wood burning and indoor air pollution
 - Reducing road traffic emissions, and
 - Reducing the impact of new developments

Each action area details why that area is important, what actions are already being undertaken by the council and stakeholders and identifies potential future areas of work.

15. The work to forward the Strategy action areas will be undertaken by a Steering Group of stakeholders with Member support. Actions will be progressed via agreed annual work plans.
16. The LAQM regime of review and assessment of local air quality against the air quality objectives remains and will be maintained alongside the implementation of the AQS.
17. The draft Air Quality Strategy is attached (**Appendix 1**).

Corporate plan priorities

18. The adoption of the AQS for New Forest District Council is a statutory requirement and relates to the following corporate priorities.
19. **Theme:**
Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives and protecting our climate.
20. **Corporate Plan Objective:**
Protect and improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.
21. **Service Objective:**
Adoption and implementation of the AQS for New Forest District Council.

Options appraisal

22. **Option 1:**
It is recommended Cabinet approves the draft Air Quality Strategy and recommend that it progresses to public consultation.
23. **Option 2:**
The alternative is to not prioritise the publication of an Air Quality Strategy. However, the Council is legally required to adopt an AQS. Failure to approve and adopt an AQS may leave the Council open to legal challenge, including by Defra. This option was not considered appropriate given the Council's corporate plan commitments to the health of its residents. □

Consultation undertaken

24. There is no guidance or recommendation from Defra regarding how to develop an Air Quality Strategy and who to consult with. As advised in paragraph 7, internal and external stakeholders were consulted and involved in the development of the draft AQS. These stakeholders proactively engaged with the development of the text and actions noted within the Strategy.
25. There will also be further opportunities to engage with other relevant stakeholders as the AQS is progressed, for example the UKHSA, Environment Agency, NHS and Forestry England.
26. Consultation is recommended prior to approval of the AQS, and the next proposed step is for public consultation. All comments received will be reviewed and the draft AQS amended as required prior to final adoption.
27. Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel has been consulted. Panel fully supported the draft AQS for approval by Cabinet and to put the draft AQS out for public consultation.

Financial and resource implications

28. The cost to develop the draft AQS has been funded from existing budgets, however there is likely to be an annual cost to implement the actions arising from the Strategy. The cost for implementation of the Strategy will be determined through work plans and stakeholder involvement. Future work may include additional monitoring of pollutants within the district and potential consultancy costs to assess and model pollutants, when necessary, to further develop the Strategy priorities and assess the impact of any measures implemented.
29. Existing budgets will fund part of the costs to implement the AQS. However, further funding opportunities will need to be explored such as securing additional funding from Government grant funding schemes either individually or by working collaboratively with neighbouring authorities to reduce costs and the possibility of funding from planning contributions.
30. There is also resource implication for officer engagement to implement the AQS. This work would be completed by current positions within the Service and across the Council. However, there may be some opportunity for collaborative working with other local authorities to develop and implement specific schemes. There is

also an option to continue work with Southampton University using their expertise in air quality data analysis.

Legal implications

31. In accordance with The Environment Act 2021 the Council is required to develop and adopt an AQS where there are no AQMA's within their district. Legal implications of failing to adopt an Air Quality Strategy may result in challenge from Defra.

Risk assessment

32. There is no requirement for a formal risk assessment. Any risks in delivering the Strategy will be reviewed in terms of task-based actions and staffing and financial resources required to deliver the actions which will continue to improve local air quality.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

33. The development and implementation of an AQS for New Forest should align with policies concerning health, climate and nature, reducing emissions from vehicles and by working with local industry. Actions forwarded within the Strategy will be developed by the steering group and address impacts on the environment, climate and nature.

Equalities implications

34. The Environment Act 2021 has been assessed by Government as being compliant with United Kingdom equalities and human rights legislation. Furthermore, the action areas identified within the draft AQS aim to link areas of health inequalities with air quality to enable suitable targeting of action to reduce the impacts of airborne pollution on those most vulnerable in the New Forest district.

Crime and disorder implications

35. No specific implications.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

36. No specific implications.

New Forest National Park implications

37. The AQS for New Forest covers both the New Forest District Council and New Forest National Park areas. The aim of the Strategy is to improve air quality and therefore benefit these areas, however the

development of specific actions needs to ensure any potential negative impacts are identified and appropriately considered.

38. The inclusion of the New Forest National Park in the development of the Strategy, and on the strategy steering group should ensure all partner agencies are included in the development of actions, decision making and delivery. Therefore, avoiding duplications, conflicts of policy or unreasonable impacts.

Conclusion

39. The Council is legally required to develop an AQS for New Forest following the revocation of its remaining Air Quality Management Area in 2023. The draft strategy has been consulted on with stakeholders and is now seeking approval to consult more widely on the draft document.

Appendices:

Appendix 1

Draft Air Quality Strategy

Background Papers:

Defra LAQM Policy:

[England \(exc. London\) Policy Guidance | LAQM](#)

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New Forest District Council: **Air Quality Strategy 2025**

Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	Why do we need to improve air quality?	6
3	Air quality in the New Forest	11
4	How will we implement this strategy?	16
5	Action areas	18
6	Public awareness and behaviour change	19
7	Reducing health inequalities	24
8	Improving our understanding of particulate matter pollution	28
9	Wood burning and indoor air pollution	31
10	Reducing road traffic emissions	35
11	Reducing the impact of new developments	41
12	Where to find more information	45

1

Introduction



The New Forest district covers a wide and diverse area, including towns, industrial areas, and rural regions. The natural beauty of our district, including many protected areas and the majority of the New Forest National Park, enriches the lives of residents, supports businesses, and draws many visitors each year.

Following progress at a local and national level in recent years, large parts of the New Forest now enjoy good air quality. Concentrations at all our monitoring sites are now below National UK Air Quality Objectives for all measured pollutants, so in 2023 we were able to revoke our last Air Quality Management Area in Lyndhurst. However, we need to keep making improvements to safeguard the health and wellbeing of everybody who lives and works here.

Our vision is to continuously improve the quality of the environment in our district, in support of the council's Corporate Plan priorities to deliver a vibrant and prosperous district for the residents of our unique place.

This Strategy will be reviewed and amended as required every 5 years unless there are any significant requirements to do so earlier.

1.1 WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THIS STRATEGY?

This Air Quality Strategy explains why we need to improve air quality, describes current air quality in our district, and sets out New Forest District Council's plans for improving air quality in the New Forest district. The focus of the Strategy is on the impacts of air quality on human health in the district.

We have identified a number of action areas to focus on over the next decade. These include targeting key sources of pollution and improving the information that we provide to our residents and businesses to empower them to reduce their air pollution footprint and their exposure to air pollution.



1.2 HOW WAS THIS STRATEGY DEVELOPED?

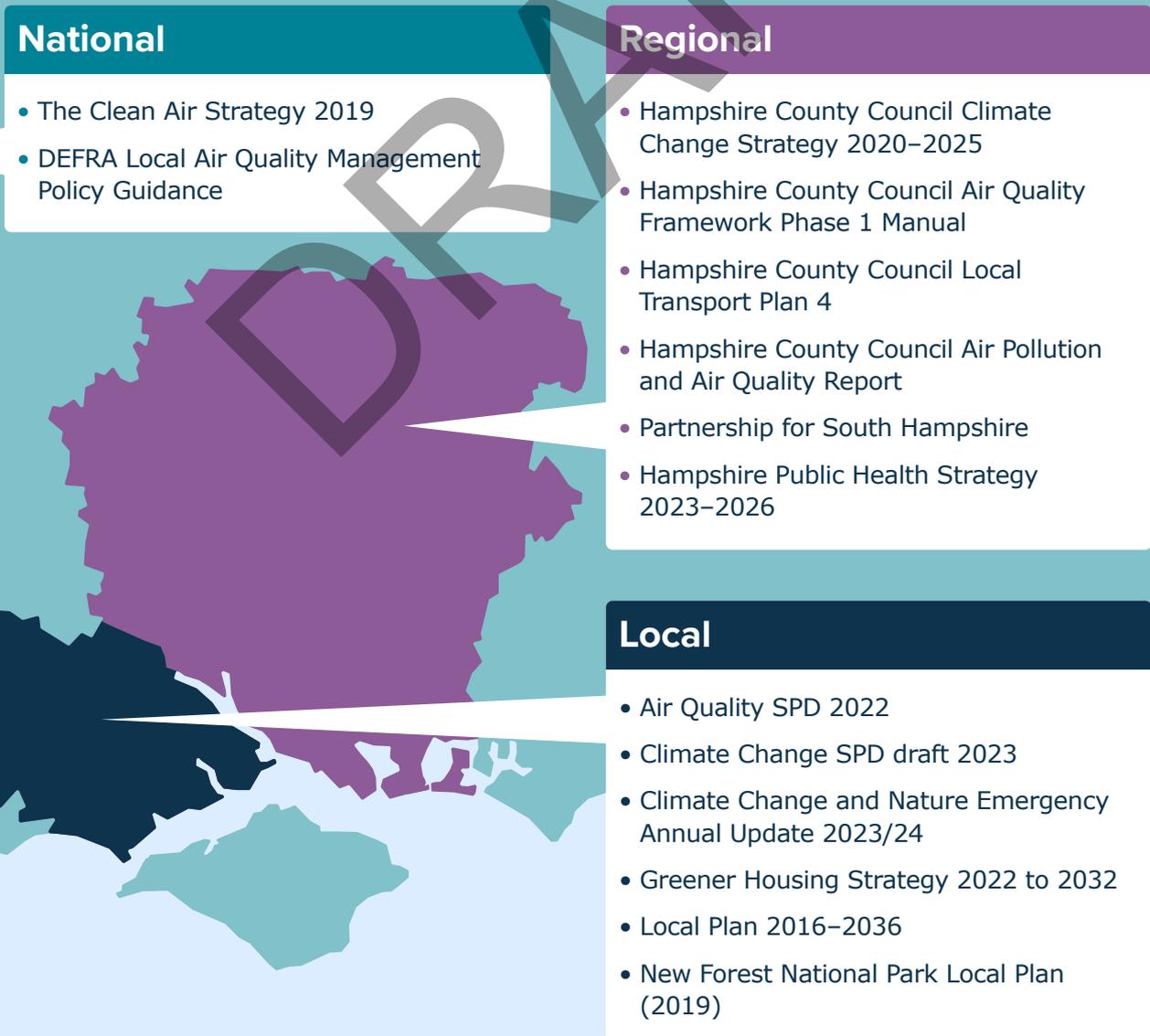
This Strategy has been developed with the support of an Air Quality Steering Group. This Steering Group includes New Forest District Council – Environmental Health, Planning, Health and Wellbeing and Climate Change, Hampshire County Council - Public Health and Transport, the UK Health Security Agency, New Forest National Park Authority, the Environment Centre, the Environment Agency, and representatives from local industry.

Furthermore, prior to formal adoption of the Strategy by New Forest District Council, a public consultation was undertaken to enable residents and businesses to provide their feedback on the Strategy.

Working collaboratively allows us to ensure our commitments and actions are inclusive and fair for everyone living in, working in, and visiting the district, and to guarantee that it represents the priorities and perspectives of the local community.

1.3 HOW DOES THIS STRATEGY ALIGN WITH OTHER POLICIES?

Air pollution in the New Forest doesn't only come from inside the district; pollution from other nearby areas also has an impact on our air quality. At the same time, the pollution we produce also affects air quality for our neighbours, so it is important to address air quality at a national and regional level as well as at a local level. We have designed our Air Quality Strategy to align with other strategies, plans and policies at national, regional, and local levels as shown below.



2

Why do we need to improve air quality?



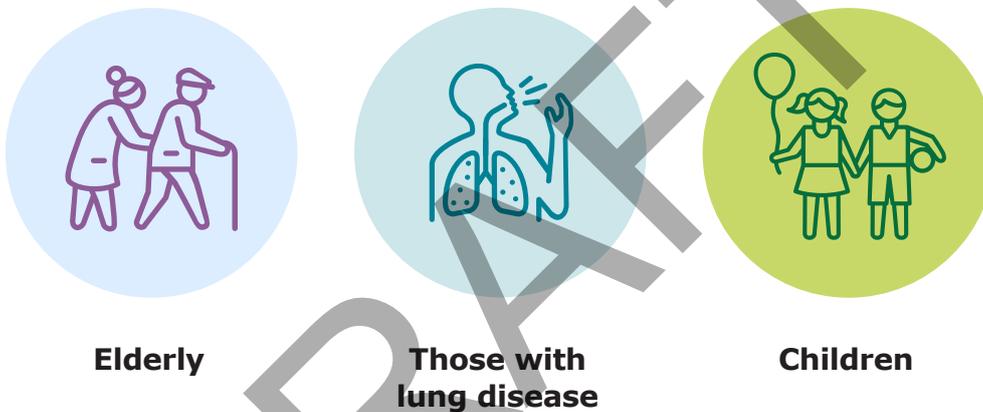
Air pollution in the UK has seen significant improvements in recent decades due to the introduction of policies and measures designed to reduce emissions from transport, industry, businesses, and homes. However, although ambient air quality in the UK is generally considered good, elevated pollution levels still occur in many towns and cities across the country.

2.1 HEALTH AND AIR QUALITY

It is estimated that human-made air pollution in the UK leads to 28,000 to 36,000 premature deaths every year.¹ Episodes of higher air pollution increase hospital admissions and mortality, with harmful short-term effects including exacerbating symptoms for those with pre-existing heart and lung conditions, such as asthma.

There is also growing evidence that air pollution is associated with other long-term ailments which are related to reduced life expectancy such as stroke, lung cancer, respiratory conditions and cardiovascular disease, dementia, diabetes, and adverse pregnancy outcomes.^{2,3}

Air pollution affects everyone who lives and works in the New Forest throughout their lives. The most vulnerable groups include young children, the elderly, pregnant women, those living in deprived communities, and those with pre-existing heart or lung conditions.⁴

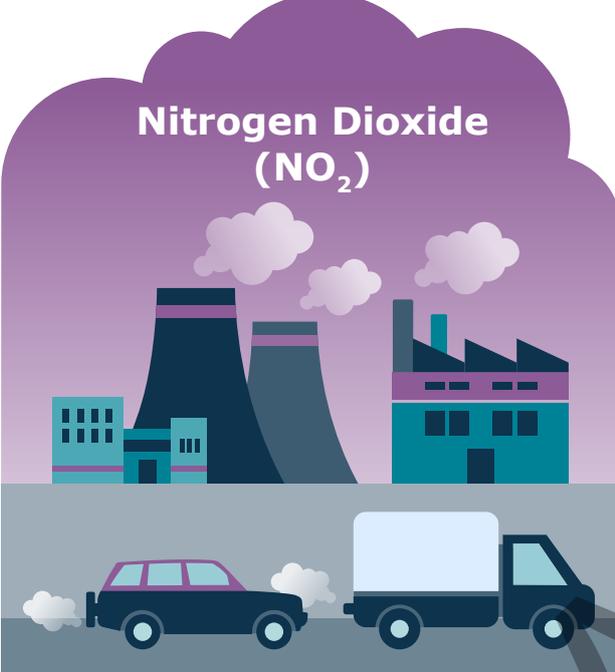


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- 1 Office for Health Improvement & Disparities, Air Pollution: applying All Our Health 2022 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/air-pollution-applying-all-our-health/air-pollution-applying-all-our-health>
 - 2 Public Health England (2014), PHE-CRCE-010: Estimating local mortality burdens associated with particulate air pollution. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/estimating-local-mortality-burdens-associated-with-particulate-air-pollution>
 - 3 World Health Organisation. (2024) Ambient (outdoor) air pollution. Available at: [https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ambient-\(outdoor\)-air-quality-and-health](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ambient-(outdoor)-air-quality-and-health)
 - 4 Office for National Statistics. (2020) Local authority ageing statistics, based on annual mid-year population estimates (2019). Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/ageing-population-estimates/editions/time-series/versions/1>

2.2 WHICH POLLUTANTS AFFECT OUR HEALTH?

The key pollutants that have an impact on our health are nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulate matter (PM).

Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂)



What is it?

- Colourless gas with one nitrogen atom and two oxygen atoms
- One of a group of gases called nitrogen oxides (NO_x)

Where does it come from?

- Formed during combustion e.g. from power generation, industrial combustion and road transport
- Other nitrogen oxides can convert to NO₂ in the atmosphere

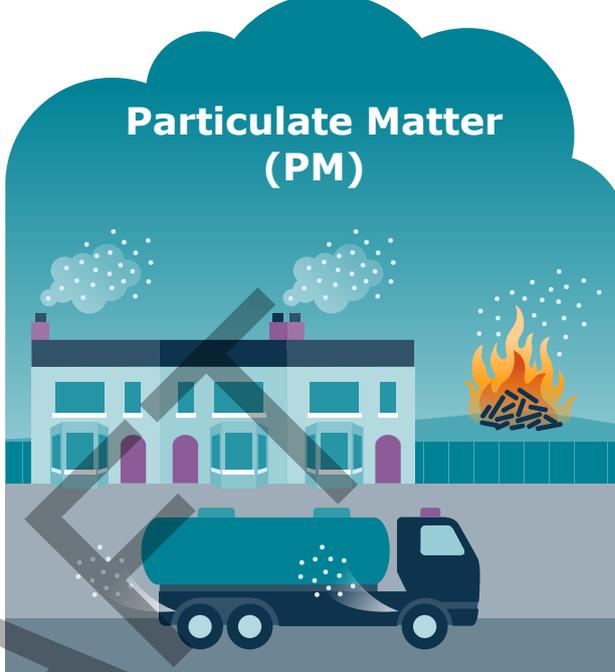
Where is it found?

- High concentrations are often seen near busy roads

How does it affect me?

- Frequent exposure to high NO₂ concentrations increases risk of **respiratory illnesses, cardiopulmonary effects, asthma attacks, and decreased lung function**

Particulate Matter (PM)



What is it?

- Solid particles (dust) and liquid droplets suspended in the air
- Made up of a range of chemicals, some of which can be toxic to human health
- PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, PM_{0.1} are different sizes of particles

Where does it come from?

- Burning fossil fuels and wood, tyre and brake wear
- Also formed by reactions between other pollutants in the air

Where is it found?

- Across wide areas, but particularly near roads and industry

How does it affect me?

- Large particles can **irritate the eyes, nose and throat, and lead to increased risk of cardio-respiratory illnesses**
- Smaller particles can enter the lungs and into the bloodstream, **affecting the heart and the brain, and have been associated with numerous health impacts**

5 PHE. Estimation of costs to the NHS and social care due to the health impacts of air pollution. London: Public Health England; 2018. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/air-pollution-a-tool-to-estimate-healthcare-costs>

PM_{2.5} is the air pollutant that causes most significant health problems and premature deaths. National modelling estimates suggest that a reduction of 1 µg/m³ of PM_{2.5} in 2017 in England could have prevented 50,900 cases of coronary heart disease, 16,500 strokes, 4,200 lung cancers and 9,300 cases of asthma in people aged over 18 by 2035.⁵

Sulphur dioxide (SO₂) is also an important pollutant which is associated with industry. This was historically an issue near the Fawley refinery, but SO₂ concentrations are now well below safe limits in the New Forest due to reductions in industrial emissions following collaborative working between industry, the Environment Agency and New Forest District Council.

2.3 HOW IS AIR QUALITY PROTECTED?

Safe levels for each pollutant are determined based on the latest health evidence. In our Air Quality Strategy, we refer to two sources for these safe levels.

UK Air Quality Objectives

In the UK, air pollution concentrations must comply with national Air Quality Objectives. Limit values are set for individual pollutants and are made up of a concentration value, an averaging time over which it is to be measured, the number of exceedances allowed per year, if any, and a date by which it must be achieved.⁶ Some pollutants have more than one limit value covering different averaging times.

Through the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) system local authorities are required to assess air quality in their area, and to designate Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) if improvements are necessary.

In 2023, the UK Air Quality Standards for PM_{2.5} were reviewed to reflect the new WHO guidelines under the UK Environment Act 2021.⁷ The new annual mean PM_{2.5} concentration target is 10 µg/m³ to be met across England by 2040, a 50% decrease from the current UK PM_{2.5} air quality standard.⁸ The Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 for England also set an interim annual mean PM_{2.5} concentration target of 12 µg/m³ at all monitoring stations by January 2028.

Local authorities are expected to contribute to meeting these targets by taking action to reduce emissions and the precursors of PM_{2.5}, and we expect to see a larger focus on actions to reduce particulate matter emissions in the coming years.

In 2021, the World Health Organisation (WHO) set out updated guidelines for air quality that are based on the latest body of evidence on the effects of different air pollutants on human health.

⁶ Defra, UK Air Quality Limits, accessed at <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/air-pollution/uk-limits>

⁷ UK Environment Act 2021. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted>

⁸ Defra, Air quality targets in the Environment Act, 2022. <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/pm25targets/targets-development>

⁹ World Health Organisation, WHO global air quality guidelines: particulate matter (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide and carbon monoxide, 2021. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240034228>

WHO guidelines

The World Health Organization (WHO) Air Quality Guidelines are a set of global recommendations aimed at reducing the adverse health effects of air pollution. These guidelines are set based on the latest available health evidence. In 2021, the WHO set out updated guidelines for air quality that are based on the latest body of evidence on the effects of different air pollutants on human health.⁹ The new guidelines for PM_{2.5} are based on there being no evidence for a safe level of exposure to PM_{2.5}. Concentrations currently exceed these guidelines across much of the UK and Europe.

Table 2-1: Annual mean pollutant concentration limit values in micrograms per cubic metre (µg/m³)

Pollutant	UK Air Quality Standard	Government Target	World Health Organisation Air Quality Guideline
Nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂)	40	-	10
Particulate matter (PM ₁₀)	40	-	15
Particulate matter (PM _{2.5})	20	10 µg/m ³ to be achieved by 2040	5

3

Air quality in the New Forest



In the New Forest, air quality is generally good and in compliance with the legal limits set by the UK Government.

On average, air quality in the New Forest is better than in other local authorities in Hampshire, excluding the Isle of Wight. In particular, average concentrations in the New Forest are significantly lower than in neighbouring Southampton and Bournemouth. However, there are noted differences across the New Forest and concentrations in our towns are similar to those seen in other towns across Hampshire.

Table 3-1 shows the average PM_{2.5} concentration in each Local Authority in Hampshire, and the percentage of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution.

Table 3-1: Population weighted average PM_{2.5} concentration and fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution in local authorities in Hampshire in 2022.

Source: Office for Health Improvement & Disparities

Local Authority	Air pollution: fine particulate matter	Percentage of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution
Basingstoke and Deane	8.1	6.1%
East Hampshire	7.1	5.3%
Eastleigh	8.0	5.9%
Fareham	7.8	5.8%
Gosport	7.7	5.7%
Hart	8.0	6.0%
Havant	7.4	5.6%
Isle of Wight	6.4	4.8%
New Forest	7.0	5.2%
Portsmouth	8.3	6.2%
Rushmoor	9.0	6.7%
Southampton	8.2	6.1%
Test Valley	7.6	5.7%
Winchester	7.4	5.6%

In 2022, 5.2% of deaths among individuals aged 30 and older in New Forest were associated with long term exposure to particulate air pollution at current levels.¹⁰ This is slightly lower than the national average of 5.8% and is the lowest of all local authorities in Hampshire excluding the Isle of Wight.

3.1 HOW DO WE MONITOR LOCAL AIR QUALITY?

Monitoring air quality provides evidence of air pollution concentrations across New Forest, which helps us to take action if any concerning increases in pollutant concentrations are noted. Air quality is currently measured using four automatic monitors, which assess NO₂, PM₁₀ and SO₂ concentration levels. We do not currently monitor PM_{2.5} concentrations at continuous monitors in the New Forest.

We also monitor NO₂ at 46 diffusion tube sites as of 2024. Most of these sites are in urban areas near roads. Diffusion tube readings are taken once a month and are quality assured following national guidance.¹¹

¹⁰ Office for Health Improvements & Disparities, Public Health Outcomes Framework: D01 – Fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution (new method), 2021 <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/public-health-outcomes-framework/>

¹¹ [National Bias Adjustment Factors | LAQM \(defra.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-bias-adjustment-factors)

We publish the results of our monitoring each year in an Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR). These can be found on our website.¹²

The council has also secured a number of portable Zephyr sensors which can be deployed around the district to carry out short-term monitoring of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} levels. The results of this monitoring can be used to provide advice and educational resources to residents.



3.2 RECENT SUCCESSES

In recent years, measured NO₂ and PM₁₀ concentrations in the New Forest District have reduced due to a combination of national, regional, and local policies, together with the introduction of cleaner technologies over time. Some recent successes are highlighted below.



Redbridge Causeway

- Defra models NO₂ concentrations along all major roads in the UK to identify roads which exceed the UK Air Quality Objectives.
- High levels of NO₂ were identified on a short stretch of the A35 over the Redbridge Causeway into Southampton.
- As a result, in 2017 New Forest District Council was named in the UK plan for tackling roadside concentrations.
- New Forest District Council and Southampton City Council collaborated on the implementation of measures to improve air quality.
- Detailed local air quality modelling was undertaken and determined that compliance would be achieved by 2019 in a business-as-usual scenario.
- Monitoring since 2019 has demonstrated that concentrations on this road are compliant with the UK Air Quality Objectives.



Revoking the Lyndhurst AQMA

- New Forest District Council declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Lyndhurst due to an exceedance of the annual mean NO₂ UK Air Quality Objective in 2005.
- We determined that the main cause was traffic congestion in narrow streets.
- Between 2010 and 2022, NO₂ levels decreased by 10 µg/m³, so concentrations in the AQMA had been compliant with the Air Quality Objective for eight consecutive years leading into 2022.
- This was due to a combination of improvements in traffic sequencing improving traffic flow through the narrowest portions of the road, and improved vehicle emissions technology.
- We commissioned a forecasting study to demonstrate that no new exceedances were likely in future.
- Using this evidence, we revoked the Lyndhurst AQMA in August 2023.

¹² Air pollution – New Forest District Council, <https://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/1002/Air-pollution>

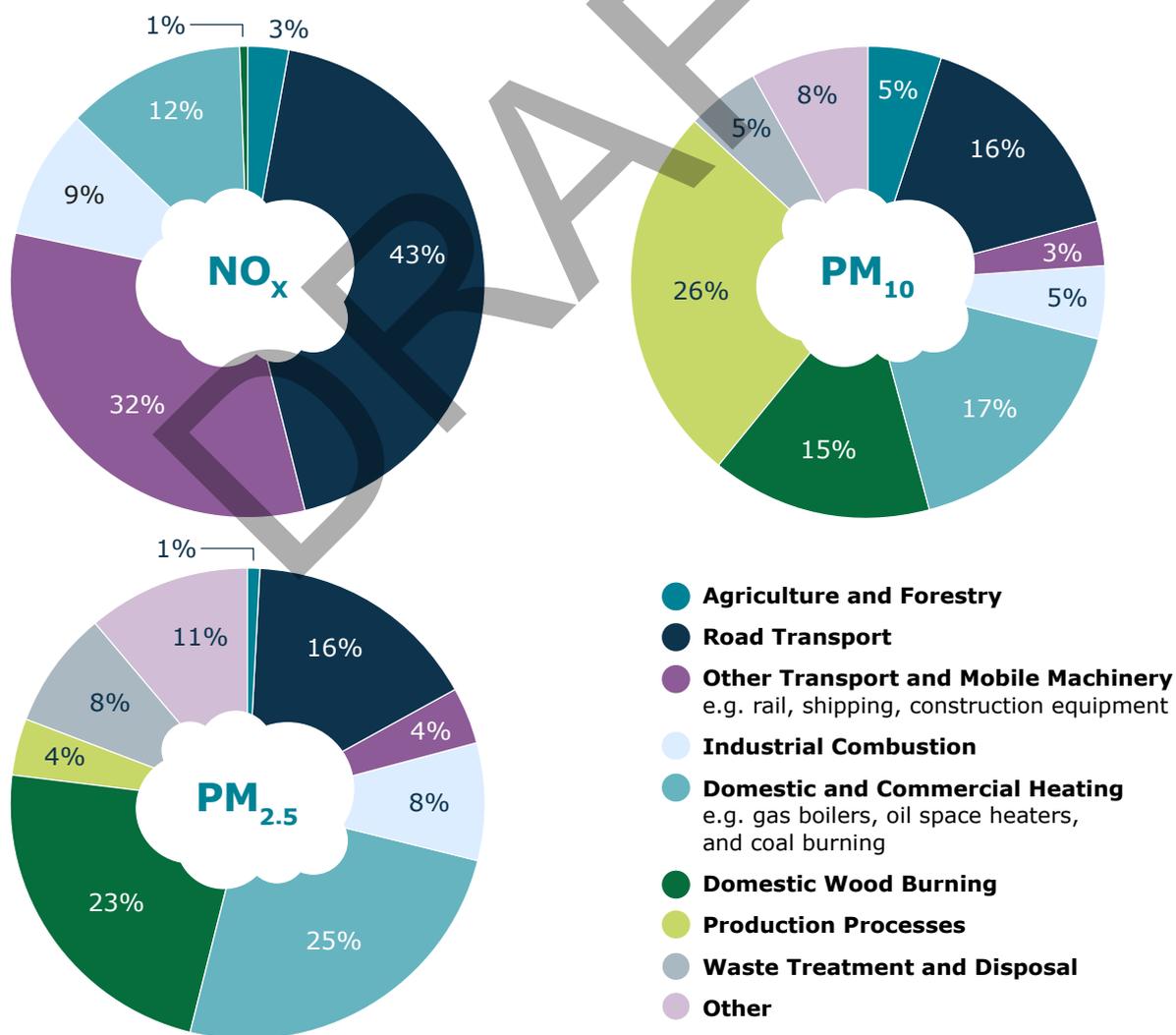
3.3 WHERE DOES AIR POLLUTION IN THE NEW FOREST COME FROM?

Different sources in the New Forest impact air quality. Identifying the sources that have the most significant impact enables us to develop policies that will have the greatest effect on reducing air pollution. **For this strategy, we have analysed emissions in the New Forest using the UK National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory.**¹³

Road transport plays a key role as a primary source of NO₂, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5}. 96% of visitors arrive to the New Forest in cars or coaches, contributing to these emissions. Other key sources include emissions from commercial, residential, and agricultural sources. Our area is home to one of the largest oil refineries in Europe, as well as significant areas of sand and gravel extraction. As such, local industry is another key source of potential concern for air quality.

Domestic wood burning is also a key source of particulate matter emissions, contributing 23% of total PM_{2.5} emissions in the New Forest District.

Figure 3-1: Sources of emissions in the New Forest



¹³ UK National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory <https://naei.beis.gov.uk/>
As of March 2024, the baseline year for this inventory was 2018.

Air quality is **not just a local issue**, as airborne pollution is not contained within district boundaries and can affect neighbouring areas. As a result, we work with neighbouring local authorities to address air quality issues. An example of this is the 'Burn Better' campaign, developed collaboratively with Southampton City Council, Winchester City Council and Eastleigh Borough Council to inform the public on pollutant issues concerning solid fuel burning. Air quality in the New Forest may also be affected by the proximity of Southampton Port emissions.

3.4 CLEAN AIR AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Many sources of air pollution, such as fossil fuel combustion, industry, and agriculture, are also key sources of emissions of greenhouse gas emissions like carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane. This means that improving air quality by reducing emissions can also help to address climate change.

Which air pollutants can contribute to climate change?

While CO₂ in itself is not harmful to human health, it along with other air pollutants can impact our climate.

Ozone is a significant greenhouse gas formed through complex chemical reactions involving nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the presence of sunlight. It directly contributes to climate change and prevents plants from absorbing carbon dioxide. Particulate matter can absorb sunlight and contribute to global warming. Other air pollutants can lead to the formation of secondary aerosols. These aerosols can reflect light and therefore affect our climate.

What does this mean for the New Forest?

Limiting the emissions of these pollutants through behavioural change such as shifting away from private vehicle use, improving fuel efficiency in vehicles or improving energy efficiency in homes and workplaces can help to minimise our climate impacts.

In October 2021 the council declared a 'Climate Change and Nature Emergency' as a result of extreme weather and climate impacts at a local, national, and worldwide level. Our Climate Change and Nature Emergency Report and Action Plan¹⁵ outlines our approach for how the Council can demonstrate climate leadership, implementing actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change.

The New Forest National Park Authority has also declared a climate and nature emergency. More information is available at: <https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/conservation/climate-and-nature-emergency/net-zero-with-nature/>

Ensuring that actions align with long-term prosperity is our ultimate goal and requires a considered approach that balances finances, health, and wellbeing, ecosystems services, cost of living and the needs of future generations.

"Pollutants not only severely impact public health, but also the earth's climate and ecosystems globally."

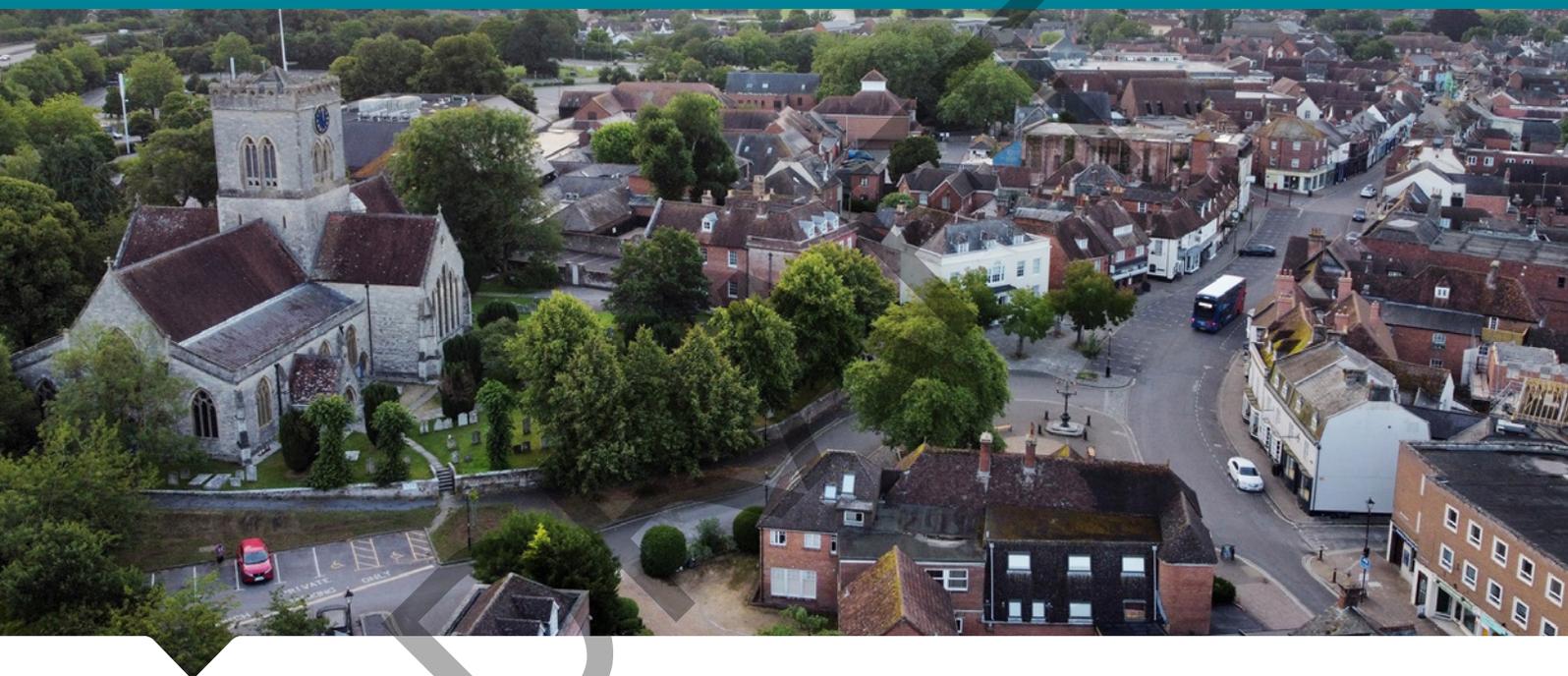
WHO¹⁴

¹⁴ WHO, Air quality, energy and health, <https://www.who.int/teams/environment-climate-change-and-health/air-quality-energy-and-health/health-impacts/climate-impacts-of-air-pollution>

¹⁵ New Forest District Council. (2023) Climate Change and Nature Emergency Report and Action Plan 2023. Available at: <https://www.newforest.gov.uk/climatechange>

4

How will we implement this strategy?



4.1 DEVELOP ANNUAL WORK PLANS

New Forest District Council will form a **Steering Group** to oversee the implementation of this Strategy. This Steering Group will include representatives from a range of council departments and include key local stakeholders.

Each year, this Steering Group will **develop a work plan** describing the actions we will take over the following year. These actions will be developed from the Air Quality Strategy's action areas. Each work plan will be included in our Air Quality Annual Status Report, which will be made available on our website. The plan will set out who is responsible for each action, how we expect the measure will safeguard the health of our residents and visitors, and how we will ensure that the work plan acts to reduce health inequalities in the New Forest.

**Figure 4-1:
Members of our
Air Quality
Steering Group**



4.2 MONITORING AND REVIEW

To ensure that we achieve our goals, New Forest District Council will implement a **continuous monitoring and review process for this strategy**. Through this process, we will incorporate new data, any updates to relevant regional or national guidance, and any emerging opportunities.

Data for each action will be used to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in each work plan. Each work plan will include Key Performance Indicators that will allow us to assess the effectiveness of individual measures and make changes where required.

Throughout the life of this strategy we will also **continue to monitor pollution levels in the area and report them annually** in our Annual Status Reports.

4.3 PARTNERSHIPS

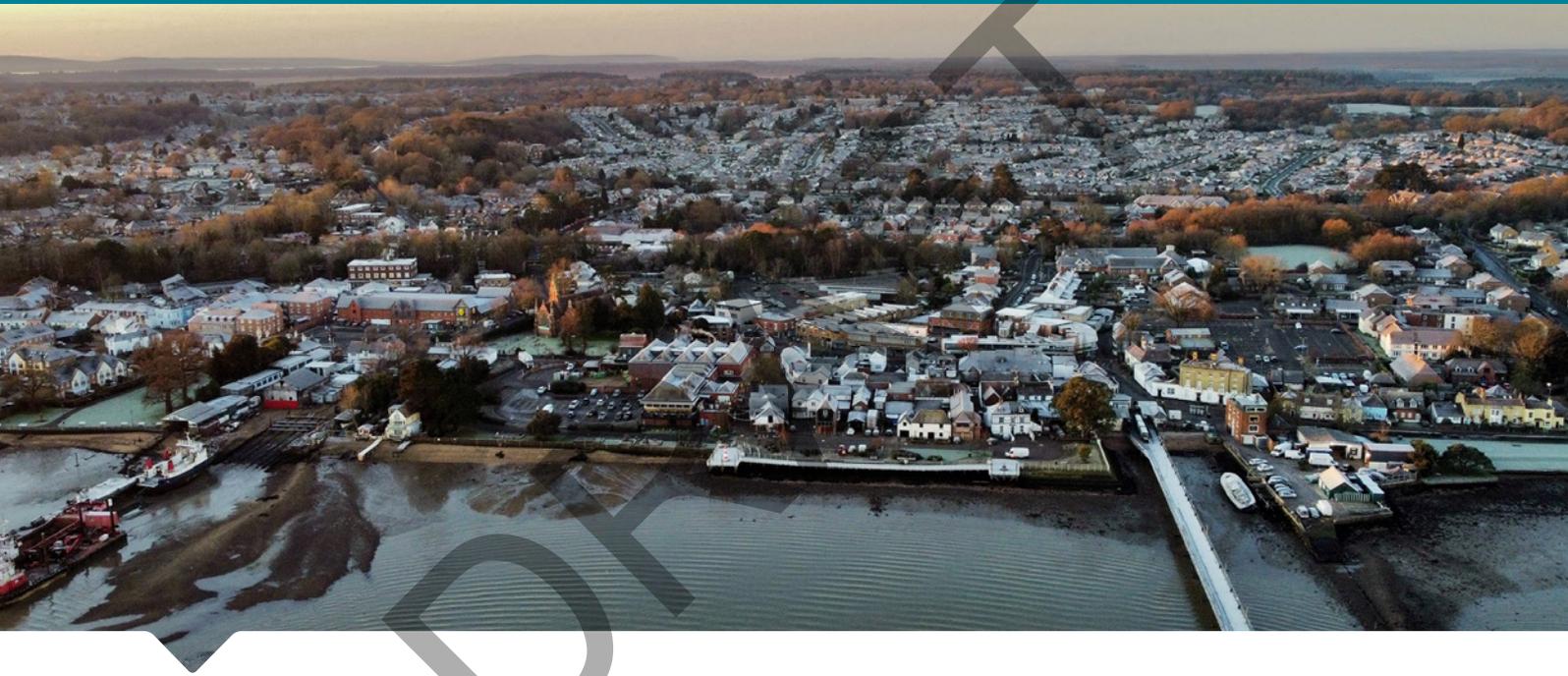
Air pollution is a regional challenge, so **collaborating with neighbouring local authorities and Hampshire County Council is crucial to ensure our success**. We will continue to collaborate with the New Forest National Park Authority and Forestry England for all projects which may affect the National Park and will continue building partnerships with local industry in the district. We will also seek opportunities to join new local and national networks on nature and climate change to deliver regional actions.

We will continue to work as a member of the Partnership for South Hampshire across key areas including energy efficiency, minimising carbon emissions, reducing the need for transport through placemaking, and support for renewable energy development.

For further details on the council's partnership plans, please see:
[Health and wellbeing – New Forest District Council](#)

5

Action areas

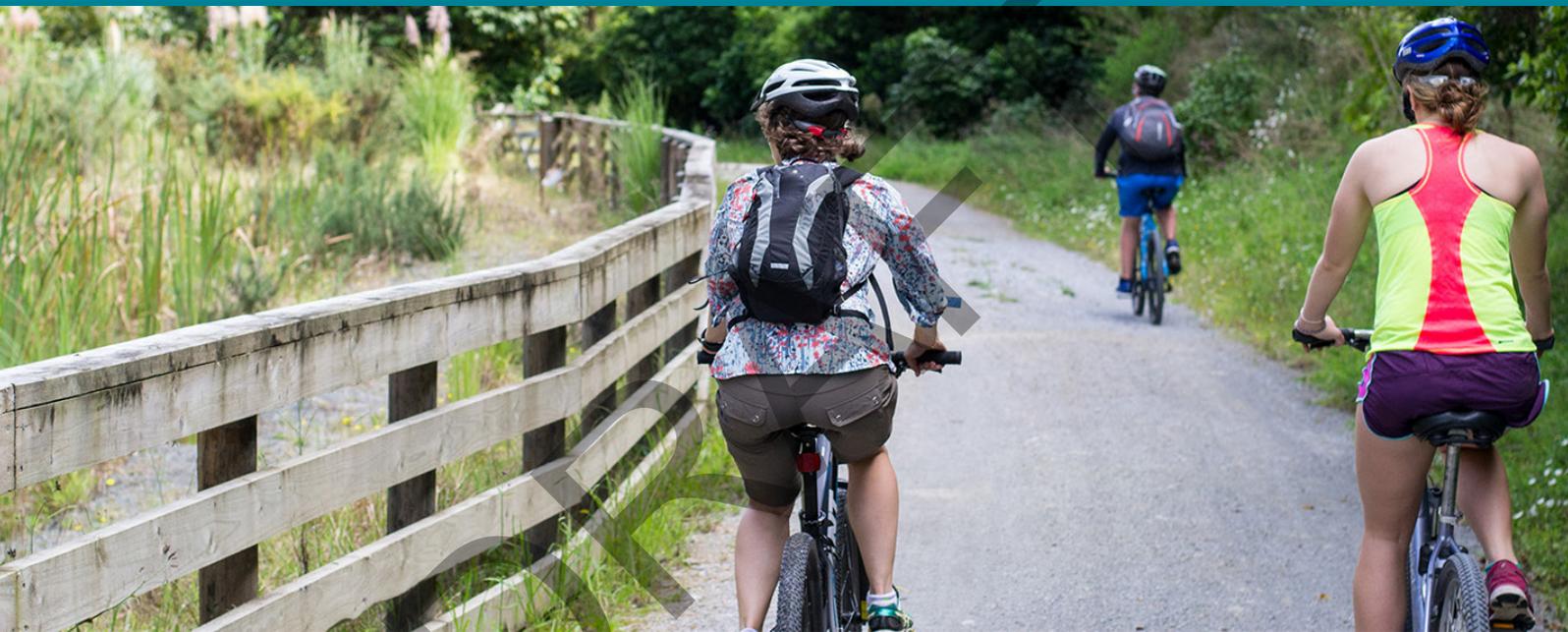


As part of this Air Quality Strategy, New Forest District Council has developed actions across multiple key areas with the aim to improve local air quality:

-  **1** Public awareness and behaviour change
-  **2** Reducing health inequalities
-  **3** Improving our understanding of particulate matter pollution
-  **4** Wood burning and indoor air pollution
-  **5** Reducing road traffic emissions
-  **6** Reducing the impact of new developments

6

Public awareness and behaviour change



6.1 WHY IS PUBLIC AWARENESS IMPORTANT?

Access to high quality, reliable information on air quality is essential so that our residents can make informed decisions to reduce their exposure to air pollution and reduce their personal emissions of harmful pollutants.

Increased awareness empowers individuals to make informed decisions, such as reducing wood burning or choosing alternative means of transport and can also encourage residents to contribute to initiatives aimed at improving air quality.

This Air Quality Strategy aims to help promote the understanding of air quality in the New Forest, provide information on what is being done to improve air quality, and provide information on how to reduce our individual exposure and emissions.

6.2 WHAT ARE WE DOING NOW?

Publishing air quality information

Our website contains links to our latest air quality reports and monitoring data.

We routinely publish our air pollution monitoring data in map format on the Air Quality England website.¹⁶

We are also required to publish an annual local air quality report for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Annual Status Reports for each year since 2018 can be found on our website.¹⁷

The reports include yearly measured concentrations and an analysis of air pollution in the District. Each report also provides detailed information on the actions that we are taking to improve in the New Forest each year and provides guidance for how you can reduce your own exposure to air pollution.

Public awareness for wood burning

We are currently working with neighbouring authorities (Southampton City Council, Winchester City Council, and Eastleigh Borough Council) and the Environment Centre to promote cleaner fuels and cleaner wood burning practices. They have been promoting the Wood Burning campaign¹⁸ for the past 3 years, raising awareness of the effects of wood smoke on health and the environment through:

- Running face to face events
- Carrying out monitoring in areas where smoke complaints occur
- Production and distribution of flyers to promote clean burning in urban and rural areas
- Engagement with tree surgeons, chimney sweeps, and stove and fireplace suppliers
- Sharing 'Burn Better' information on our social media platforms.



¹⁶ Air Quality in England. (2024) New Forest District Council Monitoring Data. Available at: https://www.airqualityengland.co.uk/local-authority/?la_id=236

¹⁷ New Forest District Council. (2024) Air Pollution. Available at: <https://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/1002/Air-pollution>

¹⁸ The Environment Centre. (2024) Wood burning. Available at: <https://environmentcentre.com/wood-burning/>

6.3 WHAT WILL WE DO NEXT?

Update our air quality website

We are committed to making it easier for our residents to access important air quality information. The main source for air quality information in our area is the New Forest District Council website, so we will **update our website to make it more informative and accessible**. This could include improving access to relevant information, such as showing real-time air quality mapping data from our monitoring stations, providing more detailed health advice, and promoting educational resources.



We will also work with other teams in the council including our Climate and Sustainability Team as they make updates to their web pages, and work with neighbouring councils to identify opportunities to make further improvements.

Work to raise awareness of travel behavioural change

We will continue to work with partners to develop and support **awareness campaigns for a range of audiences across the New Forest**. Providing accurate, reliable information on the potential impacts of different modes of transport on air quality helps inspire those who can make small changes to their daily routines, whether through using alternative modes, or turning off their engines while idling.

Encourage the shift to more sustainable modes of transport

We will work with partners such as Hampshire County Council, National Highways, the New Forest National Park Authority, Forestry England and transport operators to encourage and support people to shift from short car journeys to more sustainable modes such as walking, cycling and public transport. This will include supporting the County Council as the Transport Authority alongside other partners to extend and improve public transport services.

We will also continue to work with Hampshire County Council on the development of the Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan to improve active travel facilities across the district and encourage people to shift from short car journeys to walking/cycling/wheeling.

Facilitate the shift to zero emission fuels

We will work with partners and the local community to support the uptake of electric vehicles and provision of EV charging infrastructure in new homes and commercial premises as well as work with Hampshire County Council to support the installation of rapid public EV charging points.

We will work with partners and the local community to support the uptake of electric vehicles and provision of EV charging infrastructure in new homes and commercial premises.

Public engagement to understand the most important issues for our residents and visitors

Understanding our residents' concerns allows us to develop more effective public awareness campaigns and develop actions that **address the issues that are most important to those who live and work here.**

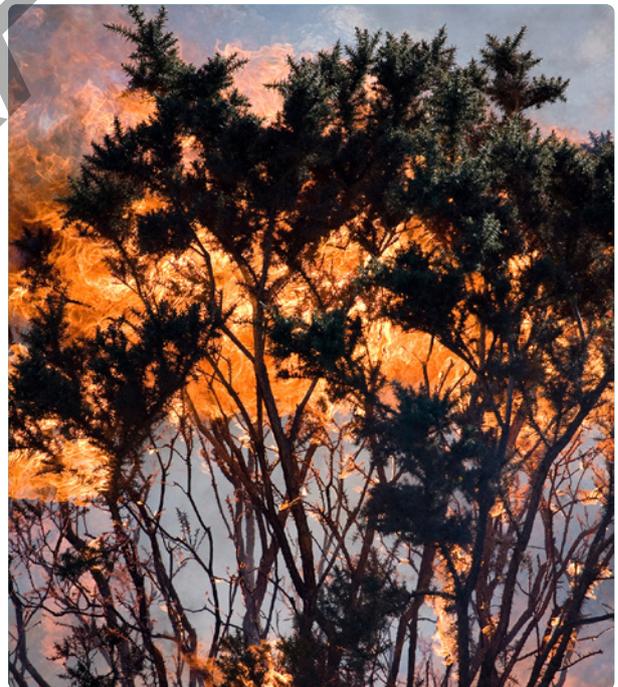
Throughout the life of this strategy, we will consider a range of approaches to public engagement to understand the most important air quality issues for our residents, town and parish councils and visitors. We will identify best practice examples from other local authorities to build on the work we are already doing. We will also **identify opportunities** within our existing engagement programme to include air quality information, for example through work with schools.

Develop our partnerships and communications with industry in the New Forest

We will work with our industrial sites such as the Fawley Refinery and other regulators such as the Environment Agency. These partnerships will allow us to **improve awareness and understanding of air quality around industrial sites**, explain how these sites are permitted, and promote the emissions reduction practices that they employ to minimise their air pollution impacts.

Campaign for heathland burning awareness

Controlled heath burning is an essential part of the regeneration cycle in the New Forest and is a crucial tool for maintaining biodiversity and encouraging new plant growth. However, this leads to increased air pollution on burning days, so it is important that residents and visitors have information on why it is done, how it is managed, and where controlled burning is due to take place to allow vulnerable individuals to avoid affected areas. We will collaboratively work to implement **an awareness campaign to help inform residents and visitors about heath burning** and provide more information to enable residents to make informed choices.



6.3 WHAT CAN YOU DO?

We can all take some simple steps to make a big difference in reducing local air pollution and help protect our families and communities.

Figure 6-1: Actions you can take to reduce local air pollution



7

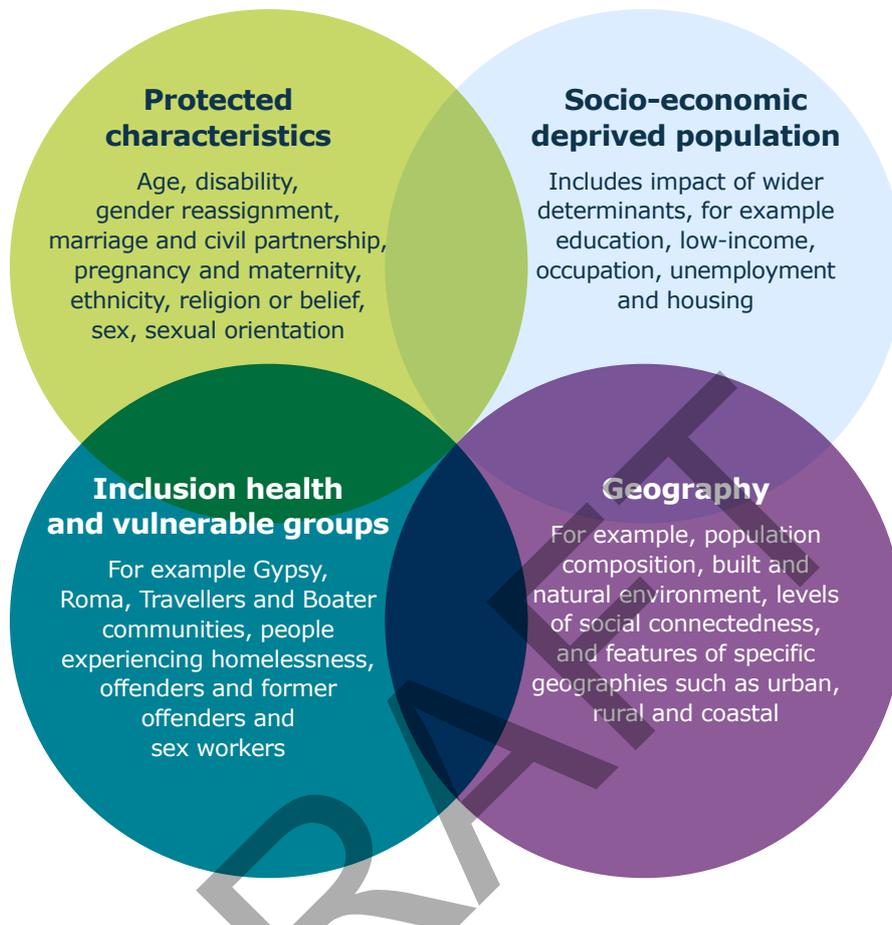
Reducing health inequalities



7.1 HEALTH INEQUALITIES AND AIR QUALITY

The environmental conditions around us shape our health throughout our lives. Differences in these conditions across populations impact access to good health at every stage of life, affecting how we think, feel, act, and, ultimately, our well-being. There are a broad range of individual characteristics that have been identified as contributing to health inequalities.

Figure 7-1: Individual characteristics that have been identified as contributing to health inequalities



Exposure to air pollution disproportionately affects vulnerable populations and can exacerbate existing health disparities. Lower-income communities are more likely to experience the adverse impacts of air pollution as they are more likely to:

- Have existing medical conditions;
- Live in areas with poorer outdoor and indoor environments
- Have less access to jobs, healthy food, decent housing, and green spaces, which all contribute to poorer health.

These disadvantages are often experienced in tandem and may affect people throughout their lives.

7.2 AIR QUALITY AND HEALTH INEQUALITY IN THE NEW FOREST

Air pollution affects everyone who lives and works in the New Forest, but there are some groups that are particularly vulnerable.

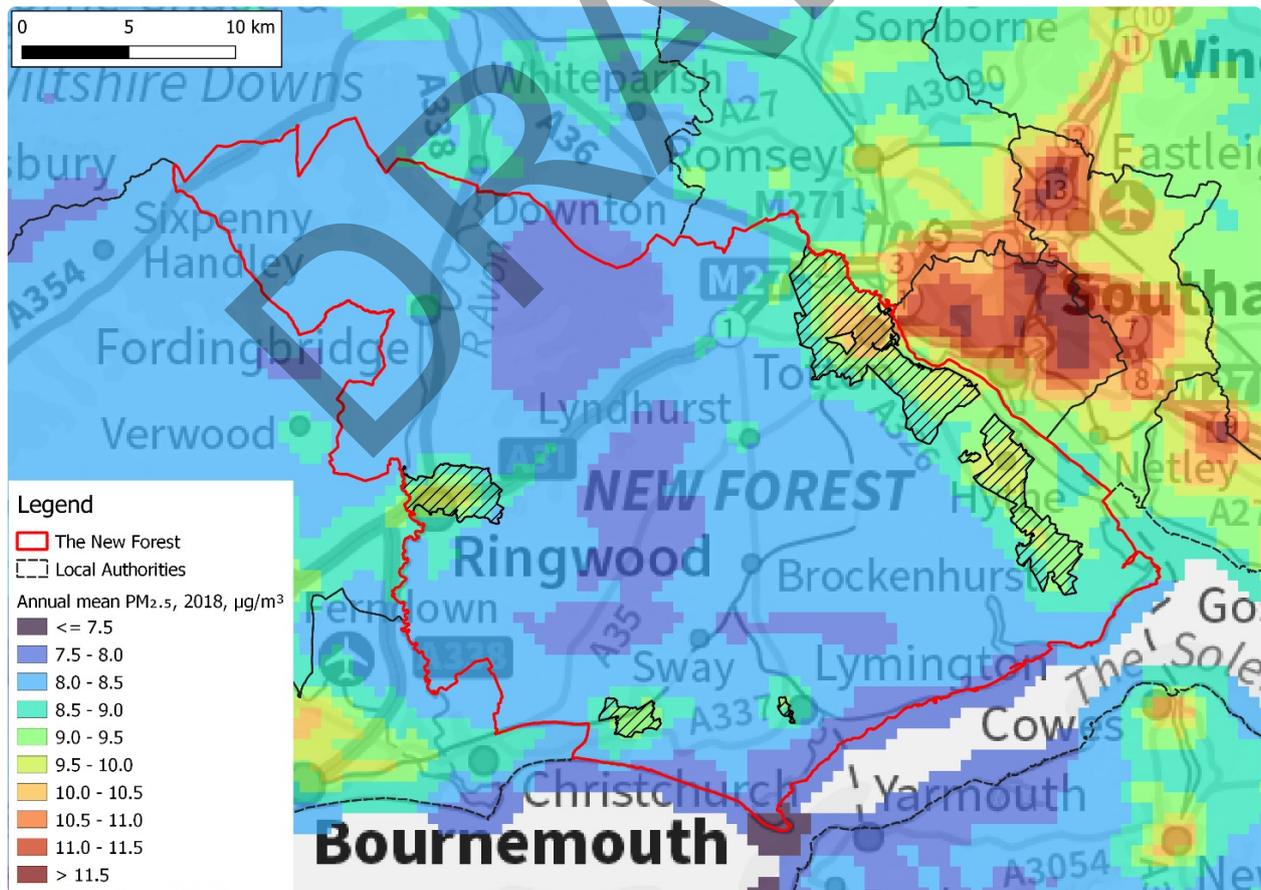
In the New Forest, 16% of the population is aged 15 or under, and 29% are 65 or older. In particular, **the New Forest has an older population than the rest of Hampshire, and as a result our population is more vulnerable to air pollution.**

On average, the New Forest is prosperous compared to the rest of the UK. Unemployment remains low according to the most recent ONS census, with 53% of the population in employment and 33% retired. However, there are a number of more disadvantaged parts of the District, particularly in our towns and in the Waterside area.

As a first step to understanding air quality and health inequality in the New Forest, we have identified vulnerable areas by combining deprivation and population data published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government¹⁹ and annual average PM_{2.5} concentration data for 2018 published by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs.²⁰ Figure 7-1 shows areas where the annual average PM_{2.5} concentration in 2018 was within 10% of the new PM_{2.5} target with either:

- a greater proportion of the population aged 60 or over than the average across Hampshire;
- a greater proportion of the population aged 15 or under than the average across Hampshire; or
- an Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) below the average for England.

Figure 7-1: Vulnerable communities in the New Forest overlaid on average PM_{2.5} concentrations, 2018



19 Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, English indices of deprivation 2019

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>

20 Defra, Background Mapping, <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/data/laqm-background-maps?year=2018>

Our analysis shows that there are **vulnerable communities in several of our towns**, particularly in the Waterside area including Totton, Marchwood and Hythe. Ringwood and parts of New Milton and Lymington are also home to communities that are more vulnerable to poorer air quality.

The majority of these areas are vulnerable as the result of having a high proportion of residents over 60. Parts of the areas highlighted in New Milton, Totton, Hythe, and Blackfield are also vulnerable due to their communities being more deprived than the average. Those living in properties that front busier roads tend to be more deprived than the average. These properties are also more likely to be rental properties or social housing, and those living in these properties are exposed to higher levels of air pollution from traffic emissions than the wider population.

More information on air quality and inequalities is available from the Hampshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.²¹ This is a resource for mapping New Forest residents' health and inequalities.

7.3 WHAT WILL WE DO NEXT?

Investigate links between demographics and air quality

We will work with Public Health to **better understand the available data on links between demographics and air quality**, with a specific focus on identifying the areas most vulnerable to health inequalities and understanding ways in which these can be addressed. We will talk to data providers to understand what information is available to us, particularly in vulnerable communities.

Incorporate reducing inequalities into our annual work plans

Our **Air Quality Strategy Steering Group will ensure the equitable distribution of air quality benefits in any action we undertake**. The Air Quality Steering Group will consist of a number of different stakeholders from both public health and environmental health and will meet as frequently as required to discuss potential areas of concern and develop solutions.

In each annual work plan, we will specifically address how the actions will improve health inequalities in the New Forest. We will consult our Public Health colleagues to ensure that each work plan is aligned with our overall strategy for reducing health inequalities.

Identify and deliver targeted measures for vulnerable communities

We will work with relevant stakeholders to conduct a study to **identify, and if appropriate, deliver targeted measures for vulnerable communities** in areas with poorer air quality. These measures could include engagement and public awareness building, making sure that information is accessible to those affected. These measures will be incorporated into our annual work plans.

²¹ Hampshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, available at: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/publichealth/jsna>

8

Improving our understanding of particulate matter pollution



8.1 WHY IS PM_{2.5} IMPORTANT?

Fine particulate matter, known as PM_{2.5}, is considered to be one of the most dangerous pollutants because it can bypass the lung's defences and enter the bloodstream circulating through the body. This can lead to serious health conditions including cardiovascular and respiratory disease, and even cancers. It affects more people than other pollutants and has health impacts even at very low concentrations.

As a result, under the Environment Act 2021, the UK Government has set 2 legally binding targets to reduce concentrations:

- an annual mean concentration target for PM_{2.5} of 10 µg/m³ across England by 2040
- an average population exposure reduction target of 35% in 2040 compared to a 2018 baseline

The Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 for England also set an interim annual mean $PM_{2.5}$ concentration target of $12 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ at all monitoring stations by January 2028.

This means that **all local authorities, even those where $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations are below the annual mean target, are expected to take action to improve air quality.**

$PM_{2.5}$ is a regional pollutant, so many sources of the $PM_{2.5}$ pollution in the New Forest are outside our control. However, we do have control over significant sources like road transport and wood burning, and our emissions affect concentrations across the region. The UK National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory, published by the UK Government, shows that emissions $PM_{2.5}$ in the New Forest are higher than in neighbouring areas, mostly as a result of domestic and commercial combustion, and woodburning.

8.2 PARTICULATE MATTER IN THE NEW FOREST

We do not continuously monitor $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations in the New Forest but we can estimate $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations using PM_{10} measurements following UK Government guidance. In 2022, $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations at our monitoring station in Totton were estimated to be around $13 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, which is above the 2040 target of $10 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

National $PM_{2.5}$ modelling published by Defra indicates that concentrations away from sources such as roads and industry are likely to be below the target already. This modelling also shows that concentrations in the New Forest are relatively low compared to other local authorities in Hampshire.

8.3 WHAT WILL WE DO NEXT?

Investigate monitoring options for $PM_{2.5}$

In order to improve our understanding of particulate matter pollution in the New Forest, we will first seek to **introduce $PM_{2.5}$ monitoring in the New Forest**. This will help us to establish a baseline for current $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations and ensure that $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations can be measured to understand changes over time.

Options for monitoring arrangements might include developing a network of low-cost sensors to understand how $PM_{2.5}$ varies over a wider area, or using continuous analysers, which will provide international reference standard data at limited locations (similar to our current PM_{10} monitoring). We will assess these options to determine the most effective approach.

Identify any PM_{2.5} hotspots

We will use our monitoring data and consider the use of modelling to **identify areas where PM_{2.5} concentrations exceed the 2040 government targets**. Using this information, our Steering Group will be able to decide whether targeted local actions are required for PM_{2.5} in particular areas.

Detailed source apportionment of PM_{2.5} concentrations

We will carry out **detailed source apportionment of PM_{2.5} concentrations if hotspots are identified** to tell us in detail where pollution in any hotspots comes from. This will allow us to develop effective, targeted work plans. It will also help us understand how much of our residents' exposure to PM_{2.5} is from sources that the council controls, helping us set to set our reduction goals.

Develop actions to reduce emissions

Our Air Quality Steering Group, will **develop and agree the best approach to reducing PM_{2.5} emissions in the New Forest**, including targeted and district-wide measures.

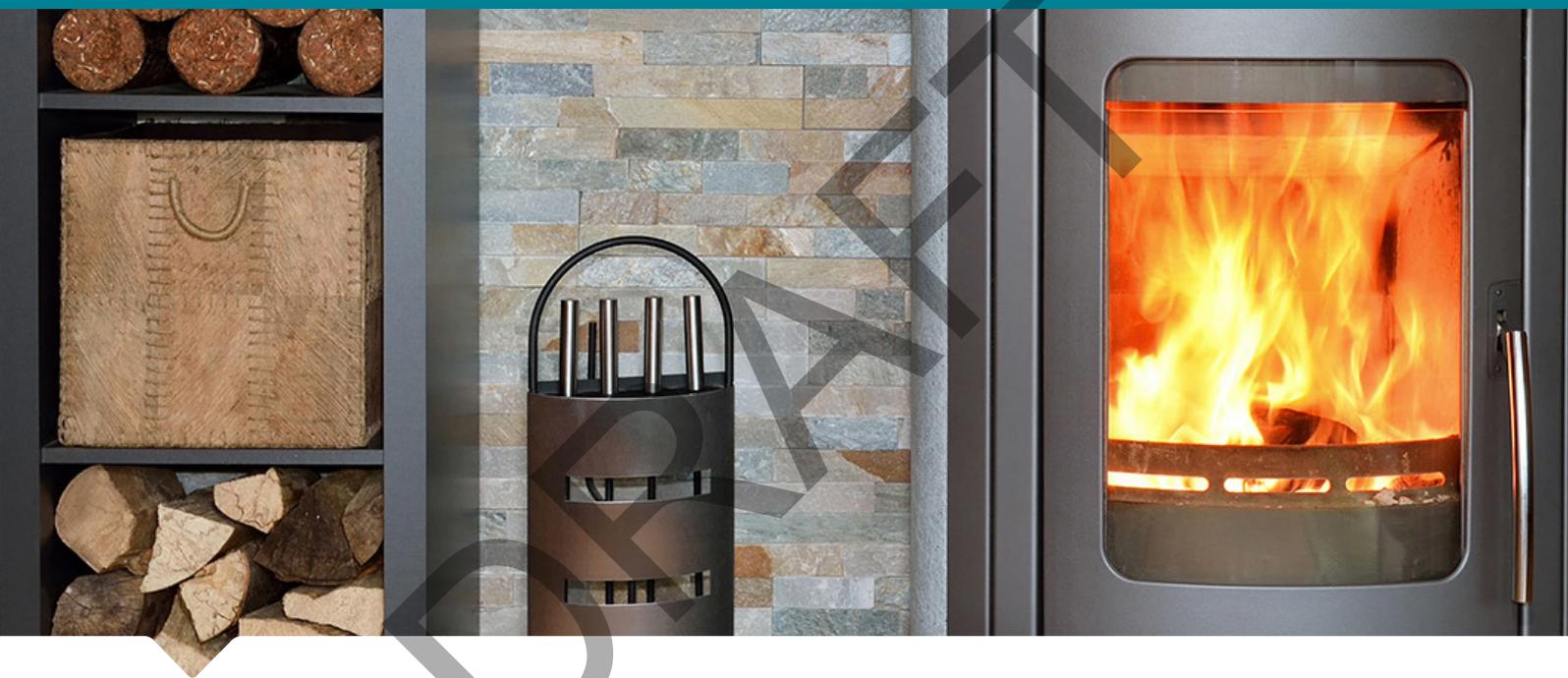
We expect that many of the actions we are already taking will also contribute to reducing PM_{2.5} emissions. However, in the meantime, we are continuing to work on our existing plans that will help reduce particulate pollution, especially our Burn Better Campaign.



We will carry out detailed source apportionment of PM_{2.5} concentrations if hotspots are identified to tell us in detail where pollution in any hotspots comes from. This will allow us to develop effective, targeted work plans.

9

Wood burning and indoor air pollution



9.1 MANAGING OUR EXPOSURE TO INDOOR AIR POLLUTION

Many of us spend the majority of our time indoors, so understanding how our households contribute to air pollution and how to manage indoor air quality is important to safeguard our health and wellbeing.

Our actions as individuals can have a large impact on the health of those around us, for example through wood burning, and on our own health. Common sources of indoor air pollution include cooking and heating appliances, cigarette and e-cigarette smoke, damp and mould, cleaning products, and building materials.

9.2 WOOD BURNING

Wood burners can be a primary source of heating for some households, but the majority of households with a woodburner use them in addition to a central heating system. This is now a major contributor to harmful particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) emissions in the New Forest. We suggest only burning in the home when absolutely necessary to help reduce your exposure to harmful pollutants.

Here is our advice for reducing the air quality impacts of burning wood in your home:

#1 Burn cleaner
Burn cleaner fuels such as smokeless, authorised fuels or dry, well-seasoned wood with low moisture content.

#2 Burn better
Use efficient appliances, don't shut off air or allow the temperature to drop, and service and clean them regularly.

#3 Burn different
If possible, switch heating source to no or low emission fuels, such as renewable, electric or gas alternatives.

9.3 INDOOR AIR POLLUTION

Reducing air pollution in your home is an investment in your health and wellbeing.

These are some simple steps that we can all follow to make sure that we are breathing the cleanest air possible:

Avoid smoking indoors

Use electric or gas heating rather than wood burning

Vacuum regularly

Use a dehumidifier to prevent mould

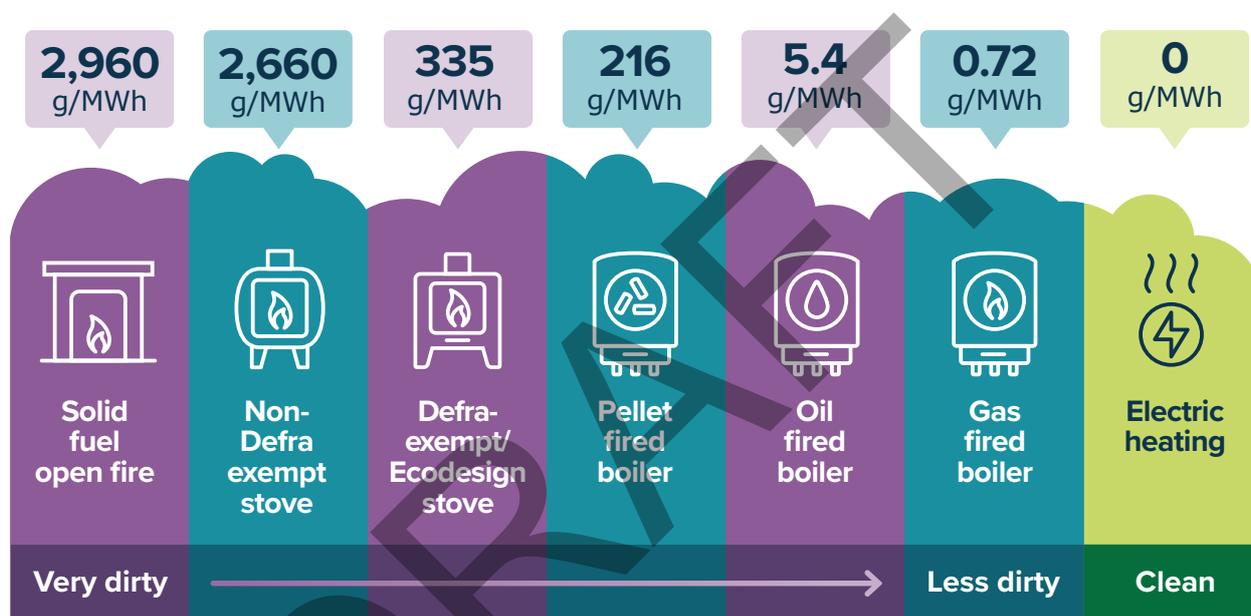
Open windows when you are cooking, cleaning, burning, or using paint

9.4 WHAT ARE WE DOING NOW?

Advocating for cleaner burning practices

Not all forms of burning are equally polluting. This figure from the Chief Medical Officer’s 2022 report²² shows how polluting different types of heating are. We are collaborating with other Hampshire Local Authorities (Southampton City Council, Winchester City Council and Eastleigh Borough Council) and The Environment Centre to advocate for cleaner burning practices in open fires, stoves, and bonfires.

Figure 9-1: The relative PM_{2.5} emissions from domestic heating methods. Adapted from the Chief Medical Officer’s Annual Report 2022.



Improving energy efficiency

Ensuring an efficient and sustainable method of heating your home reduces harmful indoor air pollution and energy costs. However, transitioning to more energy-efficient heating methods can be expensive.

There are several initiatives to make this transition easier:

- **Cosy Homes New Forest Tool:**²³ This tool simplifies the process for residents and landlords to develop a retrofit plan to improve energy efficiency.
- **The Greener Housing Strategy:**²⁴ This strategy focuses on collaborating directly with landlords to ensure compliance with minimum energy efficiency standards.

²² Chief Medical Officer’s Annual Report 2022: Air pollution, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chief-medical-officers-annual-report-2022-air-pollution>

²³ Cost Home New Forest. (2024) Start building your free online home energy plan. Available at: <https://cosyhomesnewforest.planbuilder.co.uk/>

²⁴ New Forest District Council. (2022) Greener Housing Strategy 2022 to 2032. Available at: <https://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/3113/Greener-Housing-Strategy-2022-to-2032>

- **The Environment Centre**,²⁵ located in Southampton, provides complimentary guidance to residents seeking to upgrade their homes. They can also help identify relevant funding sources.

9.5 WHAT WILL WE DO NEXT?

Raise awareness of the impact of wood burners

We will **continue to raise awareness of the impact of wood burners**. Currently we are working with the Environment Centre and neighbouring Local Authorities to raise awareness of the impacts of wood burning and also provide information on cleaner heating alternatives, proper usage practices and regulations.

Provide accessible, reliable information on alternatives to wood burners

We will also look for opportunities to **collaborate with regional authorities and suppliers to provide accessible, reliable information for anybody considering alternatives to wood burners** in their home and help users of wood burners minimise their air quality and climate footprint.

Investigate possible approaches to reducing emissions from bonfires

We will **explore the feasibility and effectiveness of adopting a Smoke Control Area in the New Forest**. We will also investigate developing and promoting awareness to reduce bonfire usage within the district following examples set by other Local Authorities. By setting clear guidelines, controls, and enforcement mechanisms, we will be able to help reduce the amount of pollution from bonfires to ensure we maintain compliance with air quality standards.

Public engagement on indoor air quality

We will work collaboratively to identify opportunities to **carry out public engagement to better understand how our residents consider and manage their personal indoor air quality**. This could include surveys to find out views on issues including indoor pollutants, mould, and particulate matter to make sure we are tackling the issues that matter most to our residents.

²⁵ New Forest District Council. (2024) Get a grant or loan to improve your home energy efficiency. Available at: <https://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/3437/Get-a-grant-or-loan-to-improve-your-home-energy-efficiency>

10

Reducing road traffic emissions



10.1 ROAD TRANSPORT EMISSIONS IN THE NEW FOREST

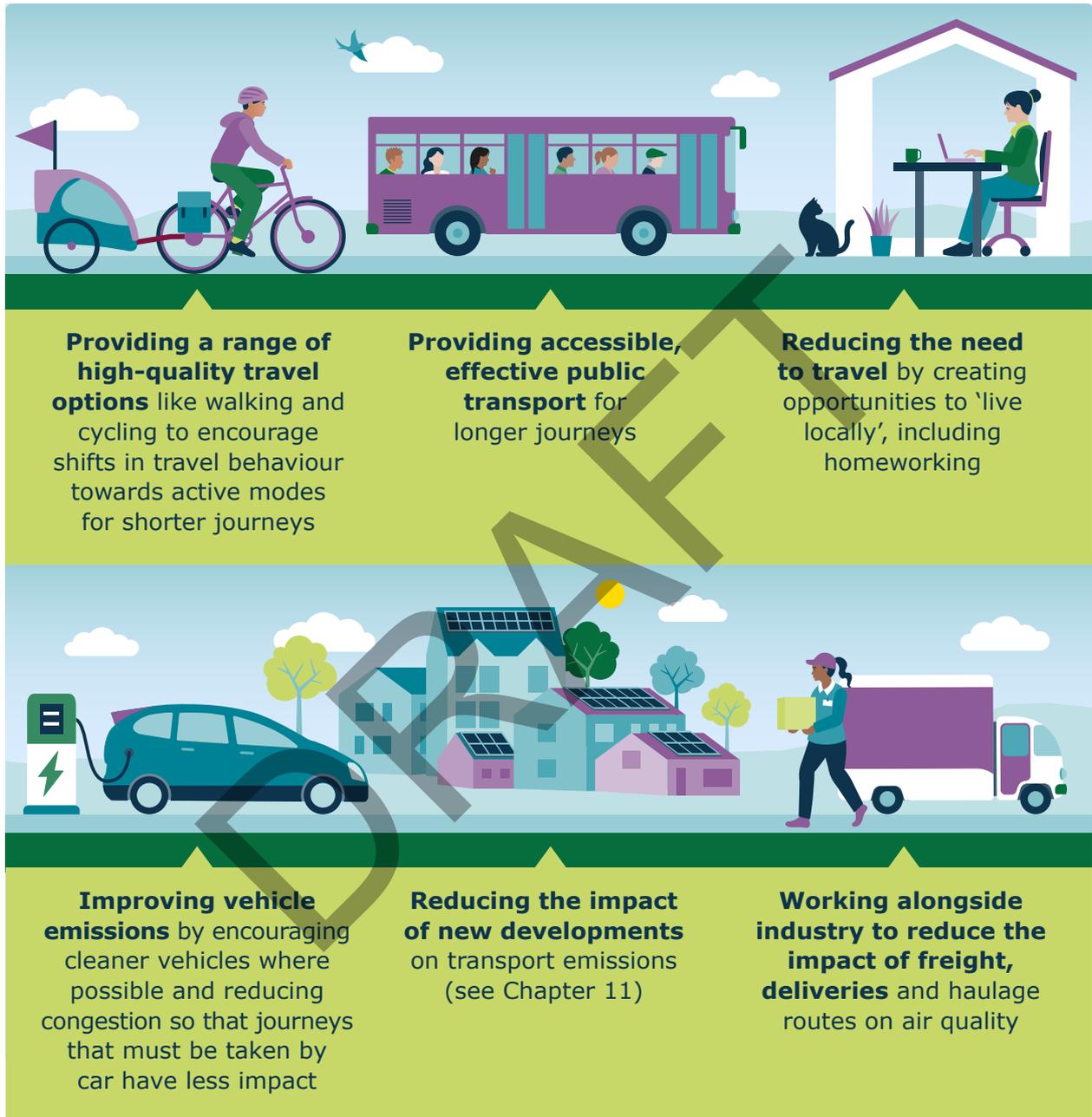
Road traffic emissions have reduced substantially in recent years due to actions and abatement measures that New Forest District Council and Hampshire County Council have implemented, combined with technological advances prompted by vehicle emission standards and other measures and policies enacted by the UK government.

However, **road transport is still the largest source of emissions of NO_x and NO₂ in the New Forest and is a major contributor to particulate emissions.** Just under two-thirds of NO_x pollution in the New Forest comes from road transport, and the highest measured NO₂ concentrations are still seen along major roads.

While the largest contributors to air pollution in the New Forest are private cars, heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) can also be important in areas such as the port, industrial sites, and the oil refinery.

To safeguard the health and wellbeing of everybody who lives and works in the New Forest, we need to continue reducing emissions through a variety of approaches.

Figure 10-1: Ways that we can reduce road traffic emissions



10.2 WHAT ARE WE DOING NOW?

Our transport priorities are set out in several local and regional plans. These outline the local requirements of their respective areas in terms of infrastructure and behavioural change requirements to achieve lower transport emissions and congestion. Policy C8 of the Hampshire Local Transport Plan 4²⁶ gives detail on how Hampshire County Council is managing the harmful health effects of poor air quality.



Enhancing walking and cycling

Shifting to walking and cycling can reduce congestion, improve physical and mental health by encouraging healthier lifestyles and help address air pollution and the climate crisis. **In Hampshire, 1 in 6 commuting trips are less than 1.25 miles, but 51% of these are made by car.**

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans are a strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required at the local level including proposed cycling network improvements and identifying important walking centres. The Waterside Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan is now complete, and we have partnered with Hampshire County Council and the New Forest National Park Authority to produce a Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan for the entire District and National Park. We will support the introduction of new infrastructure by promoting active travel and supporting schemes to make it easier to use active travel as set out in Chapter 6.

²⁶ Hampshire County Council (2024) Local Transport Plan 4. Available at <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/localtransportplan>

Using the planning system to manage and improve emissions

The New Forest District area is covered by two local plans, prepared by New Forest District Council and the New Forest National Park Authority respectively. New Forest District Council's statutory environmental health responsibilities cover the whole of the New Forest District and our Environmental Health team are a consultee on relevant planning applications within the New Forest District area of the National Park.

Objective SO2 of the Local Plan Part 1 (2020)²⁷ is to manage and where possible reduce or mitigate activities that unacceptably impact on air quality. Policy CCC1 builds on this by being clear that development should not result in pollution or hazards which prejudice the health and safety of communities and their environments, including air quality. It seeks to ensure that appropriate measures are required to prevent, control, mitigate or offset the impacts or risks of development on community health and safety. We require new developments to prioritise safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle access, linking to existing pedestrian networks where possible. Wherever there are existing footpaths, cycle routes, or public transport access to a proposed development, these are required to be retained and improved by the development. We also seek to ensure that development is built in the right place in accessible locations near public transport and services in order to reduce the need to travel by car.

In addition, new developments that may have additional mitigation needs will be required to produce a Travel Plan, setting out measures to promote and encourage sustainable travel.

New Forest District Council's planning guidance on Parking Standards (2022)²⁸ also requires developers to enable the convenient installation of charging points for electric vehicles in residential properties. Furthermore, the council's guidance on Planning for Climate Change (2024)²⁹ seeks net zero carbon development which produces lower carbon emissions (and related particulates) through reduced space heating demand. Related installation of renewable energy generation (e.g. photovoltaic panels) is also encouraged.

Promoting active travel for visitors

The New Forest receives a large number of visitors, 96% of whom arrive by car. As part of our plan to reduce traffic on our roads, we are encouraging these visitors to use public transport or active travel links into the New Forest as well as within the National Park. This includes sustainable travel options such as the New Forest Tour.

The New Forest contains more than 100 miles of waymarked cycle routes, much of it off the public highway and traffic-free. The National Park highlights popular cycle routes and highlights the locations of cycle hire shops in the area.³⁰

We are also promoting active travel for our residents, as described in Chapter 6.

27 New Forest (2016) Local Plan 2016-2036, [Local Plan 2016-2036 Part One FINAL.pdf \(newforest.gov.uk\)](#)

28 New Forest (2022) Parking Standards SPD, [Parking Standards SPD April 2022.pdf \(newforest.gov.uk\)](#)

29 New Forest (2024) Climate Change SPD, [Climate Change SPD Adopted April 2024.pdf \(newforest.gov.uk\)](#)

30 Forestry England (2021) Cycle routes map: The New Forest National Park. Available at: https://www.forestryengland.uk/sites/default/files/documents/New-Forest_Cycle-Routes-Map_2021_0.pdf

Enhancing public transport

For many people, public transport provides an essential means of getting around for their daily lives, and using public transport can reduce congestion and road traffic emissions. Our goal is to work with stakeholders to **make public transport more attractive, cheaper, and accessible to more people**, as the first choice for medium and longer journeys.

Recent schemes include improving bus stops with Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) in Totton and Hythe, improvements to bus lanes and crossing points in Marchwood, and accessibility improvements at Totton Rail Station.

Reducing the need for travel

Avoiding carbon-intensive activities by providing opportunities to 'live locally' as set out in the Hampshire Local Transport Plan 4 can significantly reduce both the number and length of journeys made every day, leading to significant carbon savings and cleaner air. This includes not only transportation and placemaking improvements, but also expanding digital and mobile connectivity. This will allow residents, particularly those in rural areas, to access jobs, services, and other opportunities and activities online from home if they choose. These priorities are echoed in the Waterside Transport Strategy and Action Plan, with the additional focus of sustainable cargo transport, particularly through the development of rail links to the Waterside area, reducing the dependence on polluting HGVs.

10.3 WHAT WILL WE DO NEXT?

Utilise current road infrastructure to reduce congestion and improve air quality in the locality

Hampshire County Council has identified **reducing congestion, improving accessibility, and improving road safety** on the A326, A35 and A337 as a key objective. As part of this bid to reduce congestion, there will also be an investigation into capacity improvements on the M3, M27 and A31, to allow for smoother traffic flows throughout the New Forest.

Additional improvements could include adding cycling lanes or carrying out measures to improve traffic flow on key roads in the area.

Continue to improve our walking and cycling infrastructure

Actions to encourage a shift to active travel could include installing more bicycle parking in key hubs and ensuring connectivity between our different cycle and walking routes. We will work with stakeholders to investigate opportunities to reallocate road space away from vehicles to walking and cycling healthy streets.

We will continue to work with the County Council, the New Forest National Park Authority and Forestry England to improve our walking and cycling infrastructure and develop our Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan to **make travelling on foot or by bike as pleasant and convenient as possible**.

Work with Hampshire County Council to increase reach of public transport services

By **increasing the reach of public transport services** and reaching more rural communities, we will work with Hampshire County Council to enable more people to switch to public transport, reducing the need for private vehicle journeys.

This could be achieved by expanding the public transport services, including supporting additional routes, increasing the frequency of bus and rail services, and making improvements to morning, evening, and Sunday services. The new Hampshire Local Transport Plan 4²⁶ and the Hampshire Enhanced Partnership Plan³¹ set out Hampshire Council's plan for improving bus services.

In the longer term, we will support the County Council in exploring more flexible and responsive public transport options to increase the reach of our public transport services.

Reduce emissions from council vehicles

Vehicles are significant contributors to air pollution in the New Forest, so we need to reduce vehicle emissions to ensure the health of our residents and visitors. We will lead by example and will **replace our vehicle fleet with low emission vehicles** as part of our commitment to achieve Net Zero by 2050. We will also seek out opportunities to optimise the total number of trips made by our vehicles and ensure that staff are driving in an efficient and effective manner, reducing fuel use, and avoiding excessive braking where possible, as per the council's Fleet Management Protocol (2024).

Improve infrastructure for electric vehicles

We will seek out opportunities to improve infrastructure for electric vehicles to make it easier to own an electric vehicle in the New Forest. We currently have approximately 60 EV chargers in New Forest District Council car parks, and we will continuously support our partners in assessing the localised need to increase this capacity to make sure that chargers are installed in the right places. We will work with commercial partners and Hampshire County Council to bid for government funding to deliver rapid charging points.

Reduce impacts from freight on air quality

Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) can be a significant contributor to air pollutant emissions in areas with high numbers of deliveries such as the port, industrial sites, warehouses and the oil refinery. We will continue to work collaboratively with local industry to find ways to minimise the impact of vital freight, deliveries and haulage routes on air quality.

³¹ Hampshire County Council (2022) Hampshire Enhanced Partnership Plan, <https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/documents/s91773/Appendix%201.pdf>

11

Reducing the impact of new developments



11.1 NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND AIR QUALITY

New Forest District Council is working to enhance quality of life for local residents and provide more housing and infrastructure to meet both local needs and national policy objectives.

However, **new developments can put pressure on local air quality**, both from the pollution generated during construction and from heating and traffic pollution generated once the developments are complete. Successful developments strike the right balance between growth and conservation, so it is important that the impact of construction and new developments is kept to a minimum.

11.2 WHAT ARE WE DOING NOW?

Planning

Our **Air Quality in New Developments Supplementary Planning Document**³² guides developers on how they should incorporate sustainable development and air quality within their designs. As part of the planning process, developers are required to submit a detailed report assessing the impact of their proposed development on local air quality and propose mitigation measures to minimise emissions. This includes impacts from additional transport to and from the new development, emissions associated with heat and power required by the new development, and emissions from any onsite processes.

Our **Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document**³³ provides guidance for developers on how they should minimise their climate change impact through reducing energy demand. Specifically, the developer should demonstrate how they have considered and plan to mitigate emissions during construction.

The New Forest District also covers the majority of the National Park, which is subject to different planning policies prepared by the New Forest National Park Authority. The planning policies for the National Park area seek to protect the environment of the New Forest from the adverse impacts associated with traffic and other forms of air pollution.³⁴

Protecting our natural environment

Our National Park that covers large parts of the district, together with other protected designations (including part of the Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs National Landscape and a range of international nature conservation designations), help to preserve our area's beauty and character. However, this also represents a challenge when finding locations for new homes and infrastructure.

Within the borders of the National Park, habitat conditions are monitored at sites close to main roads. We use monitoring equipment as well as regular ecological field work, ensuring nitrogen and ammonia levels do not exceed critical thresholds.

32 New Forest District Council (2022) Air Quality Assessments in New Development: Supplementary Planning Document, https://www.newforest.gov.uk/media/2726/Air-Quality-SPD/pdf/Air_Quality_SPD_FINAL_Version_June_2022.pdf

33 New Forest District Council (2024) Planning for Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), <https://newforest.gov.uk/article/3591/Planning-for-Climate-Change-Supplementary-Planning-Document-SPD>

34 New Forest National Park. (2024) Planning. Available at: <https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/planning/>

These plans and strategies help to protect and promote green space in the New Forest:

- **The Corporate Plan**³⁵ sets out how the council aims to balance growth with conservation efforts.
- **The New Forest District Council Tree Strategy 2020-2025**³⁶ seeks to promote, enhance, and protect all trees growing on any and all land owned or managed by the council.
- **The New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016-2036**³⁷ lays out requirements for new development within the National Park.

Council housing

We manage over 5,000 properties, and programmes to deliver at least 600 new council homes by 2026 are currently underway.

Improving and maintaining the energy efficiency of these dwellings is important both to reduce heating costs and to limit carbon and air pollutant emissions. We are heavily involved in ensuring the housing stock owned by the council is properly maintained, with planned maintenance programmes worth £6m per year for replacing doors, windows, and roofs for better insulation.

A total of 2,884 energy efficiency measures have been installed in our council housing, with 1,330 of these aimed at heating efficiency through air source heat pumps, photovoltaic schemes, window and door replacements, and insulation.

11.3 WHAT WILL WE DO NEXT?

New opportunities for growth have the potential to drive significant development over the coming decades. The Solent Freeport, one of 12 UK freeports, is expected to drive significant economic growth in our area as the majority of land which makes up the Solent Freeport tax sites is within the New Forest district. This could include the future development of the Dibden Bay area.

It is important that we respond robustly and effectively to new plans to make sure that they deliver benefits to the New Forest while protecting the environment.

Review and monitor our existing policies to ensure that they remain effective

We will use our annual work plans to identify any changes in national air quality guidance or legislation to ensure we are following best practice. We will also use our monitoring data to benchmark our air quality and refine our strategies to maximise their impact on improving air quality.

³⁵ New Forest District Council (2024) Corporate Plan 2024 to 2028 <https://www.newforest.gov.uk/corporateplan>

³⁶ New Forest District Council (2020) Tree Strategy, <https://newforest.gov.uk/media/647/tree-strategy-2020-25/pdf/tree-strategy-2020-25.pdfvc>

³⁷ New Forest National Park (2019) Local Plan 2016–2036 <https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/planning/local-plan/>

Review how we respond to planning applications

We will review how we provide air quality advice and our requirements for appropriate assessment and agreed mitigation measures to ensure that we are minimising the impact of development.

Work closely with the New Forest National Park Authority and neighbouring local authorities to share expertise, resources, and best practice

Sharing resources will allow us to help tackle air quality on a regional level. We hope to align our approach to planning and permitting for new developments across the District, including the National Park area, and contribute to the development of air quality policies across the region to address regional air quality challenges.

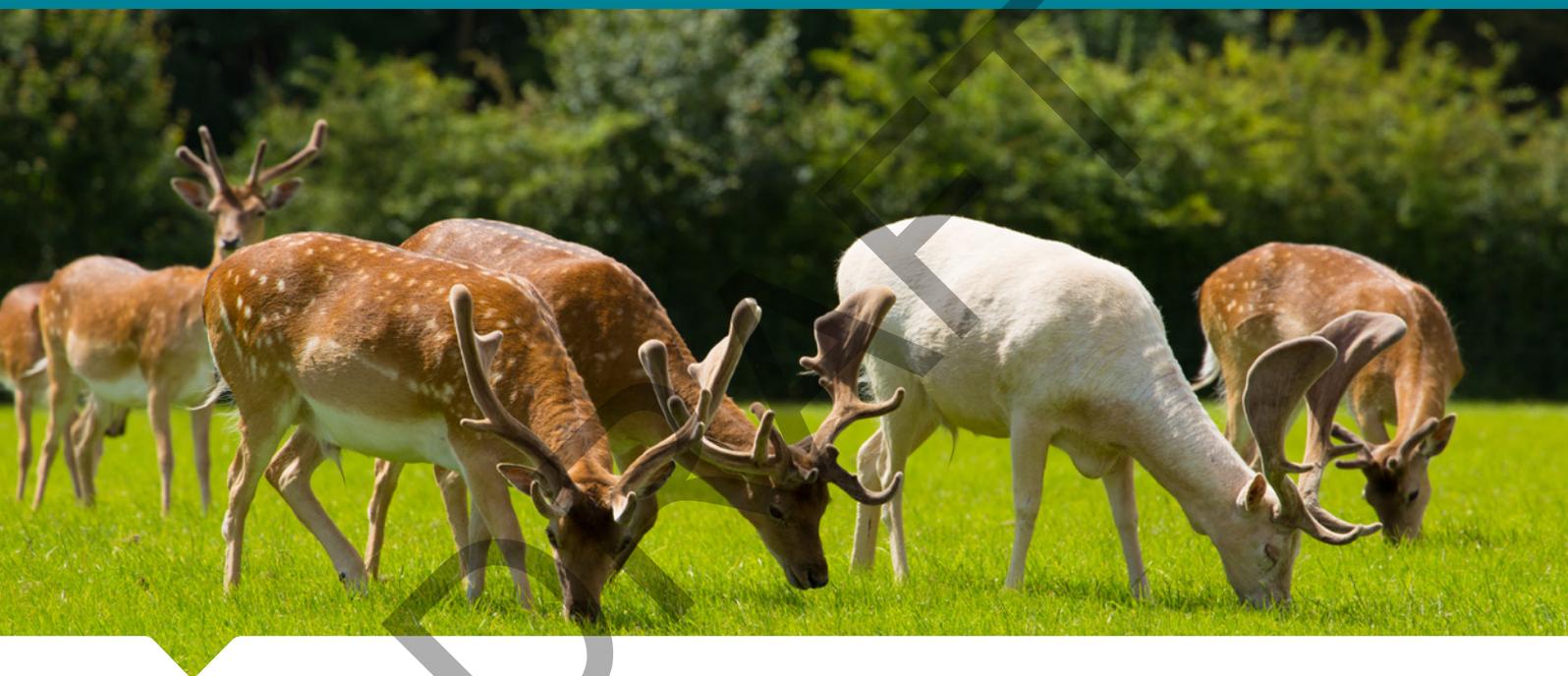
Engage with businesses to help them achieve net-zero emissions

We will seek out opportunities to engage with businesses to help them achieve net-zero emissions, and work with other Council teams to make sure these schemes deliver co-benefits for air quality where possible. This can include providing incentives, support, and guidance to businesses on implementing sustainable practices, adopting cleaner technologies, and reducing carbon and air quality footprints.

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12

Where to find more information



Please refer to the following list of tools and resources to find out more information on actions being taken by the New Forest District Council to improve air quality, the state of air quality in the New Forest, and how air pollution impacts health and wellbeing.

Tool / resource	Description	Link
New Forest District Council	Provides information on air quality monitoring in the New Forest, and provides access to air quality reports	https://www.newforest.gov.uk/airquality
New Forest Corporate Plan	Provides context for the policies on air quality in the new forest	Corporate plan 2024 to 2028.pdf (newforest.gov.uk)
New Forest District Council Monitoring Data	A map of the data collected by the continuous air quality monitoring stations in the New Forest	https://www.airqualityengland.co.uk/local-authority/?la_id=236

Tool / resource	Description	Link
Air Quality in New Developments in the New Forest	Provides information on the adoption of, and measures contained within the Air Quality Supplementary Planning Document	https://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/2934/Air-Quality-in-New-Development
New Forest Waterside Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan	Provides information on the ongoing development in the Waterside area to improve the walking and cycling experience	https://documents.hants.gov.uk/transportWatersideTransportStrategy-ETEDecisionDayReportAppendix.pdf
New Forest National Park Cycling Routes	Contains maps of cycling routes in the New Forest National Park	https://www.forestryengland.uk/sites/default/files/documents/New-Forest_Cycle-Routes-Map_2021_0.pdf
New Forest National Park – Sustainable Transport	Details the investments made by the National Park in sustainable travel schemes and infrastructure	https://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/conservation/climate-and-nature-emergency/sustainable-transport/
The Environment Centre – Wood Burning	Provides information on wood burning, and how to burn better	https://environmentcentre.com/wood-burning/
The Environment Centre – Campaign for Cleaner Air	Contains information about the ongoing cleaner air campaign related to the use of log burners in the New Forest	https://environmentcentre.com/the-environment/clean-air/
Hampshire County Council – Climate Change Strategy	Provides information on the County's Climate Change Strategy	https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/environment/climatechange
UK Health Security Agency	Provides information about the health impacts of air pollution	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-air-pollution/health-matters-air-pollution
Defra Air Pollution Forecast	Defra's air pollution forecast tool provides the latest outlook for air quality across the UK	https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/forecasting/

Cabinet - 5 February 2025

Housing Landlord Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Strategy

Purpose	For decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>Under Section 218A of the Housing Act 1996 local housing authorities, as landlords, are required to prepare and publish policies and procedures in relation to ASB.</p> <p>The Social Housing Regulation Act (2023) places additional focus on housing landlords to prevent and tackle ASB.</p> <p>The ASB strategy and accompanying ASB Policy, Hate Crime Policy & Good Neighbourhood Management Policy aim to give a clear statement on the Council’s approach to how it responds to reports, and the way the Council intends to work with residents and relevant partner organisations to combat these challenging areas.</p> <p>The Strategy will formalise the Council’s vision and commitments to preventing, responding to, and tackling ASB once adopted.</p>
Recommendation	That Cabinet supports the process for implementing the ASB Strategy and approves the draft Strategy for public consultation.
Reasons for recommendation	<p>The Regulator of Social Housing launched its new regulatory framework on 1 April 2024. The new Regulatory standards relating to ASB are contained within the Customer Standards including Neighbourhood and Community Standards, Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard and the Tenants Satisfaction Measure Standards, which stipulate:</p> <p>Safer Neighbourhoods standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered providers must have a policy on how they work with relevant organisations

	<p>to deter and tackle ASB in the neighbourhoods where they provide social housing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered providers must clearly set out their approach for how they tackle and deter hate incidents in neighbourhoods where they provide social housing. Registered providers must enable ASB to be reported easily and keep tenants informed about the progress of their case. Registered providers must provide prompt and appropriate action in response to ASB, having regard to the full range of tools and legal powers available to them. Registered providers must support tenants who are affected by ASB, including by signposting them to agencies who can give them appropriate support and assistance. <p>The Council's current ASB Policy was adopted in 2013. Subsequently there has been a significant shift in legislation, regulation, and good practice.</p>
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Steve Davies – Housing and Homelessness
Strategic Director(s)	Richard Knott – Housing and Communities
Officer Contact	Chris Pike ASB & Neighbourhood Manager 02380 285512 Chris.pike@nfdc.gov.uk

Introduction and background

- Under Section 218A of the Housing Act 1996 local housing authorities, as landlords, are required to prepare and publish policies and procedures in relation to ASB.
- The Council's housing service is the largest social housing landlord in the district. NFDC has a significant role to play in managing our estates, neighbourhoods and communities to ensure that they are

safe and welcoming environments that encourage harmony amongst all residents. To do so, the housing service must continue to develop preventative measures and early intervention measures to prevent ASB occurring and escalating.

3. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Regulatory Framework for local housing authorities is clear that as a landlord, the Council is required to deter and tackle ASB, and deter hate incidents in our neighbourhoods where we provide social housing.
4. The proposed strategy (Annex 1) sets out the Council's priorities and approach to preventing and improving the co-ordinated response to housing related ASB, which builds on the longstanding work of the Safer New Forest Partnership. The Partnership will continue to take a strategic overview of Crime and ASB within the New Forest District area involving all our partners and commissioned services - including the Council's landlord services.
5. The landlord ASB strategy is based on 4 strategic priorities:
 - Prevention & early intervention.
 - Managing risk and supporting Victims.
 - Work in partnership.
 - Putting tenants first.
6. The strategy has been developed based on the current legislative and regulatory requirements as well as current best practice, such as the recent housing ombudsman spotlight reports, written in response to complaints raised by tenants.
7. The strategy proposes that the council formally defines ASB as outlined in the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 Part 1 (S2):
 - a) ***conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm, or distress to any person,***
 - b) ***conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises, or,***
 - c) ***conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.***
8. Under the council's current ASB Policy the adopted definition for ASB is modelled on the definition in Section 1 (1) of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 which defines ASB as "***Acting in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress***

to one or more persons not of the same household as himself”.

9. Whilst it is difficult to define ASB (as it is based on different views and tolerance) the definition under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 as set out above, is widely accepted by housing providers and the Courts as the most suitable definition for ASB.

It is therefore recommended the Council adopts this definition and the ASB Policy 2013 is updated to reflect this.

10. The draft strategy has been through informal staff consultation and whilst feedback from staff (including the Community Safety Team) was limited to minor changes to wording, overall, the feedback from the staff was supportive of the priorities and commitments.
11. The strategy is proposed to be formally adopted by Council, following external consultation. The portfolio holder is due to approve the proposed ASB Policy, Good Neighbourhood Management Policy and Hate Crime Policy as agreed by the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel. In normal circumstances the strategy consultation would influence any policy and procedures. However, there is a risk in this approach as the Council’s current ASB Policy was adopted in 2013, and whilst in many ways the Policy remains workable it is outdated, and the response to hate crimes are not sufficiently covered.
12. The 2013 Policy adopts a “low tolerance” approach to Nuisance and ASB. “Low tolerance” is not defined in the policy leaving it open to interpretation. Nuisance is generally a term used by Environmental protection when referring to a “statutory nuisance” and it is not mentioned in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998’s definition of ASB. For this reason, most landlords have moved away from a “low tolerance” approach favouring either a “harm based” or “risk based” approach (where actions are determined via a risk assessment or harm matrix), most landlords will also make it clear what types of reports will be consider “anti-social”, “unreasonable” or a “nuisance”.
13. The 2013 Policy refers to the Council being a signatory to the RESPECT standard and charter. This standard was developed by the Department of Communities and Local Government in 2006. This has been superseded, most recently by the new regulatory framework on 1 April 2024, and the current policy has not kept up with other changes.

14. The updated ASB Policy has incorporated the current best practice which has been championed by the Regulator and Housing Ombudsman. This includes all ASB tools and powers available to the council - such as the use of Community Protection Notices / warnings and criminal behaviour orders which have replaced the "ASBO". It will need to be again updated to reflect the upcoming changes in the forthcoming Crime and Policing Bill, where "respect orders" will be partially replacing existing Civil Injunction powers for adults, to ensure a wider range of penalties as breaches will be dealt with in the criminal courts, alongside the new power of arrest.
15. The Regulator of Social Housing & Housing Ombudsman Service has strengthened their investigative approach, and their response to landlord failings. Landlords have been notified of the increase in expected standards in a series of special reports from the Housing Ombudsman, who have published landlord complaints where evidence of maladministration has been found, with a large focus on ASB complaints from tenants.

In particular:

- The Ombudsman Spotlight on Noise complaints report
 - The Ombudsman Spotlight on Attitudes, respect, and rights
 - The Ombudsman Spotlight on Knowledge and Information Management report.
16. Through these reports the Ombudsman has recommended that landlords provide a clear statement of the Council's approach to ASB and the way it intends to work with residents and relevant, organisations to combat what is largely a social behavioural problem. It is clear that landlords should **support victims** and follow **a risk-based approach** to reports of ASB.
 17. The ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014 states that it is good practice for agencies to assess the risk of harm to the victim, and any potential vulnerabilities, when they receive a complaint about ASB. This should be the starting point of a case management approach to dealing with ASB complaints.
 18. The suite of policies comply with Ombudsman findings and regulatory requirements, providing a commitment to this risk-based approach in relation to cases of ASB.
 19. In addition to the best practice guidance, and specifically in the ombudsman spotlight on noise, landlords have been repeatedly instructed to formalise their position on reports that don't meet the threshold to be reasonably considered ASB. In the Ombudsman 'Spotlight on Noise' complaints report they state:

“Landlords should have a proactive good neighbourhood management policy, distinct to the ASB policy, with a clear suite of options for maintaining good neighbourhood relationships and a matrix for assessing which option is the most appropriate. These options should include mediation, information sharing and community building events and, where appropriate, dedicated staffing. This will ensure that low level issues of neighbour friction are dealt with at the appropriate levels and not inappropriately handled as potential ASB. Landlords should engage residents in the development of the good neighbourhood management policy, including residents who have recently raised a formal complaint with the landlord, to assure themselves that it reflects the expectations of residents and will be effective.”

20. The updated ASB, new Hate Crime and new Good Neighbourhood Management Policies therefore seek to clarify the council’s position on reports that are not considered ASB and what as a landlord NFDC will do to support tenants and residents around reports that may still cause a great deal of upset or harm. This is outlined in the Good Neighbourhood Management commitments.
21. Whilst the Hate Crime Policy is separate to the ASB policy, all these Policies should be read in parallel. The Hate Crime policy is designed to give a clear statement on how NFDC will respond to reports classed as hateful. This approach is often more supportive and focuses on the victims’ needs and restorative Justice.
22. To reflect this change of approach, a new “How to be a good neighbour” leaflet has been developed, the NFDC website has been [updated](#), and new system processes are being introduced.
23. New staff response and case management processes have already been actioned to ensure the Council’s operational response to ASB reports mirrors the policy and data requirements of the new regulatory regime.
24. A new Neighbourhood Team has been created within existing budgets. Led by the Housing ASB & Neighbourhoods Manager this team will focus solely on the individual response to ASB reports as well as being a visible presence on estates and communal buildings.
25. Any policy changes resulting from the delivery of strategic actions will be incorporated into annual policy reviews.

Corporate plan priorities

26. Priority 2: Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives. The Corporate Plan 2024-28 states that delivery of this priority will be supported by the delivery of a new Anti-social behaviour strategy.

Options appraisal

27. The full range of policy requirements have been considered and it is deemed appropriate and proportionate for NFDC to publish the full suite of policies required by best practice and the regulatory framework.

Consultation undertaken

28. Informal consultation on draft ASB Strategy priorities and policies took place earlier this year with internal staff. Consultation responses supported the draft proposals. Formal strategy consultation is proposed in due course.
29. The draft policies have been shared with TIG and consultation responses supported the draft proposals. Formal strategy consultation is proposed in due course.
30. The Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 22 January 2025, considered the draft Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy and associated draft policies. Members fully supported the recommendation to Cabinet seeking approval of the draft Strategy for public consultation and the process for implementing the strategy.

Financial and resource implications

31. Any expenditure required by the proposed strategy and policies will be met from existing budgets, which are provided to Housing Officers to tackle neighbourhood and community issues.
32. Failure to raise standards, meet regulatory requirements and respond appropriately to complaints could lead to fines and compensation levied by the Housing Ombudsman.

Legal implications

33. Under Section 218A of the Housing Act 1996 local housing authorities, as landlords, are required to prepare and publish policies and procedures in relation to ASB.

34. The Regulator of Social Housing launched its new regulatory framework on 1 April 2024 which outlines our requirements as a social housing provider.
35. The Policy supports appropriate legal remedies to tackle ASB where non-legal remedies have failed. This will involve action taken through the courts and solicitors.

Risk assessment

36. The delivery of this strategy mitigates legal and financial risk to the Council.
37. The work of Officers in working in difficult circumstances, and priority of response to reports from vulnerable people is risk assessed in line with H&S and lone working procedures and the specific needs of high-risk individuals.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

38. Whilst the report has no direct implications the work of the new Housing Neighbourhood team will include improving the condition of local housing neighbourhoods, including open spaces, and the positive contribution to neighbourhoods. This may present opportunities to contribute to the Council's neighbourhood and climate objectives.

Equalities implications

39. The proposed strategy and policies improve the response to ASB and hate crimes for victims of such behaviour. Reports of ASB are more often made by vulnerable people, and those with protected characteristics. The reporting process considers the needs of people with different backgrounds and needs, and a flexible and priority-based approach is defined by the policies, and the Council's aims are to positively support vulnerable people.

Crime and disorder implications

40. It is anticipated there will be potential indirect and direct positive impacts on the Council's tenants and neighbourhoods. The interventions proposed are likely to lead to an initial increase in the number of cases prosecuted in the courts, or by the Police, whilst long term interventions proposed should lead to a long-term reduction in crime and disorder.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

41. The collection, retention and deletion of Tenant data is governed by GDPR and associated guidance. All data will be collected and maintained in line with the required legislation.

New Forest National Park / Cranborne Chase National Landscape implications

42. The new approach to ensuring the Housing Service positively contributes to housing neighbourhoods may involve increased partnership working with the National Park Authority where the Council's housing stock is also located.

Conclusion

43. The strategy will inform a longer-term framework of service delivery and partnering with local agencies and support in aligning our goals and resources with the corporate plan objectives.
44. The Policies are required in the shorter-term at a service level to improve service delivery and outcomes. Once the strategy is fully adopted the Policies will be updated in line with any changes required and will be continuously reviewed.
45. The Strategic Director for Housing and Communities will have authority to make amendments in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Housing and Homelessness.
46. The policies will support the Council by:
 - Meeting the expectations of the regulatory framework,
 - Providing Neighbourhood Housing Officers a best practice procedural framework to follow
 - Providing tenants with a transparent victim centred process that seeks to resolve their reports with a range of measure to help resolve their case.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – ASB Strategy 2025-2029

Background Papers:

[Spotlight Noise complaints](#)
[October 2022](#)

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NFDC Housing Landlord

ASB Strategy 2025- 2029

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Contents

Foreword.....	4
Introduction	5
What is Housing related Anti-Social Behaviour?	5
Definition:	6
National context.....	7
ASB Action Plan.....	8
Community Safety Partnerships review and Anti-Social Behaviour Powers	8
Regulatory Framework	8
Safer Neighbourhoods standards.....	10
Tenant Satisfaction Measures Standards (TSMs).....	11
Housing Ombudsman Services.....	11
Local context	12
What we know.....	12
Stock and Tenancy Type	12
ASB Data.....	12
Tenant Satisfaction Measure Data	14
Safer New Forest Partnership	14
Why this is important for New Forest Resident Services & Tenants.....	15
Tracking data	16
Corporate Plan 2024-2028	17
Our Current Approach to ASB & Neighbour Nuisance	17
Achievements to date.....	19
Our vision and strategy are built on 4 Strategic priorities	20
Managing risk and supporting victims	20
Prevention & early intervention.....	20
Work in partnership.....	20
Putting tenants first	20
Strategic Priority 1.....	22
Prevention & early intervention.....	22
Strategic Priority 2:	23
Managing risk and supporting victims	23
Strategic Priority 3.....	24
Work in partnership.....	24
Strategic Priority 4.....	25
Putting tenants first	25

Monitoring and review26
Measure of success26
Annexe 1: Strategy Action Plan28
Priority 1, Prevention & early intervention28
Priority 2, Managing risk and supporting victims31
Priority 3, Work in partnership.....32
Priority 4, Putting tenants first.....34

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Foreword

I am delighted to introduce this new Housing Landlord Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Strategy for New Forest District Council's (NFDC) housing tenants.

We understand the negative impact ASB can have on our communities and on individual residents. No-one should live in fear of intimidation from neighbours or others from within their street/ neighbourhoods. Too often ASB is referred to as a 'low level' crime or behaviour that should just be tolerated. Police, local authorities, and community agencies all have responsibilities to tackle ASB by working together to help victims.

Whilst no single organisation holds the key to resolving or preventing ASB, this strategy lays down the Council's Housing Service's commitments to take steps towards preventing ASB, supporting victims of ASB, investigating ASB and when necessary, ensuring that we have the necessary mechanisms in place to take rigorous action as a landlord.

ASB is not solely an issue for our tenants, but it is important that we acknowledge our role as the largest social housing provider in the district and the responsibilities we have for keeping our tenants safe and well in their homes. This strategy builds on the work already undertaken in our district through effective community safety partnership arrangements, including the longstanding and effective work of the Safer New Forest Partnership.

I am pleased therefore that this strategy aims to deliver 4 key priorities which will raise the profile of our work to prevent and tackle ASB but is also victim centered and has a clear commitment to continuous improvement and enhancing partnership working.

[insert photo and signature]
Councillor Steve Davies
Portfolio Holder for Housing Services

Introduction

This strategy responds to a changing legislative and regulatory landscape, as well as feedback from our residents on how we have managed previous reports of ASB, and how living through ASB feels to our residents.

The Regulator for Social Housing has led the implementation of a new regulatory regime, including a tenants' charter and consumer standards which provide clear guidance on the role of landlords. In response to these changes and the feedback from our residents the Council has developed a strategy to deliver effective prevention and support initiatives.

As the largest landlord in the district NFDC has a significant role to play in managing our estates and neighbourhoods to ensure that they are a safe and welcoming environment and one where we encourage harmony to all our residents. In doing this we must continue to develop preventative measures and early intervention measures to prevent ASB occurring and escalating.

This strategy sets out the Council's priorities to preventing and responding to ASB, building on the longstanding work of the Safer New Forest Partnership, which will continue to take a strategic overview of Crime and ASB within the New Forest District involving all our partners and commissioned services, including the Council's landlord services.

As a landlord, we are responsible for supporting our tenants who may be victims of Anti-Social Behaviour as well as taking swift and effective action where a perpetrator is our tenant.

Our primary funding is from the Housing Revenue Account, which via income from tenants' rents funds all housing related services and facilities. Therefore, any service relating to Anti-Social Behaviour must primarily be for the benefit of our own tenants or related to our housing management functions.

What is Housing related Anti-Social Behaviour?

Housing Related ASB is defined as activity that affects our housing management functions.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) is a term which covers a broad range of issues and there are several definitions for it. The general agreement is that it is defined as 'anything causing a nuisance or annoyance.'

Definition:

The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Police Act 2014 Part 1 section 2 defines the meaning of ASB as:

a) conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm, or distress to any person,

(b) conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises, or

(c) conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.

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National context

There is considerable emphasis placed on the Police, Councils and Housing providers by Central Government on ASB and the methods used to tackle it. This focus began in 1998 via the Crime and Policing Act with the introduction of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs). The Crime and Policing Act described ASB as ***“Causing or likely to cause harassment, alarm, or distress to one or more person not of the same household as the perpetrator.”***

In 2003 Central Government set up the Anti-Social Behaviour unit, launched the Anti-Social Behaviour Together action plan and introduced the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. The accompanying guidance outlined the process for tackling ASB via **respect** and **responsibility**. It provided Local Authorities and the Police with a wider and more flexible range of powers to meet their existing responsibilities.

From a social housing perspective, the changes included developing the use of injunctions and demoted tenancies. It included provisions to deal with noise nuisance and introduced closure powers on premises that were being used for drug dealing, it defined ASB to ensure reports were acted upon, as well as stressing the importance of collecting data on ASB and using this to support any community response.

In 2014 The ASB Crime and Policing Act was introduced with the aim of providing simpler, more effective powers to tackle ASB, that would provide better protection for victims and communities. This Act split the definition of ASB to cover the different legal tools available to both the Police and Local Authorities. The Definition under Section 1 of the act became widely recognised by Housing Providers as the definition for Anti-Social Behaviour. Statutory guidance was published in 2019 which focused on the importance of tackling the impact of Anti-Social behaviour and the effect this has on victims and on victim’s needs.

In 2022 National Government published five ASB principles, which are:

1. Victims should be encouraged to report Anti-Social Behaviour and expect to be taken seriously. They should have clear ways to report, have access to help and support to recover, and be given the opportunity to choose restorative approaches to tackling ASB.
2. Agencies will have clear and transparent processes to ensure that victims can report ASB concerns, can understand how the matter will be investigated and are kept well informed of progress once a report is made.

3. Agencies and practitioners will work across boundaries to identify, assess and tackle ASB and its underlying causes. Referral pathways should be clearly set out between services and published locally. This includes pathways for the ASB case review and health services.
4. The public's ASB concerns should always be considered both nationally and locally in strategic needs assessments for community safety. Best practice should be shared through a network of ASB experts within each community safety partnership, each policing area and nationally.
5. Adults and children who exhibit ASB should have the opportunity to take responsibility for their behaviour and repair the harm caused by it. Agencies should deliver appropriate interventions, which may include criminal justice options, based on the seriousness, risks and vulnerabilities of the case.

In March 2023, the national government set out a new approach to working with local agencies to tackle ASB across England and Wales including:

- Increasing the urgency ASB is responded to.
- Changing laws and system to take a zero-tolerance approach to ASB, cracking down on illegal drugs such as cuckooing.
- Increasing Police and other agencies' tools to discourage ASB, such as higher on the spot fines, increase in youth support and filling empty shops and regenerating local parks.

In November 2024 the introduction of "Respect Orders" was announced by the Home Secretary– aiming to address persistent ASB. These new orders will replace existing Civil Injunction powers for adults and introduce tough restrictions on offenders, including bans from certain areas and mandated rehabilitation programmes. Breaches will be criminal offences, enforceable with arrests and potentially leading to significant penalties. The government is presenting this as a robust response to ASB, with stronger powers to seize nuisance vehicles and tackle repeat offenders.

Community Safety Partnerships review and Anti-Social Behaviour Powers

As Part of the ASB Action Plan national government ran a consultation between March and May 2023 which included a focus on how existing ASB Powers could be improved and expanded. The consultation concluded that respondents felt that expanding the powers in the Anti-Social Behaviours,

Crime and Policing Act 2014 would ensure they are used more frequently and consistently to tackle ASB.

Regulatory Framework

Following the tragic event at Grenfell Towers in 2017 the government introduced ***The Charter for Social Housing Residents – Social Housing White Paper 2020*** with the aim to make sure social housing tenants are treated with the respect they deserve. Within this it states that ***“social housing tenants are more likely to experience anti-social behaviour and be victims of crime than those in other tenures.”***

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Regulator for Social Housing Statement:

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) and hate incidents can have a significant negative impact on tenants of social housing, both for those experiencing it directly and for those living in the community where the ASB and hate incidents are occurring.

In order to deter and tackle ASB and hate incidents effectively in areas where they operate, registered providers must work with appropriate partners, with a common aim of trying to reduce ASB and hate incidents. Joint initiatives may include, for example, providing mediation services to try to resolve disputes before they escalate, undertaking security measures and environmental improvements and providing diversionary activities.

It is vital that registered providers have effective policies and processes to tackle ASB and hate incidents, and they should communicate these to tenants. These should include their approaches to investigating reports of ASB and hate incidents (including the roles of other relevant agencies), the support available to affected tenants and the actions they take to deal with perpetrators of ASB and hate incidents.

Registered providers should take into account the diverse needs of tenants in considering how tenants report ASB and hate incidents to them and eliminate any barriers to reporting such incidents.

We expect registered providers to take a victim-centred approach to supporting tenants affected by ASB. This support can take different forms such as, for example, making a referral to an external support agency or taking into account the wishes of the complainant when determining the course of action the provider will take. As part of this approach, registered providers should consider how they support vulnerable perpetrators of ASB, to help them to sustain their tenancy.

The paper introduced 7 new commitments, of which 3 of these relate directly to Housing providers' responsibilities to ASB.

Chapter 2 sets out the requirements for tenants to know how their landlord is performing, setting out new tenant satisfaction measures (TSMs) including how satisfied they are with how their landlord has managed their Anti-Social Behaviour case. Landlord performance data will be published in national league tables allowing for tenants to make meaningful comparisons to be made across the sector for the first time.

Chapter 3 sets out the requirements to have complaints dealt with promptly and fairly, with access to a strong ombudsman.

Chapter 6 sets out the requirements for tenants to have good quality homes and neighbourhoods to live in, within this, landlords must set out to tackle Anti-Social behaviour by enabling tenants to know who is responsible for actioning their reports and who can support and assist them if they are faced with Anti-Social behaviour.

Landlords must also make a positive contribution to the neighbourhood working with local partners and stakeholders.

The Regulator of Social Housing launched its new regulatory framework on 1 April 2024. The Regulatory standards relating to ASB are contained in within the Customer Standards including Neighbourhood and Community Standards, Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard and the Tenants Satisfaction Measure Standards, which stipulate:

Safer Neighbourhoods standards

- *Registered providers must have a policy on how they work with relevant organisations to deter and tackle ASB in the neighbourhoods where they provide social housing.*
- *Registered providers must clearly set out their approach for how they tackle and deter hate incidents in neighbourhoods where they provide social housing.*
- *Registered providers must enable ASB to be reported easily and keep tenants informed about the progress of their case.*
- *Registered providers must provide prompt and appropriate action in response to ASB, having regard to the full range of tools and legal powers available to them.*
- *Registered providers must support tenants who are affected by ASB, including by signposting them to agencies who can give them appropriate support and assistance.*

Tenant Satisfaction Measures Standards (TSMs)

- Registered providers must collect and provide information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlord's performance in managing their homes and neighbourhoods.

This places a requirement on landlords to publish performance on the number of ASB cases relative to the size of the landlord (NM01) and 'How satisfied or dissatisfied tenants are with New Forest Director Council's approach to handling Anti-Social Behaviour.

Housing Ombudsman Services

The Regulator of Social Housing & Housing Ombudsman Service has strengthened their investigative approach, and their response to failings. With failings identified by the Ombudsman leading to real change expected by the Regulator.

Landlords have been notified of the increase in expected standards in a series of **special reports from the Housing Ombudsman**, who have published landlord complaints where evidence of maladministration has been found, with a large focus on ASB complaints.

The Housing Ombudsman continue to publish spotlight reports on common failings within the sector including:

- The Ombudsman's Spotlight on Noise complaints report (October 2022)
- The Ombudsman's Spotlight on Knowledge and Information Management report (May 2023)
- The Ombudsman's Spotlight on Attitudes, respect, and rights (January 2024)

The spotlight report on noise complaints made 32 recommendations to tackle the issue, including looking at refurbishment, neighbourhood management and anti-social behaviour policies, allocations and record-keeping, information-sharing, and complaint handling.

Local context

What we know

Stock and Tenancy Type

The council remains the largest provider of housing within the district, managing a stock of over 5,250 socially rented homes. Following the introduction of the Localism Act 2012 and NFDC Tenancy Policy, NFDC no longer routinely offers a secure lifetime tenancy to all tenants. All new tenants will normally be granted an initial Introductory Tenancy. This will usually be followed by a flexible tenancy, referred to as a fixed term tenancy (normally lasting a minimum of 5 years). This period of time provides the Council and tenants the appropriate time to assess if they can sustain and conduct their tenancy in line with tenancy conditions. Should acts of ASB be carried out the Council can seek to end either the introductory tenancy or not offer an additional fixed term tenancy.

NFDC provides temporary housing and a private sector lease scheme which is let to homeless households or to prevent homelessness. We are responsible for managing these tenancies and ensuring tenants are supported to keep to the terms of their agreements, whilst awaiting permanent offers of accommodation to be made.

ASB Data

Improvements in how we collect our ASB data were introduced in 2023 and this has allowed us to benchmark our performance.

A review of 2022/23 ASB reports from tenants showed 136 reported cases of Anti-Social Behaviour, which represents 26 cases per 1,000 homes.

Classification of report	Total
Amplified Music	3
Animal Nuisance	22
Filthy & Verminous Property	1
Gardens	1
Harassment and threats	16
Illegal & Immoral Behaviour	27
Other	21
Parking	6
Rowdy and Inconsiderate	35
Violent Behaviour	3
Youth Nuisance	1
Total (2022-23)	136

2023/24 showed an increase to 160 reported cases of Anti-Social Behaviour, which represents 31 cases per 1,000 homes.

Classification of report	Total
Animals	25
Behaviour	46
Criminal Activity	15
Environmental	19
Fires	2
Hate Crime	3
Noise	42
Odours/Smells	7
Surveillance	1
Total (2023-24)	160

Further analysis of last year's data (see below) shows that behaviour and noise were the two most reported issues. It is important that we continue to track the types of reports to identify any trends and use this to improve and shape our service.

Type of behaviour	Total	Type of noise	Total
Domestic Violence	2	Children	3
Fly tipping/Litter	2	Deliberate targeted noise	2
Harassment	14	Dispute/Domestic	6
Mental Health related	2	DIY/Tools/Works	2
Nuisance Caused by Children	8	Gatherings	2
Verbal Abuse/Foul Language	18	Impact Sounds	2
Grand Total (2023-24)	46	Music	5
		Noise from neighbours	17
		Television	1
		Unclassified	2
		Grand Total (2023-24)	42

Tenant Satisfaction Measure Data

Through late 2023 and early 2024 tenants were invited to take part in the tenant perception measure survey as part of the new regulatory performance regime. Overall satisfaction with the housing landlord was received at 81%, and tenants were further asked, 'how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with New Forest District Council's approach to handling Anti-Social Behaviour'. 63% of tenants surveyed answered this question. Overall satisfaction with the handling of ASB cases was 62% and when benchmarked with 52 other registered providers the Council's performance was considered slightly above average.

The tenants who answered that they were either fairly dissatisfied or very dissatisfied were asked a supplementary question on 'why would you say you are dissatisfied?' 3.2% of respondents answered the question.

Common themes of comments received were:

- Tenant incident forms being completed but not responded to or actioned.
- Reports about neighbours not taken seriously.
- Perceived lack of joint working from the Police or Police action

Safer New Forest Partnership

District wide anti-social behaviour data is tracked in partnership with Hampshire Police under the stewardship of the Safer New Forest Partnership strategic assessment.

As a result, the plan identifies 4 priorities for 2024-2025:

1. Shoplifting
2. Burglary (Business and Community)
3. Serious violence and possession of weapons
4. Violence against women and girls (VAWG including Domestic Abuse)

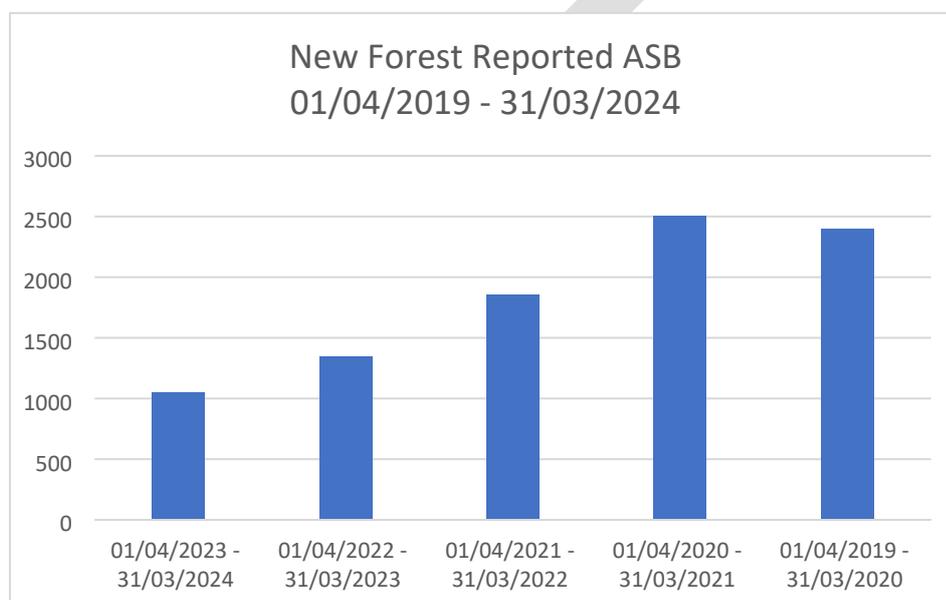
Under the 2024-2025 Strategic assessment ASB is categorised into three main types:

1. Personal
2. Community
3. Environmental

4. ASB	01/04/2023 – 31/03/2024	01/04/2022 - 31/03/2023	Variation
New Forest East	569	640	- 71
New Forest West	478	705	-227

The table shows an overall decrease of 22% in reported incidents of ASB compared with that of the previous year 2022/2023.

New Forest continue to see a reduction in reported ASB. Below shows a 56% decrease in reported ASB from 01/04/2019 to 31/03/2024 (2400 incidents to 1047 incidents).



This data needs to be treated with caution, as whilst it shows an overall reduction in the recorded incidents occurring, it may also show a reduction in the level of incidents reported. This could be a result of tolerances or confidence in services ability to resolve ASB.

Why this is important for New Forest Resident Services & Tenants

As ASB is often primarily referred to as a 'local concern'. We will need to recognise ASB will fundamentally look and feel different in every area of The New Forest and a one size fits all approach will therefore not work for victims.

The New Forest is a large district which is mainly rural with urbanised areas in Totton and Hythe to the east, Lymington and New Milton on the southern coast and Ringwood in the west. These areas hold 73% of the district population. A further 16% of the population live in rural towns and fringe areas, whilst the remaining 11% are in rural villages.

As the people most likely to be victims of ASB tend to live in more deprived communities we need to look more closely at these areas. Overall, New Forest has a low level of deprivation. It was ranked 240 out of 317 local authority districts across England (where rank 1 had the highest level of deprivation). However, there are small areas of deprivation within the district, with pockets of higher levels of deprivation located in Totton, areas near to Hythe, Lymington, and New Milton. The New Forest ranks similar to the Hampshire average when looking at income deprivation affecting children.

Social demographics and personal circumstances are a key factor in influencing the scale of impact of ASB experienced by individuals. Examples being that those with long term physical or mental health conditions are more likely to have experiences or witness ASB to those without the same conditions. Social demographics will include different genders, housing tenures, age, and vulnerability such as physical and/or mental health conditions.

Taking the example of age. The New Forest has one of the lowest population densities across English local authorities, but the New Forest has seen an increase in the average age of the population from 47 to 51 years of age, with a 19.9% increase in people aged between 65 and 74 years.

Research on the impact on individual and community by central government has shown that age was key in determining views when determining the perception of ASB. The youngest age group (those aged 18 to 34) being more likely to feel that ASB is a 'very big' or 'fairly big' problem in their local area (57%) than those aged 35 to 54 (50%) and those aged 55 and over (34%). This was despite the 18 to 34 age group being more likely to interpret ASB as 'normal' behaviour.

Interventions identified with our strategy will pay close attention the social demographic profile in the New Forest and effectively target and support groups who may be disproportionately impacted by ASB.

Tracking data

We continue to make improvements in how to track and record vulnerabilities. Our social housing tenant demographic data survey is not yet fully complete as of November 2024. This data collection exercise is well underway during 24/25 will obtain key personal data important to designing services.

Staff feedback received on ASB cases is that we continue to see increased levels of vulnerabilities in casework, and this will need to be reviewed in line with the recommendation made in the housing ombudsman spotlight report on attitudes, respect, and rights – relationship of equals.

A significant amount of our housing stock is found in our urbanised areas and the more deprived areas of The New Forest. A majority of our ASB reports will continue to be reported from these traditional built-up areas and our response will therefore need to be primarily focused to these areas. We do however need to recognise the rural landscape of The New Forest where we also hold housing stock in more sparsely populated rural areas such as Martin, Sway, Burley, Calshot and Bransgore - which will have a different local perception to ASB.

Corporate Plan 2024-2028

Our tenants and the communities they live in are an ongoing priority for this council, which is supported by the themes in our Corporate Plan 2024-2028. NFDC is keen to promote opportunities to gather feedback from our tenants through the delivery of a new Tenant Engagement Strategy and our annual residents' survey, as we look to continually improve and evolve our services.

The new corporate plan priority themes are People, Place and Prosperity. Consultation to develop the Corporate Plan involved a residents' survey which was conducted between 8 September 2022 and November 2022. Of the 760 interviewed nearly all (96%) respondents stated they felt very/fairly safe in their local area, however nearly a quarter of the respondents reported their quality of life was affected by the fear of crime. This indicated that whilst the people feel safe there is an increased perception of crime and disorder, leading to anxiety and adjustments with daily life.

Our Current Approach to ASB & Neighbour Nuisance

The Council is committed to sustaining tenancies with our Tenancy Policy making the commitment that, 'The council will make every reasonable effort to support tenants to sustain their tenancy, that they do not get into rent arrears or carry out acts of Anti-Social Behaviour. The majority of tenants will simply require the provision of information and advice; however, some tenants may require more support.

Our current preventative measures include:

- Use of Introductory Tenancies – all first-time council tenants are given an introductory tenancy.
- Use of Flexible Tenancies – these are secure tenancies for a fixed term period. If the tenant fails to keep to the terms of their tenancy, including carrying out ASB, we may not offer a further tenancy on its expiry.
- Settling in visits – taking place with 3 months and 9 months of an introductory tenant to emphasise tenant obligations, support, and vulnerabilities.

- Regular estate visits and block inspections.
- Attending strategic partnership meetings such as New Forest Drug Related Harm Forum and the New Forest District Tactical Planning Group to ensure there is adequate focus and resources directed toward tackling ASB.

We have traditionally taken a low tolerance approach to nuisance and ASB. This is one where we take an active lead in identifying and speaking to all the affected parties. This approach has resulted in a quick and prompt response but also one where we are inadvertently quick to label tenants as perpetrators, or sometimes we can incorrectly identify clear 'one on one' neighbour disputes, as ASB. Our involvement in these cases can sometimes have an unintended consequence of increasing tensions or worsening the relationship between neighbours.

Comments received via the recent TMS survey are also observed in officer casework where there is an overuse of log sheets for residents to log and evidence neighbour nuisance or ASB, as opposed to greater emphasis being placed on encouraging good communication between neighbours and the use of early intervention tools. It is important that we continue to offer safe and effective communication between residents (which is a powerful tool for tackling ASB and can be successful in preventing further escalation). We need to ensure through clear policy guidance and staff training that we effectively advise and provide tenants with a range of options around their reports.

A significant proportion of the reports NFDC receives relate to one-on-one neighbour nuisance and noise disputes. These are sometimes the most challenging issues to resolve as often these cases will not meet the thresholds for formal legal intervention. The fact that they are being reported to us shows that they are important to our tenants, that they have a detrimental effect on them and that they are seeking our advice and support. The introduction of a Good Neighbourhood Management Policy to sit alongside any ASB Policy will provide a clear separation between the two issues. We need to be clear how they can help the situation and what help we can provide, including the continued provision of mediation services to try to resolve disputes before they escalate.

Other common themes noted are the security of our blocks, including older, less secure communal entry doors which do not have electronic fob access, and which allow visitors to contribute to existing ASB issues.

Achievements to date

- Publication of a new Tenant engagement strategy in April 2024.
- Newly created ASB Manager post in 2023 and wider resources review ensuring we have the necessary resources identified to tackle ASB.
- Restructure of the Neighbourhood and Estate Management team and the creation of a dedicated Neighbourhood & ASB services (3x Full time Neighbourhood officers and 1.5 full time neighbourhood assistants)
- New ICT Housing Management Systems (HMS) developed and launched in February 2023 to support case management and data collection.
- Redefining sub-categories of reports to allow for greater analysis of trends.
- Regulator of social housing learning and internal knowledge sharing applied to processes and disseminated to housing employees.
- Digital consultation platform implementation to allow targeted consultation to different tenant groups.
- Updated procedures and staff guidance.

Our vision and strategy are built on 4 Strategic priorities.



Our vision is one where all cases of ASB and reported problems between neighbours are responded to, with clear actions agreed with the complainants.

The definition of ASB has a low threshold, and what can cause or is likely to cause a nuisance or annoyance can be subjective to the person making the report.

Given the risks attached to ASB the Council's Officers will follow a harm-based approach towards ASB so that the most serious behaviour, which has the greatest impact on people's lives, is prioritised, tackled and solutions are found. The Social Housing Regulator's view on ASB is clear and they want housing providers to also take a victim-based approach when responding to reports of ASB and in doing this we need to identify those more vulnerable to ASB and ensure their needs are considered and supported. This is sometimes also referred to as 'human centric' and involves seeing people as the most important thing.

Our data concludes that the majority of ASB or reported cases of annoyance or nuisance will not lead to 'high harm'.

In cases of that do not meet the threshold for ASB intervention, residents will continue to be provided with the access to the appropriate advice and tools so that they as neighbours can work together to resolve their differences.

To ensure this happens we will provide a robust assessment of all ASB and reported problems between neighbours to identify not only the nature of the behaviour and the causes, but also to identify at an early-stage cases of neighbour nuisance or disagreements which are not to be classified as ASB but may still impact residents' lives.

In cases of ASB, when the need for formal intervention is required by the Council, we will take a risk-based approach, assessing both the risk to the victims and their wishes. By assessing cases of ASB we will be able

provide the flexible and tailored response to cases of ASB that the regulator and residents expect.

We want residents to take pride in the estates, neighbourhoods, towns, and villages that they live in. To support this, we aim to increase resources and funding, from existing budgets, to tackle ASB and nuisance, to improve our neighbourhoods and estates and other decent neighbourhood projects as well as working with diversionary projects.

These priorities are aiming for real, meaningful impact for both tenants and NFDC services. Our priorities will be reviewed periodically by both tenants and colleagues to make sure outcomes are being achieved and powers can be flexed up and down depending on what our tenants tell us as we progress with implementation.

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Strategic Priority 1

Prevention & early intervention

One of the most effective tools to resolving ASB is to be proactive in preventing ASB in the first place, as well as responding early to reports to stop issues escalating.

We will:

- Develop a strategic approach to ASB and community cohesion (communication over conflict), developing a new ASB Policy and a 'Good Neighbourhood' Policy
- Increase awareness of what ASB is and what services are available.
- Increase awareness of what a hate crime is through the introduction of a Hate Crime Policy and Procedure.
- Increase awareness of Domestic Abuse through NFDC's Domestic Abuse Strategy and a Housing Landlord Domestic Abuse Policy & Procedure.
- Complete a self-assessment and respond to the Housing Ombudsman spotlight report on noise nuisance.
- Continuously review our ASB procedure to ensure it provides a fast response and remains focused on early intervention.
- Strengthen our existing messaging on ASB and make it clear what is a breach of tenancy and the likely consequences.
- Continue our close and effective partnership working arrangements.
- Review the current service provision around tenancy support and the support provided to alleged perpetrators of ASB.
- Ensure data and intelligence is shared between agencies to flag patterns of behaviour, crime & disorder and ASB via Community Partnership Forms (CPIs)
- Continue to review all associated documentation (letters, action plans, website) to ensure that there is a clear and consistent message delivered, with a real focus on prevention and resolution.
- Review our processes around managing our neighbourhood and communal areas so that we promote environmental sustainability and tenant engagement through improvements to communal areas and neighbourhoods.
- Empower our communities and tenants not to tolerate ASB and how to safely challenge and report incidents.
- Prevent ASB where possible through timely and appropriate interventions such as sending warning letters, offering mediation, and using acceptable behaviour contracts.
- Complete a review of communal entry door security as part of our stock condition surveys and maintenance programs.

Strategic Priority 2:

Managing risk and supporting victims

ASB can leave victims feeling unsafe and afraid in their own home, often leaving them with the feeling that no one is listening. The 'person' needs to be at the centre of our response.

We will:

- Review internal guidance and processes around recording tenant vulnerabilities.
- Address victim's immediate needs and allow time to discuss long-term support while their cases are being investigated.
- Help victims understand the options they have and what actions we can take.
- Complete regular case reviews with victims, listening to victims needs and wishes.
- Seek feedback on ASB cases to give victims the opportunity to give feedback on services.
- Use Risk Assessments in cases of ASB and use this to tailor our individual approach.
- Ensure safeguarding issues are raised and shared between agencies.
- Continue to use sensitive lettings and placements to help manage our neighbourhoods.
- Continue to use the Management transfer procedure to support rehoming both victims and vulnerable tenants whose risks cannot be managed in situ.
- Using legal enforcement action where necessary, taking a robust approach to resolve ASB whilst ensuring any action is proportionate.
- Work in partnership with Victim Support.

Strategic Priority 3

Work in partnership

Police, local authorities, and community agencies, all have the responsibility to tackle anti-social behaviour by working together to help victims.

We will:

- Respond to serious or persistent cases of ASB under MARM (Multi Agency Risk Management) frameworks or other statutory meetings, such as Adult Safeguarding or Child protection.
- Review current practices and thresholds for support service access ensuring people do not fall through the gaps.
- Review how we manage our homelessness temporary accommodation with close interdepartmental relationships.
- Promote the use of ASB case reviews where complainants are experiencing persistent anti-social behaviour.
- Reviewing how well NFDC (Housing), NFDC (Community Safety) and the Police are reviewing cases and holding services to account for their actions.
- Develop a service level agreement with open spaces around the management of housing land, including residents' involvement on how their open spaces are managed.
- Develop closer relationships with local policing teams across the district.
- Develop closer relationships with Hampshire Adults and Children Services, Mental Health Services and Probation – including the use of community pay back.
- Work closely with Environmental Protection to swiftly investigate and resolve noise complaints.
- Work in partnership around any legal enforcement action.

Strategic Priority 4

Putting tenants first

Our service and response to ASB needs to be shaped by our residents as our tenants are best placed to tell us what is working well and what we can do better.

We will

- Ensure residents are at the forefront of shaping our response to ASB, neighbour disputes and their neighbourhoods.
- Ensure data analysis forms part of our proactive activities to improve our response to ASB and neighbour disputes.
- Ensure that the Tenancy Engagement Service are actively involved around any service improvement and receipt of feedback.
- Gain feedback on all closed cases of ASB and use lessons learnt from complaints to feed into service improvements.
- Identify the core skills and knowledge required to deliver an effective ASB service, and sourcing training that delivers this. As part of this exercise, it will be essential that training on safeguarding is recognised and included as core knowledge.
- Develop a staff essential training plan focusing on legal tools and powers to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour as well as training around Mental health, Drugs and Alcohol and Domestic Abuse.
- Review how we get out and about on our estates, and how we engage with residents and our elected members.
- Review the team structure to reflect best practice and current service need.

Monitoring and review

The outcomes of the strategy and the work programme will be under continual monitoring and review. Updates to Members and the Council's Executive Management Team will be provided at least annually.

The tenant perception survey carried out each year will provide valuable insight in to how satisfied our tenants are around our response to ASB. It is accepted that there are some quick wins that can be implemented whilst other changes will take time.

Annex 1 allows us to flex our approach and timescales, but the aim will always be to achieve the priorities in this strategy before the end of 2028.

New actions and targets may be agreed if further changes are made to corporate objectives, national legislation, and policy. The focus on ASB is at the forefront of both the regulatory framework and political attention in both the national approach within criminal justice system and Policing system. It is likely that further legislation, guidance, and funding arrangements will continue to change over the next few years.

We are keen to understand the ongoing impact of Anti-Social Behaviour on our residents especially those victims who are vulnerable and live in more deprived areas. Our annual review will incorporate statistical and perception-based analysis of our ASB cases and impact on victims. This will enable us to be responsive in tackling any emerging issues.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing Services, working with the Housing Strategic and Assistant Directors, our Housing Service Managers and the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Manager will lead the review of the delivery action plan.

In reviewing its strategy annually this council remains committed to embracing amended policy direction and incorporating it within annual updates.

Measure of success

Our key measures of success will be quantitative:

- Improved satisfaction performance year on year following on from the initial set of Tenant Satisfaction Perception Survey in 23/24
- Improved satisfaction performance year on year when bench marked against similar sized landlords.
- Reduction in number of stage 1 and 2 complaints received from tenants relating to ASB compared with the 23/24 financial year.

- Increase in cases being successfully resolved year on year following outcome being recorded from 24/25.

Our key measures of success will be qualitative.

- By the end of the strategy period in 2028 tenants will have a clear voice under following implementation of the tenant engagement strategy. Tenants will tell us that they are able to directly influence and scrutinise out service.
- Learning from complaints and ASB case review will be embedded into service design and re-design.
- Tenants feedback on closed cases will be used to design and re-design the service.
- Streamlined process and access to more information and advice.

DRAFT

Annexe 1: Strategy Action Plan

Priority 1, Prevention & early intervention

Publish a new ASB Policy and a 'Good Neighbourhood' Policy

Lead Officers:

ASB Manager, Service Manager for Housing Resident Services.

Target Date:

April 2025

Increase awareness of what ASB is and what services are available.

Lead Officers:

ASB Manager, Service Manager for Housing Resident Services.

Target Date:

April 2026

Publish a Hate Crime Policy and Procedure.

Lead Officers:

ASB Manager, Service Manager for Housing Resident Services.

Target Date:

April 2025

Publish a Domestic Abuse Strategy and a Housing Landlord Domestic Abuse Policy & Procedure.

Lead Officers:

Service Manager Community Safety, Community Safety Manager, Service Manager for Housing Resident Services, ASB Manager.

Target Date:

April 2026

Complete a self-assessment and respond to the Housing Ombudsman spotlight report on noise nuisance.

Lead Officers:

Performance & Insight Manager, ASB Manager.

Target Date:

April 2026

Continuously review our ASB procedure to ensure it provides a fast response and remains focused on early intervention.

Lead Officers:

ASB Manager.

Target Date:

Ongoing

Review the current service provision around tenancy support and the support provided to alleged perpetrators of ASB.

Lead Officers:

Service Manager for Housing Resident Services.

Target Date: April 2027

Review our processes around managing our neighbourhood and communal areas so that we promote environmental sustainability and tenant engagement through improvements to communal areas and neighbourhoods.

Lead Officers:

Service Manager for Housing Resident Services, Tenancy Engagement Manager, Housing Estates Manager, ASB Manager.

Target Date:

April 2027

Complete a review of communal entry door security as part of our stock condition surveys and maintenance programs.

Lead Officers:

Housing Maintenance Programmes and Servicing, Service Manager for Housing Resident Services, Housing Estates Manager. ASB Manager

Target Date:

April 2027

Priority 2, Managing risk and supporting victims

Review internal guidance around processes around recording tenant vulnerabilities.

Lead Officers:

Service Manager for Housing Resident Services, Tenancy Engagement Manager, Housing Estates Manager, ASB Manager.

Target Date:

April 2026

Seek feedback on ASB cases to give victims the opportunity to give feedback on services.

Lead Officers:

Tenancy Engagement Manager, ASB Manager.

Target Date:

On-going

Work in partnership with Victim Support.

Lead Officers:

Service Manager for Housing Resident Services, Tenancy Engagement Manager, Housing Estates Manager, ASB Manager.

Target Date:

April 2026

Priority 3, Work in partnership

Review current practices and thresholds for support service access ensuring people do not fall through the gaps.

Lead Officers:
ASB Manager,
Target Date:
On-going

Review how we manage our homelessness temporary accommodation with close interdepartmental relationships.

Lead Officers:
Service Manager for Housing Resident Services, Service Manager for Housing Options and Tenancy Accounts, ASB Manager.
Target Date:
April 2027

Promote the use of ASB case reviews where complainants are experiencing persistent anti-social behaviour. Checking NFDC (Housing), NFDC (Community Safety) and the Police are reviewing cases and holding services to account for their actions.

Lead Officers:
Service Manager for Community Safety, Community Safety Manager, ASB Manager.
Target Date:
April 2026

Develop a service level agreement with open spaces around the management of housing land, including residents' involvement on how their open spaces are managed.

Lead Officers:

Service Manager for Housing Resident Services, Housing Estates Manager.

Target Date:

April 2027

Develop closer relationships with local policing teams across the district.

Lead Officers:

ASB Manager, Community Safety Manager.

Target Date:

April 2026

Develop closer relationships with Hampshire Adults and Children Services, Mental Health Services and Probation – including the use of community pay back.

Lead Officers:

ASB Manager, Community Safety Manager.

Target Date:

On-going

Annual reviews with Environmental Protection to review internal procedures to swiftly investigate and resolve noise complaints.

Lead Officers:

ASB Manager, Environmental Protection Manager.

Target Date: 2026

On-going

Priority 4, Putting tenants first

Ensure residents are at the forefront of shaping our response to ASB, neighbour disputes and their neighbourhoods.

Lead Officers:

Tenant Engagement Manager, ASB Manager.

Target Date:

On-going

Ensure data analysis forms part of our proactive activities to improve our response to ASB and neighbour disputes.

Lead Officers:

ASB Manager, Performance and Insight Manager.

Target Date:

April 2026

Ensure that the Tenancy Engagement Service are actively involved around any service improvement and receipt of feedback.

Lead Officers:

Tenant Engagement Manager, ASB Manager.

Target Date:

On-going

Gain feedback on all closed cases of ASB and use lessons learnt from complaints to feed into service improvements.

Lead Officers:

Tenant Engagement Manager, ASB Manager.

Target Date:

April 2026

Develop a staff essential training plan focusing on legal tools and powers to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour as well as training around Mental health, Drugs and Alcohol and Domestic Abuse.

Lead Officers:

Service Manager for Housing Resident Services, Housing Estate Manager, ASB Manager.

Target Date:

April 2027

Review how we get out and about on our estates, and how we engage with residents and our elected members.

Lead Officers:

Tenant Engagement Manager, ASB Manager.

Target Date:

April 2026

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)

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Statement of Community Involvement

Planning

~~DRAFT REVISED VERSION FOR CONSULTATION~~

~~(Revisions in red text)~~

~~October 2024~~

CABINET VERSION

February 2025

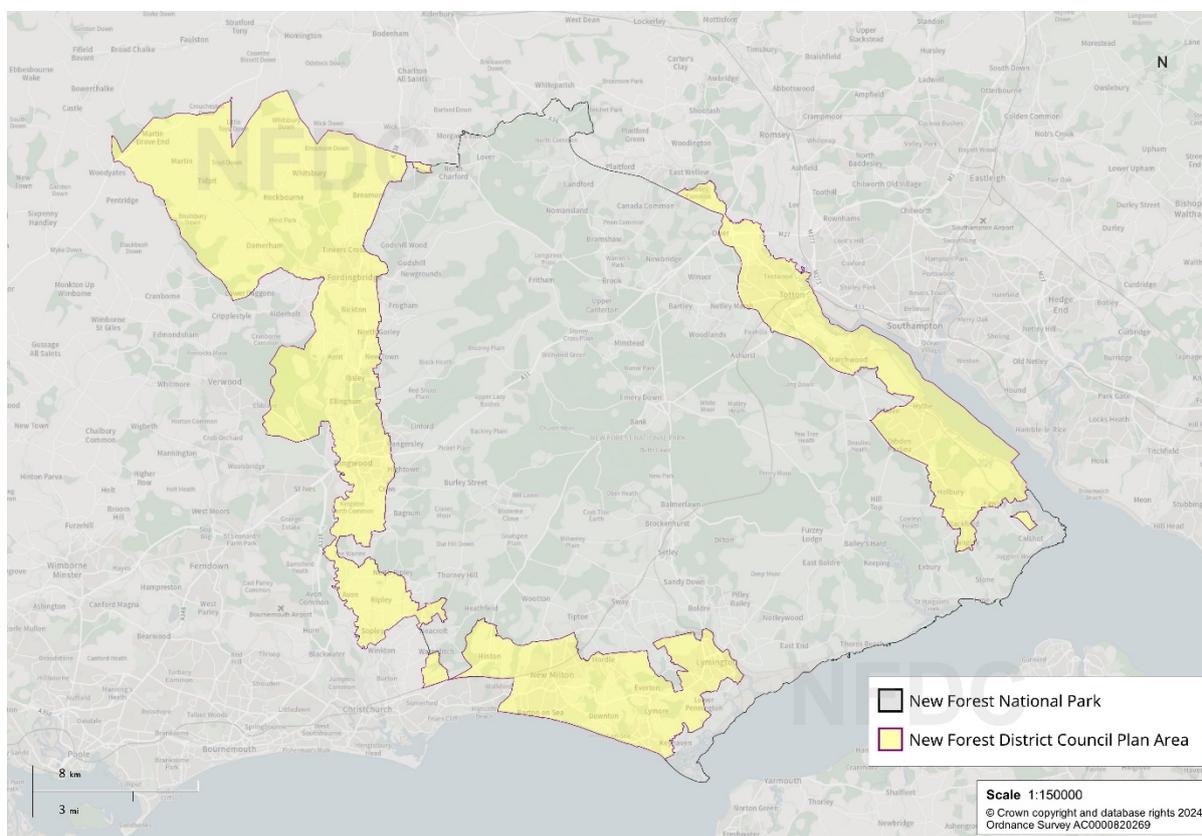
Contents

Introduction.....	4
1 What is a Statement of Community Involvement?	5
A brief guide to the planning system.....	5
Planning in the New Forest.....	6
Working with others.....	7
The New Forest National Park and Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) National Landscape.....	7
Neighbouring authorities and Local Economic Partnerships.....	7
2 The process of Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Document preparation.....	9
How we will involve and consult others on the preparation of the Local Plan	11
Sustainability Appraisal	15
Fulfilling the Duty to Cooperate	15
3 How we will involve and consult others on the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents	17
4 Neighbourhood Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders	19
5 How we will involve others on allocating the Community Infrastructure Levy to projects.....	21
6 Community Involvement in Development Management	22
Pre-application Stage.....	22
Planning Application Stage	23
What happens when a planning application is received?	23
Who will we consult?.....	24
How is a planning application determined?	25
Assisting the Local Planning Authority.....	27
Appeals against decisions or non-determination	27
Details submitted pursuant to planning conditions	27
Post decision Amended Plans.....	28
Enforcement	28
Appendix 1 – Local Planning documents: Consultees	29
Type A – Specific Consultation bodies.....	29
Type B – General Consultation bodies.....	31
Type C – Statutory consultees for the Duty to co-operate	32
Type D – Individuals.....	33
Appendix 2 – Neighbourhood Planning Protocol	35
Neighbourhood Planning support	35
Introduction and Purpose.....	35

Context: Neighbourhood Planning and the District Local Plan.....	36
The statutory obligations of the District Council	36
District council advice and assistance.....	37
Appendix 3 – Who should the Qualifying Body seek to engage with?	42
Appendix 4 – Publicising Planning and related applications	47
Appendix 5 – How we will notify neighbours	55
Exceptions.....	55
Wider neighbour notification/consultation.....	56
Appendix 6 - Glossary	57

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 <u>on specific issues or studies (e.g. statutory bodies and infrastructure providers)</u> 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	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:
<p>Early preparation</p> <p>Evidence gathering</p>	<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
<p>Production of draft plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a draft Plan based on evidence and views collected
<p>Formal Consultation on draft plan</p>	<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. 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.

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.

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.

⁴ www.nfdc.gov.uk/privacy

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.

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.

⁵ [View or comment on a planning application - New Forest District Council](#)

⁶ [Planning practice guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

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.

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.

Assisting the Local Planning Authority

6.19 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

Appeals against decisions or non-determination

6.20 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 . 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.

Details submitted pursuant to planning conditions

6.21 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.

6.22 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.

Post decision Amended Plans

6.23 Post-decision amendments are only accepted if the Council is satisfied that the change is not material.. In cases where amendments are accepted, the amendments will not be the subject of publicity.

Enforcement

6.24 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 Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board
- British Telecommunications PLC
-
- 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 Marine Management Organisation
- Wessex Water
- Southern Water

- Bournemouth Water PLC
- Mobile UK (which represents the UK's mobile operators)

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 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

<p>Application that is a departure from the Local Plan</p>	<p>Newspaper advertisement (14 days) and Site notice (21 days)</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
<p>Application which would affect a right of way to which Part 3 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 applies</p>	<p>Newspaper advertisement (14 days) and Site notice (21 days)</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
<p>Minor Development: Residential development involving less than 10 homes. Other development: floor space is less than 1000m²</p>	<p>Site Notice (21 days) Or Neighbour notification (21 days)</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 at or near the site
<p>Change of use applications</p>	<p>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 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

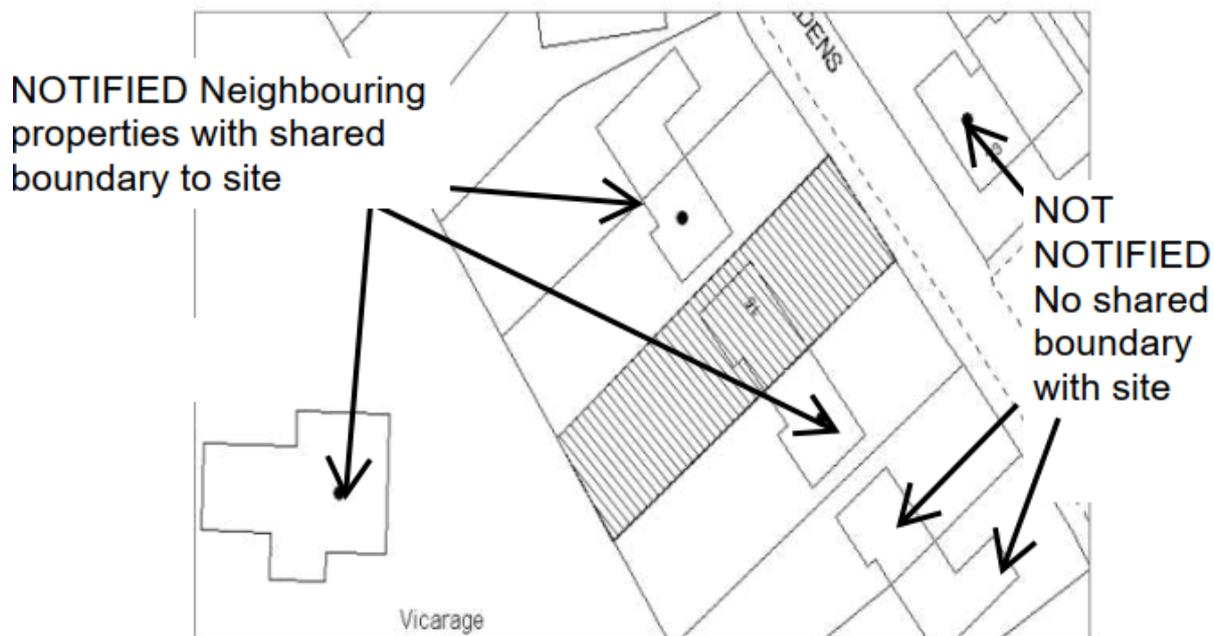
<p>Prior Approval for change of use (Class C, J, M, N, O, P, PA, Q, R, S, T)</p>	<p>Site Notice (21 days) or neighbour notification</p>	<p>The Council will: Display a site notice</p>
<p>Prior Notification for Telecommunication Equipment</p>	<p>Where development is not in accordance with the development 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

Local Plan Review – Issues and Scope Consultation Document

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	Approval is sought to undertake public consultation on the Issues and Scope document for six weeks from mid February 2025, in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement.
Recommendations	<p>It is recommended to the Cabinet that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the Local Plan Issues and Scope document be approved for public consultation, attached at Appendix 1 to this report; and 2. 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.
Reasons for recommendation	To allow the Council to move forward to the first stage of consultation for the Local Plan review
Ward(s)	All wards outside the National Park
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Derek Tipp – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy
Strategic Director(s)	James Carpenter – Strategic Director for Place, Operations and Sustainability
Officer Contact	<p>Tim Guymer Assistant Director for Place Development tim.guymer@nfdc.gov.uk</p>

	<p>Dean Brunton Service Manager - Planning Policy, Infrastructure and Delivery dean.brunton@nfdc.gov.uk</p> <p>James Smith Planning Policy Team Leader james.smith@nfdc.gov.uk</p>
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Introduction

1. This report seeks approval for the Issues and Scope consultation document (**Appendix 1**) that will form the basis for public consultation and enable the Council to move forward with the approved programme for the preparation of a new local plan.
2. Cabinet approved a revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) in October 2024. This sets out the following programme for preparation of the Local Plan Review:
 - Call for sites: October – December 2024
 - Consultation on a Local Plan review Issues and Scope document: February – March 2025
 - Proposed consultation on the draft Local Plan review: Autumn 2025.
3. The subsequent programme for the preparation of the Local Plan will be determined in due course following consideration of the responses received to this consultation, the preparation of further evidence base studies and in anticipation of there being further clarity on the implications of national policy changes.
4. In respect to the emerging proposals for devolution and associated local government review, the Government has made it clear that local authorities should continue to ensure local plans are kept up-to-date, and progress reviews of their local plans where they are not.

Background

5. The proposed consultation document is extensive and covers a wide range of issues. It has been prepared by the Planning Policy Team with input from an Officer Working Group and a Member Working Group. The Officer Working Group includes those reliant on local

plan policies for their service delivery (e.g. climate change) and planning-related professionals (e.g. conservation officer).

6. The Local Plan review is a major corporate project and requires the Council to act collectively to meet its statutory and legal responsibilities. It is therefore important to ensure that there is wider Member engagement in, and oversight and scrutiny of, the Local Plan preparation process to maintain ownership and buy in. The Local Plan Member Working Group is a cross-party group made up of 6 Conservative Members, 3 Liberal Democrat Members, 1 Independent Member and 1 Green Party Member established to advise the Cabinet on the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans.
7. The Member Working Group has met five times, exploring a range of issues to be considered as part of the Issues and Options consultation, receiving updates to the work on preparing the evidence base and inputting into the proposed work programme. As part of the discussions the group noted the need to consider existing neighbourhood plans.
8. In relation to legislative requirements for furthering the purposes of the New Forest National Park, officers maintain a good working relationship with officers from the National Park Authority. The National Park Authority are expected to be undertaking a similar consultation at a similar time to ensure that messages are consistent and that we continue to work closely. Officers are also aware of the duty to further the purposes of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape.

Structure of the proposed Issues and Scope consultation document

9. The structure of the document has been designed so that the topics align with the priorities in the Corporate Plan and is set out below.

Foreword
Introduction & background <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan Area• What is the Local Plan• Role of others• Stages of production• What is the Issues and Scope document and why we are seeking views
Spatial context <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Forest as a place

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship of Plan Area to National Park and sub-area descriptions <p>Our current spatial strategy</p> <p>Spatial vision & objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What should the distribution of new development be? Relationship with the New Forest District Council Corporate Plan 	
Topics	
People	<p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How much housing to plan for Housing mix & affordable housing Housing densities Second home ownership Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople
	<p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's role (also that of the County Council) Digital infrastructure Utilities Social infrastructure The role of culture and art
	Health and wellbeing
Place	<p>Design (and placemaking)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key principles for good quality and sustainable places and communities
	<p>Climate change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing the causes of climate change Adapting to the effects of climate change
	<p>Natural Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural capital Recreational impacts and nutrients Biodiversity and Biodiversity Net Gain Green and blue infrastructure Landscape character Backup grazing land
	Green Belt
	<p>Strategic development locations and opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of existing strategic site allocations Review of other existing site-specific proposals Potential new strategic site allocations
	<p>Open space, sport, recreation, and play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach to formal sport Approach to parks, amenity open space and greenspace Approach to equipped play areas
	Historic environment
Prosperity	Economy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for employment land/floorspace. • Where can employment land/floorspace be delivered? • Solent Freeport and port employment • Protection of employment land • Town and local centre uses • Tourism
	Transport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads • Public transport • Travel by water • Active travel
	Viability
Next steps	

10. Each 'Topic' section is structured in the following format:

- Introduction
- Why does it matter?
- What are the issues?
- Consultation questions.

Proposed consultation questions

11. In order to encourage a wide-ranging audience, the proposed consultation questions have been drafted mindful of representing the challenges before the Council and allowing people to have their say, whilst also framed so as not to give any 'false hopes' of what could be achieved.
12. All questions will be optional, with an opportunity also provided for further comments to be made on the document and raise any further topics that may have been overlooked.

Consultation arrangements

13. Consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement and include engagement with town and parish councils, workshops with key stakeholders and the use of specialist digital engagement software (Go Vocal).
14. Officers also intend to use social media, and the use of short videos, to highlight the topics presented to the Council as part of the Local Plan preparation.
15. Officers intend to hold a series of 'roadshow' events at key locations during the consultation period itself. Full details on how to respond to the consultation will be available on the Council's website.

16. As the New Forest National Park Authority will be undertaking a similar consultation during a similar period, officers will explore whether it may be appropriate to hold joint events.

Next Steps

17. Officers will keep Members informed on the consultation arrangements, and particularly the dates for 'roadshow' events. Work on the development of the evidence base will continue whilst the consultation is carried out and the responses analysed.
18. The revised NPPF and initial devolution and local government reorganisation proposals for strategic planning were published by the government in December. Officers will need to consider the implications for the Local Plan review and discuss these with partner authorities and the Member Working Group in due course.
19. The Local Development Scheme anticipates a rapid timetable for preparation of the draft Local Plan review for consultation in autumn 2025. The Officer and Member Working Groups will be fully engaged in this work before consideration by Cabinet.

Corporate plan priorities

20. The Corporate Plan 2024-28 outlines the vision, values, and priorities for the Council over the next four years.
21. The vision of the Corporate Plan is to secure a better future by supporting opportunities for the people and communities we serve, protecting our unique and special place and securing a vibrant and prosperous New Forest. This has been organised into the thematic areas of People, Place and Prosperity. The Local Plan aligns with all the objectives of the Corporate Plan and the document proposed for public consultation has been drafted by grouping together the various topics under the headings of the Corporate Plan.

Options appraisal

22. The alternative option of pausing the Local Plan review at this time has been considered. This is rejected on the basis that it was against a strong government steer to commence local plan production at pace, and not wait for any potential devolution and local government reorganisation to progress. Further to this, not progressing our Local Plan review would lead to a longer period for the Council in having an out of date Local Plan, which in turn would potentially result in a risk of a greater number of speculative applications for development outside of a plan-led approach.

Consultation undertaken

23. The document and proposed approach to consultation set out in this report and appendix has been discussed with officers, including via the Officer Working Group and with Members through the Member Working Group, together with informal consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy.

Financial and resource implications

24. Sufficient existing budget provision has been made to cover work on the Local Plan review.

Legal implications

25. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004 requires/ provides the legislative framework which requires that Councils should prepare a local plan and keep it up-to-date.

Risk assessment

26. None.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

27. A Local Plan review, as set out in the published Local Development Scheme, is essential if the Council is to stay in control of the planning of its area and ensure a high-quality environment.

Equalities implications

28. None directly from this report.

Crime and disorder implications

29. None directly from this report.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

30. Local Plan engagement, including public consultation, requires the collection and processing of some personal information in a manner compliant with GDPR.

New Forest National Park / Cranborne Chase National Landscape implications

31. The New Forest National Park Authority are required to produce and review their own local plan. The timetable proposed by this Council is broadly in line with that of the National Park Authority, therefore

there may be increased opportunities for joint working on evidence studies.

32. There are no specific implications identified for the Cranborne Chase National Landscape in this document, although the topic in relation to furthering the purposes of the National Landscape is covered.

Conclusion

33. The Local Plan review is being undertaken at a time of great change for the planning system, particularly in relation to the provision of housing, potential devolution and local government reorganisation. However, the government is clear with its continued commitment to the plan-led system and expectation that plans will be delivered quickly. The Council will need to move forward quickly to ensure that it can maintain an up-to-date Local Plan, taking account of the comments it received through this consultation in preparing a sound Plan.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Proposed Issues and Scope consultation document

Background Papers:

None.

Issues and Scope Consultation

New Forest District Council

(outside the National Park)

February 2025 – Cabinet Version

Contents

Foreword	3
Introduction and Background	4
The New Forest District Council 'Plan Area'	4
What is a local plan?	6
Role of other Local Authorities, Agencies, Organisations, and Individuals in the Plan	6
What are the stages of the production of the New Forest District Local Plan? ..	7
What is this 'Issues and Scope' document about, and why are we seeking your views?	7
Spatial context	8
New Forest as a place	8
Relationship of the Plan Area to the National Park	9
Our Current Spatial Strategy	13
Spatial Vision and Outcomes	14
What should the distribution of new development be?	15
Relationship with the New Forest District Council Corporate Plan	16
People	18
Housing	18
Infrastructure	22
Health and wellbeing	25
Place	26
Design (and placemaking)	26
Climate change	27
Natural Environment	30
Green Belt	34
Strategic Development Locations and Opportunities	35
Open Space, Sport, Recreation and Play	37
Historic Environment	39
Prosperity	41
Economy	41
Transport	45
Viability	47
Next Steps	49
Issues and Scope consultation	49
How to respond to the consultation	50
Glossary of key terms	50
Appendix A	51
Status of strategic sites	51
Status of sites within Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management DPD	55
Appendix B	59
Design Principles	59

Foreword

New Forest District has had a successful history of local planning that has provided new jobs, homes, and investment in town centres and local infrastructure at the same time as protecting and enhancing our natural and historic environment and promoting health and wellbeing. Over the course of the 50 years of New Forest District Council's history, Local Plans have regularly been produced and updated to help realise these goals.

This 'Issues and Scope Consultation' is the first stage in reviewing the local plan. The local plan is an important document which sets out detailed planning policies and proposals for New Forest District (outside the National Park) for the coming years.

In producing the local plan, we are required to accord with certain legal requirements and guidelines set at national level. However, the views of those who live and work in the area are key in shaping this new plan to meet its needs, while protecting and enhancing the local environment. This document has also been prepared in light of the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 which has increased pressure on local authorities to meet high housing targets and set new requirements for elements such as Green Belt reviews.

Good planning means that we try to address different priorities, endeavouring to help cater for growth, while supporting communities with good design, and protecting our precious environment and furthering the purposes of both the National Park and Cranborne Chase National Landscape.

To do this we need to be appropriately informed and that is why we need your views to help shape the plan and the future for the New Forest. We would be grateful for your views in response to the consultation.

Thank you.

Councillor Derek Tipp

Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy

Introduction and Background

The New Forest District Council 'Plan Area'

1. The 'Plan Area' which is covered by us comprises the yellow area on Figure 1. New Forest District Council (NFDC) is responsible for planning matters in this area including, the production of the Local Plan, Development Management (determining planning applications), Building Control and Planning Enforcement.
2. Our Local Plan Area is not contiguous, but comprises three broad sub-areas:
 - Waterside
 - South Coastal Towns
 - Avon Valley and Downlands

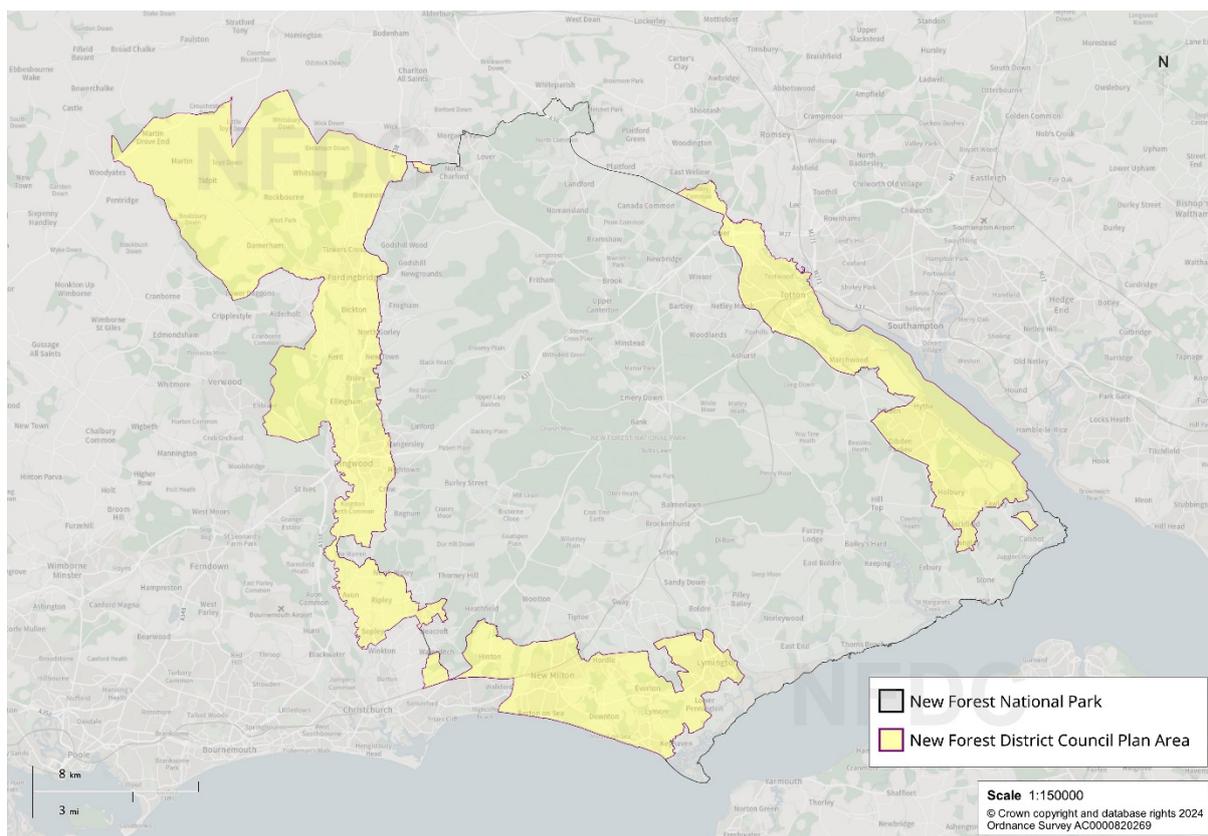


Figure 1: The Plan Area in relation to New Forest District and the National Park

3. Each NFDC sub-area is described in more detail later in the document.

4. The Plan Area is in, and near, a number of International Nature Conservation sites (SPAs, SACs and Ramsars), including the New Forest, as well as across the Solent and Southampton Water. Under the **Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017** (as amended), all new residential development within the Plan Area will have to consider its impact upon the conservation and protection of the internationally important sites and will need to be accompanied by an extensive package of habitat mitigation measures.
5. The parts of the district within the New Forest National Park (the grey area on figure 1) are not covered by our Review. Instead, within the National Park, planning is the responsibility of the **New Forest National Park Authority** (NFNPA) who prepare a separate local plan for their area.
6. As introduced in the **Levelling up and Regeneration Act 2023**, we have a strengthened legal duty to further the purposes of both the New Forest National Park and the Cranborne Chase National Landscape. The National Park purposes are:
 - Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife, culture and heritage.
 - Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of national parks by the public.
7. If there is any conflict between these purposes, greater weight must be attached to the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park. The purpose of a National Landscape is to protect and enhance the natural beauty of the area. The natural beauty of these areas is the sum of its 'sense of place'. It includes geology, climate, landform, and species which together give rise to the industry, heritage, culture, and language of a place.

What is a local plan?

8. Local plans are the key documents through which local planning authorities can set out a vision and framework for the future development of the area, engaging with their communities in doing so. Our Plan will set out a strategy and policies for the use, development or protection of land and buildings in the Plan Area for at least 15 years. These policies are then used as the basis for determining planning applications.
9. The new Local Plan will replace the existing adopted policies set out in the current Adopted Local Plan, which comprises **Part One (adopted July 2020)**, **Part Two (adopted 2014)** as well as saved elements of the **Core Strategy (2009)**. The Plan will include policies that address the strategic priorities for the area. Policies will cover a diverse range of topics including climate change, housing, economy, infrastructure, biodiversity, and transport.
10. The Plan will not cover minerals and waste planning as this will be a matter for the Minerals and Waste Local Plan produced by the Hampshire minerals & waste planning authorities, led by **Hampshire County Council**.
11. In December 2024, the government published a new **National Planning Policy Framework** (NPPF). This document has been prepared in the context of the current NPPF and we will continue to have regard to any revisions to government policy as our review progresses. The government is seeking to significantly boost housing supply and delivery and has set a target to deliver 1.5 million dwellings across England by 2029.

Role of other Local Authorities, Agencies, Organisations, and Individuals in the Plan

12. Whilst we have responsibility to produce a local plan, other tiers of local government are also relevant to the process, both as consultees for the review, and because they have responsibilities and/or produce plans which we will need to have regard to. This includes Hampshire County Council, town and parish councils as well as neighbouring authorities.

13. More details of consultees and the consultation process can be found in our **Statement of Community involvement (SCI)**.

What are the stages of the production of the New Forest District Local Plan?

14. The local plan making process that the Council must follow is prescribed in **national regulations**.

15. More detail on the timetable is set out in our **Local Development Scheme (LDS)**.

16. The latest timetable, for the initial stages of Plan preparation, is set out below:

- Issues and Scope Consultation – Spring 2025
- Draft Plan Consultation – Autumn/Winter 2025
- Review of consultation, further testing and refinement – Winter/Spring 2025/26

What is this 'Issues and Scope' document about, and why are we seeking your views?

17. This consultation on Issues and Scope is the first formal stage of preparing our Local Plan.

18. At this stage we are looking for your views on whether we have identified the right issues facing our Plan and the scope of what the review should cover. We are also seeking your views on individual topics and some of the key issues the Plan will need to address.

19. This document sets out a summary on a wide range of issues and contains several questions that we would like your views on, but this is not the definitive list, and we would welcome your views on any other topics you feel we may have missed.

Spatial context

New Forest as a place

20. New Forest District lies on the south Hampshire coast between the conurbations of Southampton to the east and Christchurch / Bournemouth / Poole to the west. The New Forest National Park lies at the centre of the district. The Plan Area contains most of the district's population, settled in six market towns of Totton, Hythe, Lymington, New Milton, Ringwood and Fordingbridge as well as numerous smaller settlements and large areas of countryside. The settlements in the Plan Area can be identified as belonging to one of three main tiers of settlement as published in the **settlement hierarchy** from our existing Local Plan Part One:

- i. Towns: Fordingbridge, Hythe Village, Lymington, Marchwood, New Milton, Ringwood, and Totton.
- ii. Main Villages: Ashford, Blackfield, Bransgore, Everton, Fawley, Hardley, Holbury, Hordle, Langley, Milford-on-Sea, and Sandleheath.
- iii. Small Rural Villages: Breamore, Damerham, Ellingham, Harbridge, Ibsley, Martin, Rockbourne, Sopley and Whitsbury.

21. The hierarchy as currently adopted does not explicitly name all towns and villages, and we would welcome views on a revised hierarchy. The towns and villages covered by this Plan are set out in Figure 2.

22. According to the 2021 Census, the size of the New Forest population (including the National Park and the Plan Area) was 175,800 people (51.9% male, 48.1% female). The total population has decreased by 700 people (0.4%) since the previous census in 2011 when the population was 176,500. By contrast, the population in Hampshire has increased by 6.3% and the UK population has increased 6.6%. This makes New Forest one of only 25 authority areas within the UK to have shown a decrease in population since 2011. The New Forest has an ageing population and a decreasing working age population.

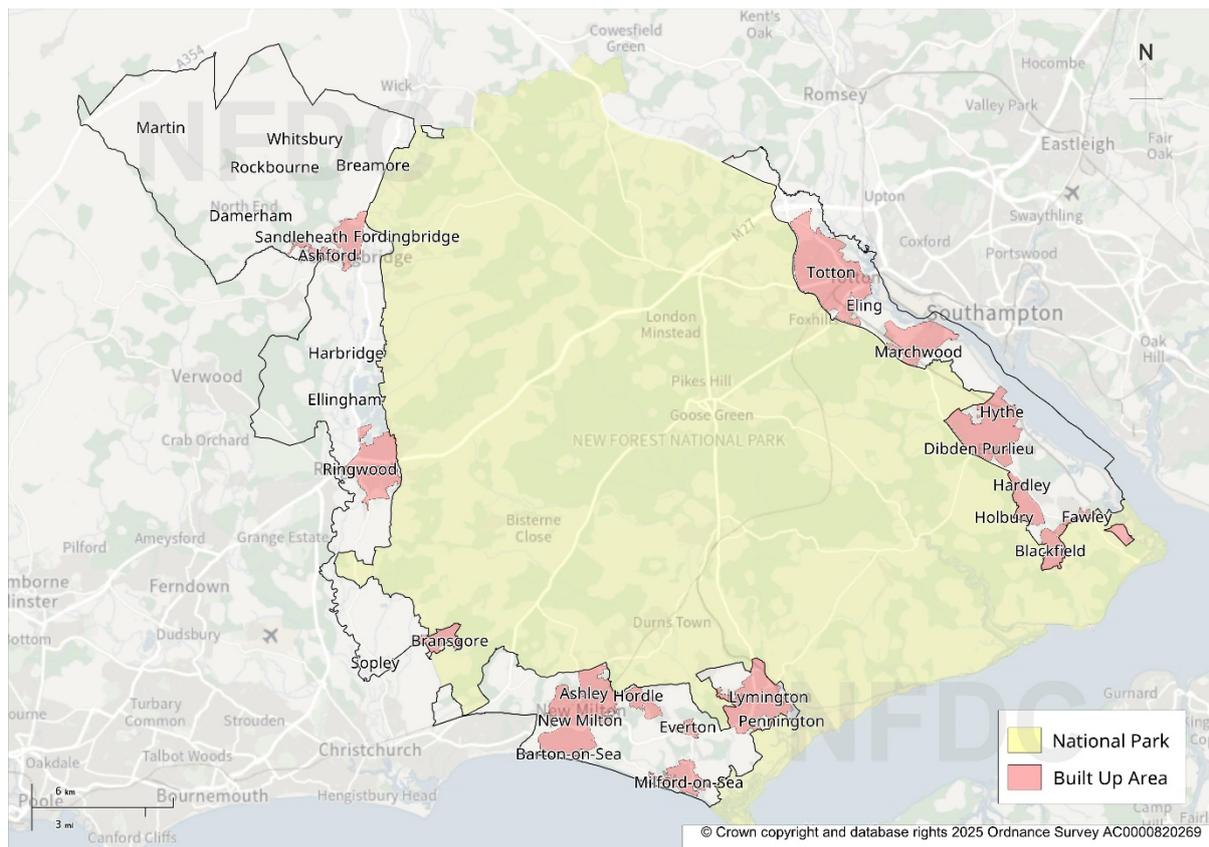


Figure 2: The settlements covered by our plan.

Relationship of the Plan Area to the National Park

23. The Plan Area houses most of the population of the New Forest as a whole and surrounds the New Forest National Park. The relationship between the Plan Area and the surrounding countryside, including the National Park, is a distinctive feature and one of the main attractions for residents and businesses seeking a green and natural environment in which to live and work. Due to the geographical nature of the Plan Area and the National Park, preserving our shared natural assets, including nationally and internationally significant nature conservation areas, is of great importance. Infrastructure, including transport links, is shared and interdependent between the National Park and the Plan Area. Due to government policy (including **paragraphs 189 and 190** of the NPPF) the majority of housing and other development to meet needs across New Forest District is expected to predominantly come forward within the Plan Area, outside of the National Park.

The Waterside

24. The Waterside lies between the National Park and Southampton Water. Much of the area is intensely developed with approximately 37% of the district's population living in the settlements of Totton, Eling, Marchwood, Hythe and Dibden, Hardley, Holbury, Blackfield, Langley and Fawley. The area falls within the Southampton housing and economic market areas, with the A326 providing the main access route linking the settlements with Southampton and the M27, and typically more rural roads linking the Waterside into the National Park. A historic ferry route links Hythe to Southampton, whilst a presently disused railway branch line runs between Fawley and Totton.
25. The area has a substantial amount of existing employment land, focused on sites in Totton and Marchwood and the Fawley Refinery. A significant increase in employment opportunities is forecast to become available as the **Solent Freeport** develops. Totton also has a large town centre with a smaller village centre at Hythe. Both settlements also have out-of-centre supermarkets. A number of local centres serve the other settlements.
26. Most of the coast and the Lower Test Valley is subject to national and international nature conservation designations. Open areas of countryside between the main settlements help to maintain their separate identities, accommodate green infrastructure, and are used for a variety of rural purposes, including agricultural grazing.

South Coastal Area

27. Located between the National Park and the Solent is the South Coastal Area. The largest towns are Lymington, Pennington and New Milton, with main villages including Milford-on-Sea, Hordle and Everton. There are significant employment estates at Lymington and New Milton, and both have large town centres. There is a village centre in Milford-on-Sea, and local centres elsewhere. Lymington is a historic and popular sailing centre, provides an important ferry route to the Isle of Wight and is an attractive visitor destination. Barton-on-Sea and Milford-on-Sea are also both important coastal destinations with the latter providing a key access point to the **English Heritage owned Hurst Castle** a popular tourist site located within the National Park.

28. The A337 links the main settlements with Christchurch to the west and to Brockenhurst and Lymington to the north. Access to the north and east is through the National Park, with some routes along forest roads. Whilst outside of the Plan Area, there is also a level crossing of the mainline railway at Brockenhurst as well as a great number of vehicular movements in Lyndhurst (particularly during the summer months), both of which can cause traffic issues and congestion.
29. There is an existing minerals extraction site at Downton Manor Farm with permission for up to 150 trips per day which is safeguarded in the Adopted **Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan**. The workings of minerals on this site are reaching its conclusion prior to planned restoration. As part of their **partial update to their Minerals and Waste plan**, the Hampshire minerals and waste planning authorities are proposing a new minerals extraction site at Ashley Manor Farm. This would replace the existing operations at Downton Manor Farm and would operate within the existing vehicular movements. The geology of the area means that a significant proportion of the remaining countryside is within a 'Mineral Consultation Area' for future minerals extraction prior to any potential alternative development.
30. Much of the coast is designated **nationally** for its nature conservation importance with a small area designated for its **international** nature conservation importance east of Milford-on-Sea. The cliffs at Barton-on-Sea are of international geological importance. This area contains the South-West Hampshire Green Belt which tightly surrounds all the settlements and adjoins the South-East Dorset Green Belt to the west.

Avon Valley and Western Downlands

31. This sub-area lies to the west of the National Park. Around 27,000 people live in the main settlements of Bransgore, Ringwood, Fordingbridge and the downland villages of Damerham, Martin, Rockbourne, and Whitsbury.
32. The River Avon also flows through this area from Salisbury before reaching the English Channel through Christchurch Harbour, and to the north-west of Fordingbridge lies the Cranborne Chase National Landscape which covers 6,750 hectares of the Plan Area and includes the downland villages.

33. The A338 runs between Christchurch, through Ringwood and Fordingbridge, to Salisbury. Ringwood has a large town centre with a smaller centre in Fordingbridge. There is also a small village centre in Bransgore. Ringwood contains some sizeable employment estates within the town and at Blashford. There are small settlements in the Avon Valley including Sopley, Ellingham, Harbridge, Ibsley and Breamore. The sub-area is divided between two housing market areas: the south including Ringwood and Bransgore look towards Bournemouth/Christchurch, while Fordingbridge and the north-west have strong links with Salisbury and Wiltshire.
34. The area has been subject to significant development pressure. The existing Local Plan Part One allocated strategic sites for housing development in Fordingbridge, Ringwood and Bransgore. There are existing minerals extraction sites and most of the land in this area is safeguarded in the Adopted **Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan**, which means that any future planning decisions will need to consider potential minerals and waste interests on suitable sites.

Our Current Spatial Strategy

35. Our existing **Local Plan** (2016 – 2036) sets out a spatial strategy for the area which outlines how development is distributed across the area for at least 10,420 dwellings. This is set out in **policy STR5**.
36. The existing Plan also acknowledged the role of good quality design principles in helping to shape places. The current spatial strategy is design, landscape and environment-focused, aiming to address the key issues under the following themes:
- Protect and enhance the special character and environment of the New Forest;
 - Provide more homes for local people;
 - Support local businesses to prosper for the benefit of the community; and
 - Promote the safety and wellbeing of people who live and work within the area.
37. The existing Plan identifies where growth will take place within the Waterside, the South Coastal towns and the Avon Valley with strategic sites allocated around the Plan Area as follow:
- Waterside – 3,230 dwellings
 - South Coastal Towns – 945 dwellings
 - Avon Valley and Downlands – 1,820 dwellings
38. The current spatial strategy locates development in accessible locations that help to sustain the vitality and viability of the towns and villages. It includes a settlement hierarchy based around towns, main villages, and small rural villages.
39. The current Plan promotes sustainable economic growth by retaining and supporting existing business sectors and safeguarding opportunities for future employment and business development. The strategy for economic growth reflected the observed unemployment rates in the Plan Area were generally low at the time of preparing the Plan and that with an ageing population the working age population was not forecast to increase significantly across the Plan period.

Spatial Vision and Outcomes

40. It is important that a local plan incorporates a vision. The vision should set out the intended character of the Plan Area and, with objectives, set out how we should deal with critical issues.

41. Developing a vision for the Local Plan involves looking ahead to what our Plan Area will be like in 15, 20 or even 30 years' time, and will likely include:

- a direction of travel as to how the Plan Area will evolve and places are shaped.
- the general location of where development will take place and where it will not.

42. The NPPF expects strategic policies to look ahead at least 15 years post adoption and to ensure that any proposed large scale development (e.g. a new settlement or significant extension to an existing settlement) is set within a vision of at least 30 years. Whilst a 15 year period would likely require a local plan period up to 2043, we are keen to understand what period you think this Plan should cover.

43. Our current **vision** for the Plan Area sets out how the areas and settlements within it will contribute towards its delivery, but as we start this review we need to consider what our new vision should be and what are the key issues to be considered.

Consultation questions:

1. What would you like see as our main focus for our review?
2. What do you think the key issues will be to deliver a new vision and why?
3. How should our Plan look to address the 'duty to seek to further the purposes' of the New Forest National Park and the Cranborne Chase National Landscape?
4. How long ahead should we plan for in the new Plan, and why?

What should the distribution of new development be?

44. The new Plan will contain policies that set out the overall spatial strategy for the distribution of development.
45. Our current strategy is to locate and direct new development to accessible locations that help to sustain the vitality and viability of the towns and villages of the Plan Area as the focal points of commercial and community life and as safe, attractive, and accessible locations to use and visit.
46. The existing **settlement hierarchy** is defined based on the availability within the settlement or ease of access to services like public transport, employment, schools and health facilities and shops or 'high street' facilities. It also considers the regeneration opportunities in the main towns and coastal communities.
47. An important issue to address in our review is whether to continue with this spatial development strategy or develop an alternative strategy. Options could include (but not limited to):
 - focus development according to the existing settlement pattern, with different scales of development considered appropriate for the town, main village, or small rural village,
 - an increased focus on brownfield sites and town centre regeneration,
 - identifying a site for a new settlement in a sustainable location, or other approaches such as a larger number of smaller developments in areas that are linked together,
 - Identifying sites where development could be justified through its special quality and ability to deliver benefits for redefining countryside and settlement edges.
 - focusing new development on established transport corridors such as the A326 and/or where access to larger existing market towns is possible,
 - Increasing densities on new developments to enable more homes to be delivered on smaller sites.

- Providing new development within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape (in that part of National Landscape that is within our Plan Area)

48. Whatever the development strategy proves to be, there will always be a need to reinforce and support existing communities to maintain and enhance local services and facilities.

Consultation questions:

5. In seeking to meet our identified development needs, what should our strategy be?
6. Is the existing settlement hierarchy appropriate, or are there changes that should be included?
7. Do you think it's appropriate for us to consider new development within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape?
8. Are there other strategic options that could help meet the need for development that we should also consider?

Relationship with the New Forest District Council Corporate Plan

49. Our new Local Plan will take forward the key commitments for the Council as set out in the **Corporate Plan**, adopted on 3 of April 2024 and provide the spatial dimension to it.

50. The Corporate Plan sets out the following Vision for New Forest District:

"To secure a better future by supporting opportunities for the people and communities we serve, protecting our unique and special place, and securing a vibrant and prosperous New Forest."

51. In addition to its Vision, the Corporate Plan sets out nine key commitments (priorities) the Council is making to New Forest District residents. These are divided into three priority themes, 'People,' 'Place,' and 'Prosperity' which are underpinned by the Future New Forest transformation program.

52. In order to group the large number of issues that need to be discussed in the Local Plan, the remainder of this document sets out the various topics that we believe need to be considered. These are grouped within the context of the Corporate Plan priority themes of People, Place and Prosperity. At this stage it is intended that these themes will be used as our Local Plan develops but we would welcome suggestions on any alternative structure.

Consultation questions:

9. Are our **Corporate Plan** priorities of 'People', 'Place' and 'Prosperity' appropriate to also be used for our Local Plan?

People

Helping people in the greatest need and creating balanced, resilient, and healthy communities who feel safe and supported with easy access to services.

Housing

53. Housing is a basic human right and a key priority for the government. It is important that we ensure that the right number and type of houses are delivered across the Plan Area. The Local Plan will need to set out the number of new homes to be provided and the distribution of these based on the spatial strategy for the distribution of development. Additionally, the size, type, and tenure of housing needed for different groups will need to be identified, including the proportion of the overall housing requirement that should be affordable.

Why does it matter?

54. There is a significant need for new homes across the Plan Area. The NPPF requires local authorities to prepare local plans that meet the housing needs of their areas wherever possible as currently supply is not meeting demand, and nationally developers have not been building houses where they are needed. There is also a need to take account of any development needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas.

55. Our review therefore needs to make sure it provides for a supply of homes in an appropriate way to address the needs of our communities.

What are the issues?

a) How much housing to plan for

56. To fulfil the government's priority of boosting the supply and delivery of housing, the NPPF 2024 requires local authorities to calculate the housing need for their area using a **standard method** which sets our housing need as 1,501 dwellings per annum. This is a near three-fold increase above our existing housing target and far above levels previously delivered in both the Plan Area and the National Park.

57. The housing need figure established by the standard method is the first step in the process of deciding how many homes should or can be planned for in as part of our review. It is undertaken separately from assessing whether sufficient land is suitable, available, and achievable. The extent of any unmet development needs in neighbouring areas which we need to consider has yet to be confirmed.

58. Our Plan Area is significantly affected by major physical and environmental designations and constraints. Approximately 57% of the Plan Area (i.e. outside of the National Park) is affected by constraints the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) lists in '**footnote 7**' as providing a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type, or distribution of development in the Plan Area. These constraints include nature conservation designations – of both international and national importance, Green Belt, areas at risk of flooding or erosion, and National Landscapes (formerly known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty). All these constraints and others will need to be considered when assessing sites for development and establishing the proposed housing requirement.

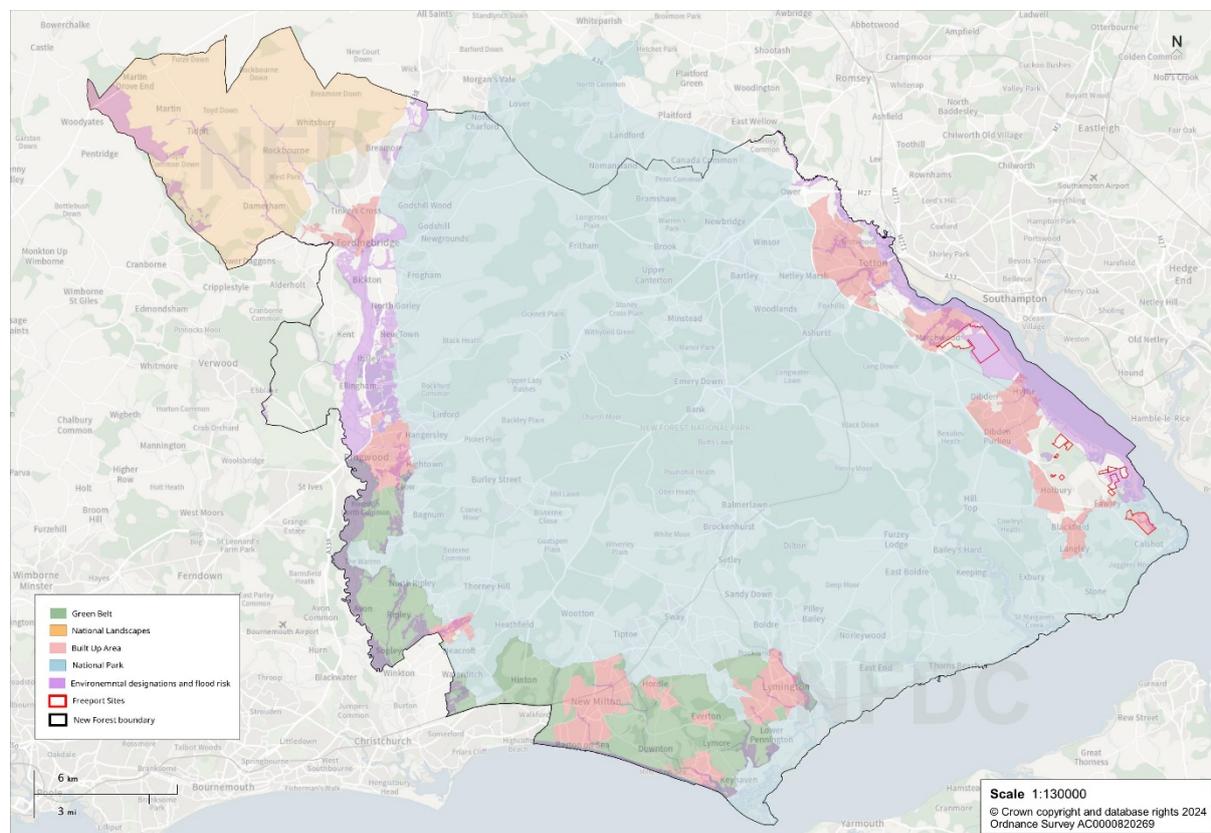


Figure 3: Constraints plan for the Plan Area.

59. Neighbourhood planning groups can prepare neighbourhood plans se determine sites to be allocated for development. The NPPF requires that strategic policies should set out the housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations.

b) Housing mix and affordable housing

60. The Council currently has approximately 2,100 households on its Housing Register awaiting affordable housing. Of these, most of the need is for 1 or 2 bedroom properties. Approximately 1,100 of the households on the Housing Register are in bands 1 & 2 of priority need (the highest priority needs).

61. We need to consider how to plan for the needs of our population and will need to consider the balance between letting the market find suitable sites within existing urban areas and the general policy framework of the Plan or through making more specific policy provision, perhaps through site specific requirements on land to be allocated for development. Notable demographic trends for our area include a decrease in total population and an ageing population with a decline in working age and school age cohorts. Whilst it is important not to simply seek to carry forward past trends, it is important to note that where there are demands for certain types of housing (e.g. housing for older people), this is also likely to generate a requirement for housing for younger people nearby to help service this specialised housing.

62. We also need to consider that a range of housing should be provided across the Plan Area to cater for all demographics.

c) Housing densities

63. As part of preparing a new Local Plan the density of sites will need to be considered. The NPPF makes it clear that site densities should be optimised (albeit not necessarily maximising) to promote the most efficient use of land. It is therefore important that as part of the plan we understand the character of a place should not seek to preserve things in a static way but should ensure an appropriate balance is struck between existing fabric and any proposed change. Opportunities for change and transformation, through new building forms, densities, and typologies, should be informed by an understanding of a place's distinctive character and landscape.

d) Second home ownership

64. 'A 'second home' is defined as a privately-owned habitable accommodation that is not occupied by anyone as their main residence. It may be occupied occasionally, for example as a holiday home or when working away from the household's main home. The 2021 Census has indicated that there are around 2,000 second homes in the New Forest District.
65. Whilst neither the NPPF nor Planning Practice Guidance make any direct reference to the ability for local plans to restrict second home ownership, it has been shown that second homes can have a positive economic effect on a wider area but simultaneously cause damage to the community cohesion and social fabric of settlements and harm the viability of key local services such as schools.

e) Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople

66. Historically, Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople communities have some links to the New Forest area and the communities make up a small, but higher-than-average, proportion of the local population. National policy is to ensure fair and equal treatment for Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life while respecting the interests of the settled community.
67. All local planning authorities are expected to make their own assessment of need and to develop fair and effective strategies to meet need, including ensuring there are sufficient authorised plots and pitches. There are currently 10 established sites within the Plan Area. Our new Plan should include fair, realistic and inclusive policy measures that have due regard to the protection of local amenity and local environment.

Consultation questions:

10. Do you have any comments on our housing need and how it can be met?
11. Are there any specific sites not currently allocated in existing local plans or otherwise permitted for development that should be considered for their development potential?
12. What role can town and parish councils have in addressing the development needs of the area, such as through preparing **neighbourhood plans**?

13. Should we consider a policy to restrict second home ownership within the area?

14. Are there any specific forms of affordable housing that we should aim to prioritise to provide for those most in need locally?

15. How should we aim to meet the housing needs of its population and the current population trends?

16. Do you have any comments on the range of densities that should be sought on new development sites?

17. How should we aim to meet the identified accommodation need of the Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople community?

Infrastructure

68. Infrastructure can be categorised into 3 broad types:

- Physical (necessary to connect homes and workplaces to the wider environment such as transport, waste and utilities to meet the day-to-day needs)
- Green (to maximise ecosystem services that support wild and human life, including blue infrastructure)
- Social (to ensure that the communities can function effectively and covers a wide range of assets such as affordable housing, education, healthcare, sports facilities, and libraries).

Why does it matter?

69. The provision of relevant infrastructure is key in delivering sustainable communities that function effectively. It is also critical that this infrastructure is delivered alongside development in a timely manner for the benefit of existing and new residents.

What are the issues?

a) The Council's role

70. Most infrastructure is provided by **organisations** other than the Council. It can be provided by private companies (e.g. electricity or sewage) or the public sector (e.g. health, transport, and education). The Council's responsibility is to ensure that new development is located and designed to minimise its demand on existing infrastructure and to work with those other organisations to ensure that any additional impacts arising because of development can be effectively mitigated through delivery of new or expanded, high quality infrastructure.
71. We will need to consider the cumulative impacts of development and identify the key infrastructure required to deliver the strategy such as new strategic transport schemes, utility networks, green infrastructure and community facilities including schools. These considerations will be informed by a refresh of the infrastructure evidence base, including an updated assessment of potential transport demands generated from new development to ensure that all forms of movement infrastructure are identified and planned for.

b) Digital infrastructure

72. There is a need to improve access to digital connectivity in rural areas by, for example, securing efficient full fibre broadband provision for all. Full fibre ensures that speeds can increase to keep up with demand which will continue to grow at even faster rates as more devices and services become connected and richer data needs to be transmitted.

c) Utilities

73. Much of the physical infrastructure required to provide services to new development is provided by private utility companies. These companies often have a statutory duty set out in legislation to provide the service to new development. There are concerns locally about the adequacy of existing wastewater treatment and conveyance and water supply (particularly in relation to flooding incidents affecting supply infrastructure). We are also aware of the need to provide additional electricity supply capacity to meet the needs for growth through a significant substation upgrade in the Totton area.

d) Social infrastructure

74. The Council is responsible for setting out the requirements at plan-making stage for social and community needs, including schools, access to nature, doctors' surgeries and community buildings. This will be identified through consultation with various key infrastructure providers with responsibilities in this area including the National Health Service and Hampshire County Council.

75. Larger developments have the capacity to deliver infrastructure on-site. Smaller developments may not be able to deliver a school, for example, but do contribute to a cumulative need for additional facilities (either through a **S106 agreement** or the **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** . The Council can seek funding from individual developments and collects the Community Infrastructure Levy to provide for cumulative needs.

e) The role of art and culture

76. Arts and culture play an integral and valuable role in making prosperous, healthy, and attractive places. Bringing people together, arts and culture provide a sense of vitality in our local areas; on our high streets, our town centres and in regeneration areas; contributing much to the current and future health and growth of where we live, work and play.

77. Cultural planning supports place making through considering what arts and cultural infrastructure can be secured through redevelopment and the planning process. We are currently preparing a cultural strategy for the District, which will sit alongside our plan and we will need to consider options for the creation of tangible creative ways for local communities to participate in both art and cultural activities.

Consultation questions:

18. What are the key infrastructure priorities that need to be delivered and how can they best be delivered?

19. What do you think are the key considerations for increased electricity generation from renewable sources in the New Forest (outside the national park), such as onshore wind or solar power?

20. Do you have any suggestions for incorporating art and culture into our Local Plan?

Health and wellbeing

78. The environment in which we live is a major determinant of human health and wellbeing.

Why does it matter?

79. The current planning system originated from focusing on basic human living conditions. Today, the health and wellbeing agenda is much broader, with determinants considered to influence health and wellbeing encompassing the physical, social, and economic environments.

80. Health and wellbeing should not be seen as an isolated topic and should be an important thread throughout the whole Plan.

What are the issues?

81. Planning for health involves thinking about the interrelated factors that affect health, including social and psychological elements, such as wellbeing. The wider determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live and age. A healthy place is one that can contribute to the prevention of ill health and provide the environmental conditions to support positive health and wellbeing.

82. As well as incorporating the design principles for active street layouts and public realm, which can also include enhancing our green spaces to improve physical and mental health, the Local Plan is likely going to need to consider ways to making it easier for people to make healthier choices, reducing social isolation and loneliness and reducing health and sustainability impacts (e.g. impacts to air quality).

Consultation questions:

21: Do you agree with the description of issues regarding health, wellbeing and are there other issues to consider?

22: What options do you think we should follow for addressing health and wellbeing?

Place

Delivering growth, opportunity and services that shape our place now and for future generations, within a unique environmental context, to ensure we remain a special place to live, work and visit.

Design (and placemaking)

83. The NPPF highlights that design centres around the creation of high quality and sustainable buildings, and places. Design and placemaking should be specific to its local area, and we will look to ensure we continue to have a good understanding of our local context of both settlements and countryside. Good design also supports the development of which also supports the development of healthy, safe, and sustainable communities.

84. Alongside our Local Plan we are also preparing a district wide Design Code

Why does it matter?

85. Design and placemaking encompass social and economic opportunity, creating an environment that supports health, wellbeing, and the quality of people's lives. Great places are safe and inclusive, well planned, and managed, offer equality of opportunity and good services for all, and promote a green economy. The NPPF **National Model Design Code** and **National Design Guide** underwrite these ambitions.

What are the issues?

a) **Key principles for designing good quality and sustainable places and communities**

86. The key principles for designing good quality and sustainable places and communities are:

- Active, inclusive, and safe;
- Environmentally sensitive;
- Well-designed and built;
- Well-connected;
- Thriving community/offer; and

- Future proofed.

87. Recognising that how we live in our homes has changed over the years, requiring flexibility to adopt to changing household needs, the NPPF allows us to require minimum space standards where the need can be justified.

Additionally, as part of our review we can consider whether there is justification to identify an approach to the provision of private amenity space in private or community gardens, as well as the functional use of external space, e.g. car parking, bin/cycle storage.

88. Additionally, we can look at the **Hampshire & Isle of Wight Home Movers Survey 2023** which looked to identify the key characteristics and views of occupiers of new homes across the wider Hampshire & Isle of Wight area. The survey showed that over 40% of new homes built within the New Forest area with three or more bedrooms were being occupied by two person households. It also highlighted that across Hampshire and Isle of Wight nearly 15% of people work solely from home and that 45% of households within the New Forest area currently had no one in employment (and the highest percentage of respondents aged 65+).

Consultation questions:

23. Are we identifying the correct principles for creating a place people want to live and work, or are there any others that need to be considered?

24. Should we seek to set a policy for the size of houses and gardens that are different from those set **nationally**?

Climate change

89. We declared a Climate Change and Nature Emergency in October 2021 to support the government's adoption of environmental objectives, including a **legally binding target to reach net zero emissions by 2050**. To drive progress against these targets, we are aligning activities across four programme areas:

- Carbon Reduction;
- Climate Adaptation;
- Nature Recovery; and

- Programme Management.

90. The key achievements to date, and short-term future plans, are detailed in the **NFDC Climate Change and Nature Emergency Annual Update Report**.

91. We have provided further extensive guidance on the implementation of climate change policies in the current adopted Local Plan through a **Supplementary Planning Document** (SPD). This sets out best practice approaches or standards that developers are encouraged to target or adopt, including to:

- Take all practical steps to decarbonise the running of buildings;
- Meaningfully reduce embodied carbon in construction; and
- Ensure that development is climate change adapted.

Why does it matter?

92. As sea level rises, coastal communities will be at increasing risk of tidal flooding and coastal erosion. Furthermore, all communities will experience more extreme weather which is predicted to lead to fluvial, ground and surface water flooding. This will adversely impact operational infrastructure, particularly where critical facilities are in areas at risk of flooding. There are significant financial and emotional costs for those who experience flooding, particularly where properties are difficult or expensive to insure.

What are the issues?

a) **Reducing the causes of climate change**

93. The Local Plan will need to provide a framework for development which reduces greenhouse gas emissions locally as part of the area's wider contribution to national objectives. This will include:

- Consideration of the distribution and location of development, to reduce the need to travel within and beyond the Plan Area and maximise opportunities to travel by other means;
- Sustainability standards for new buildings to minimise the demand for energy; and

- Identifying opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy generation and the associated infrastructure and, where possible, requiring this as part of new development.

b) Adapting to the effects of climate change

94. Significant parts of the Plan Area face some level of flood risk. Areas at risk include low-lying land near the coast and around water courses (including rivers, streams, and the feeder streams, drains and ditches that flow into them), and areas affected by rainwater surface run-off.

95. The approach to climate change adaptation and ensuring resilience to the effects of climate change will necessitate changes to the way buildings and development sites are planned and designed. These measures may include:

- Sustainability standards for new buildings to make them more resilient to the effects of climate change;
- Locating new development to minimise the risk of flooding, taking into account climate change predictions for sea level rise and increased fluvial, groundwater and surface water flood risk;
- Protecting water quality and maximising water efficiency; and
- Provision of multi-functional open spaces that can support carbon storage and address temperature increases, flooding, and soil erosion.

Consultation questions:

25. How do you think we should work towards achieving net zero?

26. What measures do you think we should take to ensure appropriate climate change adaptation, mitigation, and resilience?

27. Should we seek more ambitious targets and measures to address climate change?

28. Other than the private car, what other form of transport (including buses, walking, cycling, rail and water transport) would you use more if you could?

29. What approach should we take to large-scale renewable energy generation?

Natural Environment

96. The New Forest National Park lies at the centre of the district. With its remarkable range of plants and animals, and ancient tradition of commoning, the National Park is largely protected from major development. While the very high quality of the landscape and environment of the National Park dominates the district, the Plan Area includes other areas of high landscape and environmental quality, including part of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape, the valleys of the rivers Avon and Test and the coast.

97. We have an ambition that as a result of the Local Plan we leave the environment in a better state than it is now. That means achieving environmental net gain. The government has recently introduced a statutory requirement to achieve a minimum of 10% **Biodiversity Net Gain**.

Why does it matter?

98. Substantial parts of the Plan Area, including its coastline, are covered by statutory nature conservation designations, a large proportion of which include national, European, and international designations. Outside these there are also many sites that are covered by local nature conservation designations. There are also priority habitats and species, not all of which will be within designated sites. These designations are in place to protect endangered species and the habitats that support them.

99. Protecting and enhancing our natural environment in the area is fundamental to delivering a sustainable development strategy. The natural environment is an essential and precious asset and underpins our wellbeing and prosperity. The natural environment is therefore proposed to be at the core of the approach to our spatial strategy. There are legislative requirements to ensure that protected habitats and their landscapes are not harmed.

What are the issues?

a) Natural capital

100. The concept of natural capital is an important part of our growth strategy. The importance of accessible, good quality natural environments to encourage community cohesion, activity and healthy living is recognised as is the role of '**natural capital**' in enhancing economic prosperity, productivity and inward investment.
101. Recognising the complex ways in which our natural, social and economic systems interact enables us to make better decisions that protect and enhance the services and environment that we need.

b) Recreational impacts and nutrients

102. The recreational pressures arising from residential development within the Plan Area have a potentially harmful impact on the internationally important nature conservation sites within the New Forest and at the coast. To comply with legislation to protect the designated sites, measures need to be taken to ensure adverse effects on the integrity of protected sites from recreational impacts is avoided or mitigated.
103. The current adopted **Local Plan policy**, supported by the **NFDC Mitigation for Recreational Impacts on New Forest European Sites SPD** and the **Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy**, provides the strategy for mitigation to address the current scale and distribution of development provided for in the adopted Local Plan. This strategy will need to be reviewed against our new Plan.
104. Our current strategy comprises four main elements:
- New greenspace via the provision of new areas of publicly accessible Alternative Natural Recreational Greenspace (ANRG), required on schemes over 50 dwellings;
 - Enhancements and improvements to local existing greenspace and Footpath/Public Right of Ways (PRoW) located near to where new residential developments have taken place;

- Ongoing monitoring of the implementation and effectiveness of schemes, including monitoring usage, changes in overall visitor numbers, environmental impacts and realised benefits; and
- Access and visitor management delivered by our People and Wildlife Ranger to undertake educational and monitoring functions.

105. The impact of nutrient deposition (nitrates and phosphates) generated by increased wastewater treatment from new development can be harmful to protected habitats. Although new development only makes a very minor contribution to the nutrients reaching the protected habitats, it has to demonstrate that it is '**nutrient neutral**'.

c) Biodiversity and Biodiversity Net Gain

106. Key components of the **Environment Act** include the requirement of development to provide a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain and the opportunity to enter conservation covenants and register off site biodiversity gains. In addition, there is a requirement to prepare a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Hampshire (led by Hampshire County Council). This strategy will set out the priorities for nature recovery, identify areas of opportunity and help to shape how future funding will be spent to maximise benefits for both people and nature across the county.

d) Green and blue infrastructure

107. Green Infrastructure (GI), including blue infrastructure comprising the network of rivers and lakes, comprises a broad range of high-quality green spaces and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multi-functional resource capable of delivering ecosystem services and quality of life benefits. For example, GI supports healthier lifestyles (including opportunities for recreation and active travel), manages flood water, improves air quality, and helps to mitigate the effects of climate change. We have recently undertaken a review of the **Green Infrastructure opportunities** along the waterside.

e) Landscape character

108. Landscape character is unique to its location and influenced by physical and human interaction through history. These landscapes are what makes this area distinctive and there is a need to conserve and enhance many of the features of importance landscape settings, as well as recognising the importance of their views and vistas. A Landscape Character Assessment was last completed in 2000 and will be updated shortly.

109. Some landscapes are more sensitive to change than others. Development can impact on character and the quality of the landscape. The degree to which development will become a significant or defining feature in the landscape, including skyline (where additional development appears disproportionately dominant), and loss of sense of remoteness, will vary according to site location and the design and form of development proposed. Visual impacts concern the degree to which proposed development will become a feature in particular views (or sequences of views) and the impacts this has on people experiencing views.

f) Backup grazing land

110. Commoning is a way of life with a long history in the New Forest. The grazing of animals helps to suppress brambles, gorse, and other coarse vegetation, thereby creating the landscape of open lawns and trees. Backup grazing land outside of the forest is important to Commoners and can essentially act as functionally linked land to the open forest habitats in the core of the New Forest. The cost of grazing land is often significant and a serious constraint to the long term viability of Commoning.

111. Historically there has been no published map of where backup grazing land is, which makes it difficult to protect. Concerns have been previously expressed that this land was being lost to other uses (incl. development), without due consideration of the impact that the loss of such land can have on the New Forest SPA.

Consultation questions:

30. What should be our approach to ensuring that people don't harm the particularly environmentally sensitive parts of the New Forest, for example additional rangers, considering providing a new country park or new more local areas of accessible green space?
31. What are the key mechanisms we should use to achieve benefits for the environment? and how can this be measured?
32. Should we look to introduce biodiversity net gain targets above the mandated 10%?
33. How can we make greenspaces more accessible? Should we include minimum standards of access to green space (e.g. by size and type)?
34. How should we look to address the issue of backup grazing land? If so, what evidence is there to inform future considerations?

Green Belt

112. Government policy sets out that the Green Belt serves five purposes:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Why does it matter?

113. Whilst the Plan Area surrounds the National Park, the south-western part is also within the South West Hampshire and the adjoining South East Dorset Green Belt. A Green Belt for this area was first confirmed in 1958 and now stretches from Lymington at the east, Wareham to the west and Ringwood and Verwood to the north.

What are the issues?

114. Green Belt designation covers land outside defined settlement boundaries in all the South Coastal Towns sub-area, and all the Avon Valley and Downlands sub-area to the south of Ringwood. The extent of the Green Belt has been regularly reviewed in the New Forest, with relatively poorly performing land removed from the Green Belt in the adopted Local Plan to accommodate residential development. Our last **Green Belt study** was published in 2016.

115. In the latest 2024 NPPF a new classification of 'grey belt' was introduced. Grey Belt is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising Previously Developed Land and any other parcels and/or areas of Green Belt that make a limited contribution to Green Belt purposes (specifically those relating to limiting unrestricted sprawl, preventing coalescence and preserving setting and special character of historic towns) but excluding those areas or assets of particular importance listed in footnote 7 of the NPPF (other than land designated as Green Belt).

Consultation questions:

35. How should our previous **Green Belt study** be updated and what factors should be considered?

36. Are there current Green Belt sites that you feel have the potential for more positive uses?

Strategic Development Locations and Opportunities

116. We need to allocate land to meet the need for development, particularly considering the new housing targets from government. Whilst small scale development can be delivered quickly and can help regenerate existing urban areas, the scale of need means we will need to consider larger scale allocations.

Why it matters?

117. Strategic sites can offer the best opportunities to deliver sustainable development through contemporary approaches to place making and climate change adaptations. Larger sites can ensure the provision of infrastructure through on-site delivery and environmental mitigation can be designed as part of the overall scheme, providing easy access for new residents.

What are the issues?

a) Review of existing strategic site allocations

118. Our current adopted Local Plan includes strategic site allocations and some of these have progressed to deliver new homes and others are progressing through the planning process. The current status of the Adopted Local Plan strategic site allocations is set out in Appendix A.

b) Review of other existing site-specific proposals

119. The **Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management** adopted in 2014 sets out a number of detailed proposals and policies, including some smaller site specific allocations for development. Although the current Local Plan (2016-2036) Part One: Planning Strategy was adopted in 2020 many of the Local Plan Part 2 policies are still in place.

120. Given the amount of time since adoption it would be appropriate for us to consider whether any allocations from both plans that have not progressed to development should be continued or whether alternative uses should be considered, or the allocation is removed entirely.

c) Potential new strategic site allocations

121. We will also need to consider whether there are any additional strategic site allocations that could be brought forward through our review. The 'call for sites' carried out at the end of 2024 is likely to help identify new land and we anticipate similar exercises being carried out during the Plan's preparation.

Consultation questions:

37. Where existing site allocations have not yet come forward or progress has stalled, do you have any views on what the approach should be to those sites?

38. Are there further sites for any type of development that we should consider?

Open Space, Sport, Recreation and Play

122. Access to a range of high-quality open spaces and recreation opportunities is a key consideration when planning for both new development and existing communities.

Why it matters?

123. Open spaces provide health and recreation benefits to people living and working nearby. They have an ecological value and contribute to green infrastructure. They can also help provide alternative recreational areas away from sensitive ecological sites and can be an important component in the achievement of sustainable development.

124. Open spaces can also be a focal point for community social activities. As part of a wider commitment to equalities, open spaces should meet the needs of all users, older and younger, male and female, able-bodied and physically impaired, as well as simple preferences for a range of passive and active forms of recreation.

What are the issues?

a) Approach to formal sport

125. Formal sports are those activities which use both indoor and outdoor facilities for organised activities such as playing pitches and indoor sports facilities. Audits and quality assessments of existing facilities are already well under way and are being informed by consultation and interviews with local sports clubs, sport's governing bodies, leisure centres, schools, providers of pitches and facilities and clubs, etc.

126. The current and anticipated future demographic and socio-economic profile of the Plan Area will be reviewed to ensure a clear understanding of the size and activity rates of the communities that the indoor and outdoor sports facilities strategy are likely to need to serve.

b) Approach to parks, amenity open space and greenspace

127. This category includes parks and gardens, amenity open space, play areas, accessible natural & semi-natural greenspace, cemeteries and churchyards and allotments.

128. Quantity and access standards will be applied to ensure the Plan Area has sufficient accessible provision of the full range of open space types to serve the needs of all users.

129. As well as the above, the provision of country parks is also being considered. Created to provide recreational attractions, country parks typically provide a range of facilities and a supervisory service via car borne visitors. Country parks are usually operated as a single unit and managed by statutory bodies, or private agencies or a combination of both. The New Forest has one country park at Lepe, with Moors Valley and Avon Heath Country Parks located just outside the Plan Area in Dorset.

c) Approach to equipped play areas

130. Equipped areas of play are currently being assessed with regard to their quantity, access, and quality of provision. Standards will be proposed in response informed both by national benchmarks, the results of this assessment, previous policy, and local consultation.

131. The current policy approach for the provision for play areas are that where they are proposed to be provided, they should have a range of equipment to fully engage users.

132. Our existing policies also promote an inclusive approach to make new equipped play areas accessible to all ability ranges.

133. In addition, there is a need to ensure that existing play equipment meets accessibility standards.

Consultation questions:

39. What should we do to ensure there is sufficient provision of open space, which is also functional and attractive to our residents?
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40. What do you believe should be our approach to providing open space? This could be either creating a few new larger sized destinations for play areas, sports pitches, smaller scale areas as part of new developments or a new country park?

Historic Environment

134. The historic environment forms an important part of the Plan Area's character, landscape, and settlements. Significant elements of the historic environment are termed 'heritage assets' and include any building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, including below-ground archaeology.

135. Designated heritage assets include scheduled monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, and conservation areas. Our Plan Area contains many **heritage assets of national importance**, as well as undesignated heritage assets which contribute positively to its special character and appearance.

Why does it matter?

136. The historic environment is a key part of the distinctive character of the Plan Area. Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource that need to be conserved so that they can be enjoyed and contribute to the quality of life and social vitality of existing and future generations. It is sensitive to change and needs to be properly understood to make sure it is sensitively managed and properly conserved. There may be opportunities to enhance the significance of the historic environment and it is important that these are identified and realised.

137. The NPPF requires local plans to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay, or other threats.

What are the issues?

138. Our review will consider the need to update the current policy approach to the historic environment in the Adopted Local Plan (**Part 2: Sites and Development Management Document**). In line with the NPPF, the policy framework will ensure great weight is given to protecting heritage assets and their settings.

139. It is important that adverse impacts associated with development, whether they are direct, such as new building, or indirect, such as traffic generated by development, are avoided. If they are not capable of being avoided, adverse impacts will require compelling justification. Impacts must then be minimised and mitigated.

Consultation questions:

41. What should our approach be in relation to the historic environment?

42. How can we secure the sustainable long-term use of our heritage assets, and help to protect archaeological features as part of new development?

Prosperity

Promoting a strong local economy that delivers its inclusive aspirations through effective partnerships, attracting investment, and increasing skills and employment opportunities.

Economy

140. We published an **Economic Profile of the District** in 2022 highlighting that the New Forest is the fourth largest economy in Hampshire. The leading business sectors are the marine, land-based activities, hospitality & leisure, manufacturing, and care sectors.

141. We will need to consider whether changes to retailing and the demand for floorspace mean that policies for retailing and town centres need updating. There are also policies related to tourism, and marine-related businesses (including protecting their waterfront access) in the 2014 Part 2 Local Plan, that the Council will need to consider updating. . Evidence studies will also be carried out to understand the demand for new employment floorspace within other areas and not just town centres.

Why does it matter?

142. The NPPF sets out that local plans should set out a clear economic vision and strategy which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth and that meets anticipated needs.

143. Encouraging a strong local economy and appropriately addressing economic/employment floorspace need is important because a strong local economy can create employment opportunities, bring inward investment, and contribute to creating sustainable and prosperous communities.

What are the issues?

a) Need for employment land/floorspace

144. Ensuring we make provision for the delivery of an appropriate amount and type employment floorspace across the Plan Area to meet the need for local economic growth is something we need to address. The new Local Plan will need to set out the amount of floorspace or land to provide across the Plan Area, with the distribution based on the spatial strategy for the distribution of development. We will also need to consider the protection of existing employment land.
145. The Solent Freeport is a major economic intervention with expected significant future impact on the New Forest. Whilst planning applications for nationally significant development proposals would be likely to be determined by the government, there are likely to be implications for the local economy beyond the Freeport boundaries.
146. The Partnership for South Hampshire published an '**Economic, Employment and Commercial Needs (including logistics) Study**' in 2021 which includes some information on future needs in the east of the Plan Area. We will also be commissioning our own needs study for the New Forest as part of our evidence base.

b) Where can employment land or floorspace be delivered?

147. Potential locations for new employment allocations will need to be considered and these could form part of mixed-use new communities, providing local jobs near to where people live. Any new sites should relate to the scale and type of likely commercial demand for employment in these locations as identified by the economic needs evidence base. For example, this may include smaller scale office and industrial units.

c) Solent Freeport

148. The Solent Freeport was officially designated in December 2022. Within the Plan Area there are four Freeport tax sites: Fawley Waterside, Fawley refinery complex, Marchwood Port and ABP Strategic Land Reserve. Marchwood Port is also a Freeport custom site. The **Solent Freeport Full Business Case** identifies that the initiative has the potential to unlock significant investment, create thousands of new jobs and enhance the region's credentials as a global gateway into the UK. The incentives to support investment on tax sites are now in place, including business rates relief and other incentives to support capital investment. At the same time, business rates growth which results from that investment will be pooled and reinvested in the area.

d) Port employment

149. We will be commissioning a study to examine the indicative potential need for and the implications of the potential expansion on the Port of Southampton for land in the Plan Area. This will help to inform the policy approach and in particular the review of policies related to Marchwood Port, ABP Strategic Land Reserve and the former Fawley Power Station.

e) Protection of Employment Land

150. Whilst there is considerable pressure to identify land for housing development, we will need to consider the degree to how we protect existing employment sites and whether there are any sites not suitable for continued employment use that should be allocated for housing. When considering this, it will be important to ensure the local economy is still able to function well and to grow and adapt to future requirements.

f) Town and local centre uses

151. Town centre uses are defined within the **NPPF**, with retailing experiencing a decline in traditional 'high-street' shopping as consumers switch to on-line ordering and home deliveries, a trend which accelerated during the pandemic. Existing local centres, however, continue to provide a reasonably good range of services and facilities for the communities living within and around them.

152. Our current adopted Local Plan currently defines town centre boundaries and primary, and secondary shopping frontages, where different planning policies apply. Local shopping frontages are also defined for shopping parades elsewhere in most towns and in the large villages. We will need to consider whether the policy approach to these areas is still appropriate, with the objective of ensuring that they are/remain areas that are vibrant and resilient. We would also welcome your views on whether the extent of the town centre and shopping frontage boundaries is still appropriate.

g) Tourism

153. Tourism is an important part of the local economy. The National Park, whilst out of our Plan Area, is a major tourist attraction for day visitors and those who stay overnight in the many hotels and campsites. Businesses and residents from outside the National Park benefit from the economic and employment opportunities generated within it. There can be pressure for tourism related development that cannot be accommodated within the National Park. In addition, parts of the northwest of the Plan Area (e.g. Fordingbridge and Cranborne Chase) and the coast (e.g. Lymington) attract tourists.

Consultation questions:

43. How can we make our high streets more vibrant?
44. How can we ensure that the opportunities from the Solent Freeport designation are made available to all New Forest residents?
45. Are there any existing employment sites that are no longer appropriate, or attractive for that use and should be considered for alternative development?
46. What should be our approach towards town centres and primary, secondary, and local shopping frontages? Do the boundaries that appear on our **policies map** need to be changed and if so, how?
47. In relation to tourism, should we consider allocating new, or protecting existing, land or sites for new tourist attractions or accommodation?

Transport

154. Having sufficient and appropriate transport infrastructure is key as it is a vital way for how we move around the Plan Area, and wider New Forest, for both work and recreation.

Why it matters?

155. The location of development can be critical to both the demand for travel and the way that demand is met. Residents of new homes will be significantly less reliant on the car-use if they are able to access other modes of travel. In the 2021 Census, across New Forest District nearly 12% of people responded indicated that they did not have a car, this number increased in the towns of Totton (nearly 20%) and Ringwood (nearly 17%).

156. Lower density development, and poorly located development tends to be associated with increased car use due to the difficulty in providing viable public transport services at a frequency or cost that is a realistic alternative to the car. It is important to consider the issue of how to potentially increase densities close to services and facilities in accessible locations and along accessible transport corridors.

157. The new Local Plan will identify future opportunities to achieve connectivity through sustainable modes of transport and active travel, a priority in the **Hampshire Local Transport Plan 4**. In terms of distance, many of the main towns in the Plan Area are located relatively close to one another, albeit around the edge of the National Park. Green Infrastructure and new walking and cycling routes provide opportunities to facilitate modal shift, acknowledging that public transport will be important, particularly for longer distances.

158. The approach to transport is also important in the context of designing and delivering high quality places and sustainable communities including a move towards Healthy Streets. Healthy Streets is a human-centred framework for embedding public health in transport, public realm, and planning. Focusing on the needs of people to use the environment can lead to more attractive places with more space for landscaping and tree planting. Conversely insufficient road access or parking provision can lead to adverse environmental impacts.

What are the issues?

a) Roads

159. Development inevitably leads to increased traffic on local roads, alongside background traffic growth. The NPPF makes clear that development should only be prevented on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual impacts on the road network would be severe. Where site specific development is being considered, plans should ensure that any significant impacts from development in terms of capacity and congestion or on highway safety should be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.

b) Public transport

160. Although parts of our Plan Area have excellent local and regional rail links, there are large areas in the Avon Valley and the Waterside that do not have easy access to rail.

161. The towns and villages of the Plan Area, which surrounds the National Park, are currently relatively well served by bus with at least hourly frequencies connecting the local towns and providing access to Christchurch, Bournemouth, and Southampton. Some community transport provision is available across the Plan Area but is not an NFDC function. The viability of bus services in the future is unclear with current public subsidies subject to regular review.

162. Whilst the location and form of development are important to achieving modal shift, the provision of improved wider transport infrastructure is reliant on investment by the public sector (UK Government and County Council) and the private sector (e.g. public transport operators). Higher density residential development should ideally be located close to existing public transport or be demonstrably capable of supporting new public transport routes.

c) Travel by water

163. The Plan Area also has two ferry routes, the Hythe to Southampton ferry and the Lymington to Isle of Wight ferry. There may be potential opportunities to further support and encourage water-based travel in the area, notably on the Waterside.

d) Active travel

164. Active travel comprises walking and cycling. This mode of travel offers health and wellbeing benefits as well as being zero carbon in operation.

165. The design and layout of development is important to encourage active travel choices. On larger sites the provision of attractive and convenient cycling and walking infrastructure is essential. Streets and public spaces can be designed so that the car does not dominate. All new buildings should have secure and accessible cycle parking.

166. The County Council has prepared a **New Forest Waterside Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (2022)**. This identifies cycling and walking improvements required at the local level across the Waterside to encourage more people to cycle or walk for local journeys. The County Council, NFDC, the National Park Authority and Forestry England have been working together to prepare a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for the rest of the New Forest. This is expected to be finalised in 2025 and is expected to identify an extensive network of cycle routes across the area together with walking zones for the main residential settlements.

Consultation question:

48. What are the key transport issues to be addressed to help new development come forward?

49. How can our planning policies help make you, and others, travel by the sustainable modes of walking, cycling and public transport?

Viability

167. Many of the requirements that we place on development, including the percentage of affordable housing, that we can realistically seek on housing development sites will be based on viability evidence.

Why does it matter?

168. The principle of securing developer contributions towards this infrastructure (and affordable housing) remains the same as before in the NPPF, with both S106 and the **Community Infrastructure Levy** (CIL) are able to be collected. There are public benefits arising from the use of these contributions, in providing infrastructure to support development. However, we will need to produce robust evidence to allow us to ensure that development proposed creates sustainable development and incorporates many of the topics covered in this document.

What are the issues?

169. The value of a scheme is calculated through the 'residual valuation' method and is done at a plan level approach rather than on a case-by-case basis. This method establishes scheme value and then deducts the costs incurred to develop the scheme. These costs are comprised of build costs (materials and labour), developer's profit, finance costs, professional fees, land costs and Section 106 costs. If there is any surplus after these costs have been deducted from the scheme value, the scheme could accommodate additional affordable housing, CIL, or Section 106.

170. If scheme value is lower than total costs, then an adjustment needs to be made. One of the key variables on the cost side needs to fall (either land cost, profit, build costs or CIL) to ensure the scheme is viable.

171. Our last viability study was undertaken as part of our previous Local Plan review. As part of preparing our new Local Plan, we will need to undertake a new viability assessment which will also look to review our CIL Charging Schedule. Our previous study was undertaken prior to the imposition of nutrient neutrality issue which is known to have significantly impacted viability.

Next Steps

Issues and Scope consultation

172. This Issues and Scope consultation is the first stage in preparing our new Local Plan and runs from:

Dates to be confirmed post Cabinet decision.
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173. It is important to clarify that at this stage no views have been formed on the scale of growth, which sites and locations should be allocated for new development, how adopted policies should be updated or whether there should be any additional policies. Key evidence base studies, and the responses to the Issues and Scope consultation document will help to inform and contribute to the development of detailed planning policies and proposals at later stages of the plan making process.

174. The next stage in the preparation of the Local Plan, following this consultation, is expected to be the preparation of a range of draft planning policies and proposed site allocations to meet the level of growth we are planning for. We hope to consult on these in the form of a full draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) later this year. The development and consideration of spatial options will also need to take account of a range of influences such as the plans of adjoining authorities and planned infrastructure provision.

175. Following consultation on the draft Local Plan the Council will prepare the final version of the new local plan (Regulation 19) that it intends to submit for Examination – known as the ‘Publication’ or ‘Pre-submission’ Local Plan. There will be another round of consultation at this stage and the opportunity for comments to be made on whether the proposed local plan is ‘sound’ and legally compliant. The timetable for this is still to be determined but all information on the plan-making timetable will be updated in the Council’s **Local Development Scheme** which currently only timetables to the end of the 2025. This timetable will be updated in response to the comments made in this Issues and Scope consultation and taking account of any further announcements of changes in legislation from government.

Consultation question:

50. Are there any issues that you feel we have missed and should be addressed?

How to respond to the consultation

Details to be provided once consultation arrangements are finalised.

Glossary of key terms

A glossary of key terms can be viewed via:

<https://www.planningportal.co.uk/services/help/glossary>

Appendix A

Status of strategic sites

The status as of February 2025 of the Adopted Local Plan strategic site allocations is set out in the table below. For the most up to date information on the progress of each of the below sites please visit the [Strategic Sites Progress](#) page on the New Forest District Council website.

Site	Minimum proposed new homes / floorspace	Homes permitted or with committee resolution to grant	Current planning status
Strategic Site 1 Land to the north of Totton	1,000 homes 5ha employment land	623 (80 of which delivered as of 1 April 2024)	Some planning permissions in place and homes being delivered
Strategic Site 2 Land south of Bury Road, Marchwood	700 homes (plus a potential further 300 homes on land currently occupied by the solar array)	0	No planning application(s) submitted currently. Phased to commence from 2030/31
Strategic Site 3 Land at Cork's Farm, Marchwood	150 homes	150	Outline planning permission. Reserved Matters planning application pending decision
Strategic Site 4 The former Fawley Power Station	1,380 homes 10,000 sqm community uses 10ha land for business and industrial use	0	Outline planning application withdrawn in July 2024

Site	Minimum proposed new homes / floorspace	Homes permitted or with committee resolution to grant	Current planning status
Strategic Site 5 Land at Milford Road, Lymington	185 homes	90	Land south of Milford Road, Pennington – outline planning permission granted, reserved matters planning application granted Land north of Milford Road, Pennington – full planning application pending decision
Strategic Site 6 Land to the east of Lower Pennington Lane, Lymington	100 homes	0	Outline planning application pending decision for majority of the site. Full planning application pending decision on remaining area of the site
Strategic Site 7 Land north of Manor Road, Milford on Sea	110 homes	170	Outline planning application pending decision

Site	Minimum proposed new homes / floorspace	Homes permitted or with committee resolution to grant	Current planning status
Strategic Site 8 Land at Hordle Lane, Hordle	160 homes	10	The Coal Yard – full planning permission granted Land at Hordle Lane – outline planning application pending decision
Strategic Site 9 Land east of Everton Road, Hordle	100 homes	97	Full planning permission granted with works underway on site
Strategic Site 10 Land to the east of Brockhills Lane, New Milton	130 homes	164	Full planning permission granted
Strategic Site 11 Land to the south of Gore Road, New Milton	160 homes	178	Outline planning application pending decision
Strategic Site 12 Land to the south of Derritt Lane, Bransgore	100 homes	100	Full planning permission granted
Strategic Site 13 Land at Moortown Lane, Ringwood	480 homes	443	Hybrid planning application

Site	Minimum proposed new homes / floorspace	Homes permitted or with committee resolution to grant	Current planning status
			pending decision
Strategic Site 14 Land to the north of Hightown Road, Ringwood	270 homes 3ha employment land	400 3ha employment land	Outline planning application pending decision
Strategic Site 15 Land at Snails Lane, Ringwood	100 homes	0	Outline planning application refused in 2021
Strategic Site 16 Land to the north of Station Road, Ashford	140 homes	198	Full planning permission granted and development started
Strategic Site 17 Land at Whitsbury Road, Fordingbridge	330 homes	406 (7 of which delivered as of 1 April 2024)	Some planning permissions in place and homes being delivered
Strategic Site 18 Land at Burgate, Fordingbridge	400 homes	518 (36 of which delivered as of 1 April 2024)	Some planning permissions in place and homes being delivered

Overall through the current strategic site allocations there is an indicative figure of new homes totalling 5,995 with 3,547 either with being built, having been granted planning permission or have a resolution to grant permission (subject to the completion of legal agreements).

Status of sites within Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management DPD

The number of homes from the sites in the table below is 1,095.

Site Name	Allocation / Planning Permission Reference	Status on Progress
Land at Durley Farm, Totton	TOT1 First allocated in 2014 Identified Reserve Site in 2005	The site is situated on the southern edge of Totton. The site consists of agricultural land and a woodland and grassland Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). No recent progress has been made in bringing the allocation forward for development.
Land at Hanger Farm, Totton	TOT3 Permissioned: 07/89872 Detailed, 05/83625 Detailed – 330 dwellings	This is a greenfield site with highway access points in place and there are no onerous infrastructure requirements. This site has longstanding detailed permissions for 330 dwellings. However, there has been no further progress with building out the site for well over 10 years.
Manor Farm Building, Hanger Farm, Totton	Permissioned: 03/78798 Outline, 05/85757 Reserved Matters – 13 dwellings	This site adjoins Hanger Farm (TOT3) and is owned by the same developer. This site has longstanding permissions for a net gain of 13 dwellings. However, there has been no further progress with building out this site for well over 10 years.
Land at Jackie Wigg Gardens, east of Brokenford Lane, Totton	TOT6 First allocated in 2005	This is a small remaining parcel at the very southern end of the wider TOT6 allocation. The rest of the TOT6 allocation has now been built out. No recent progress has been made in bringing forward this small remaining parcel. The parcel is still in active commercial (car repair/light industrial) use.
Bus Depot, Salisbury Road, Totton	TOT9 First allocated in 2014	The site is in a mainly residential area and is currently in use as a bus depot. No recent progress has been made in bringing the site forward for residential development.

Site Name	Allocation / Planning Permission Reference	Status on Progress
Land at Eling Wharf, Totton	TOT11 First allocated in 2005	No recent progress has been made in bringing the site forward for residential-led mixed-use development. The site is being used for port related needs. There are significant constraints affecting redevelopment opportunities on this site including: the site is likely to be heavily contaminated from previous industrial uses and therefore remediation will be required, forecast sea level rises and flood risk including the site adjoining land that is within Flood Zone 2 and 3 will need to be addressed, and impacts on the adjacent Solent and Southampton Water Natura 2000 sites will need to be addressed.
Land between Cracknore Hard Lane and Normandy Way, Marchwood	MAR1 First allocated in 2014 Identified Reserve Site in 2005	The site is currently in use as a car park. No recent progress has been made in bringing the site forward.
Land off Mulberry Road, Marchwood	MAR4 First allocated in 2014	This site is an area of grassland within a residential area. No recent progress has been made in bringing the site forward.
Land at Cabot Drive, Hythe	HYD2 First allocated in 2014	NFDC's housing development team has been in dialogue with Hampshire County Council to acquire this small site. Negotiations are ongoing.
Land adjacent to Blackfield Primary School, Blackfield	BLA1 First allocated in 2014	This site is part of a former golf course at the northern edge of Blackfield adjacent to the north of Blackfield Primary School. No recent progress has been made with the site forward.
LYM4 Land at 142-144 Southampton	LYM4 First allocated in 2014	The southern third of the allocation has been implemented delivering 4 dwellings. The remaining undeveloped portion of this site has an extant planning permission for 6 dwellings for

Site Name	Allocation / Planning Permission Reference	Status on Progress
Road, Lymington	Permissioned: 10/96153 – 6 dwellings	which foundation trenches have been dug but no further work has happened for several years. The site is currently overgrown scrub.
Fox Pond Dairy Depot and Garage, Milford Road, Lymington	LYM5 First allocated in 2014	The site is in currently in use for a mix of commercial uses. No recent progress has been made in bringing the site forward for the uses envisaged by the allocation. A full planning application (19/11555) sought to develop the southern part of the site for A1/A5 use which was refused in April 2020 and subsequently dismissed at appeal. Some Prior Approval applications have been made for small-scale residential development (18/11353, 17/10576, 17/11278 – all refused) and an application for a first-floor extension to the existing office building (20/10501 – refused and subsequently dismissed at appeal) on parts of the area of the northern part of the site.
Land off Park Road, New Milton	NMT3 First allocated in 2014	This is a greenfield site on the northwest edge of New Milton next to an existing residential area. No recent progress has been made in bringing the site forward.
Land east of Caird Avenue, New Milton	NMT4 First allocated in 2005 NMT6 First allocated in 2014	The site is situated to the south of Carrick Way and is currently used for industrial purposes and as part of the mineral / gravel workings on the Solent Industrial Estate. The western portion of the site (NMT4/NMT5) is allocated in the 'made' New Milton Neighbourhood Plan for commercial development only as residential development is no longer considered possible on the site. Policies NMT4 and NMT5 are therefore superseded by Policy NM3 of the New Milton Neighbourhood Plan. The eastern part of the site (NMT6) is in use for gravel processing / extraction.

Site Name	Allocation / Planning Permission Reference	Status on Progress
Ashley Cross Garage, Ashley Lane, New Milton	NMT8 First allocated in 2014	No recent progress has been made in bringing the site forward. The site is currently in commercial (garage/car showroom) use.

Appendix B

Design Principles

Key principle	Outcome
Active, inclusive, and safe - Fair, tolerant, and cohesive with a strong local culture and other shared community activities	Development proposals will support strong, vibrant, and healthy communities where people feel safe, healthy, socially connected, and proud of where they live.
Environmentally sensitive - providing places for people to live that are considerate of the environment	New development will respect and make use of the natural and historic character of the Plan Area and ensure that all residents and visitors can benefit from the advantages these characteristics offer.
Well designed and built - featuring quality built and natural environment	Sustainable communities offer: sense of place - a place with a positive 'feeling' for people and local distinctiveness user-friendly public and green spaces with facilities for everyone including children and older people sufficient range, diversity, affordability and accessibility of housing within a balanced housing market, appropriate size, scale, density, design, and layout, including mixed-use development, that complement the distinctive local character of the community, high quality, mixed-use, durable, flexible, and adaptable buildings, using materials which minimise negative environmental impacts. Buildings and public spaces which promote health and are designed to reduce crime and make people feel safe.

Key principle	Outcome
	accessibility of jobs, key services, and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling.
Well connected - with good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services	Sustainable communities offer: transport facilities, including public transport, that help people travel within and between communities and reduce dependence on cars. Facilities to encourage safe local walking and cycling and an appropriate level of local parking facilities in line with local plans to manage road traffic demand. Widely available and effective telecommunications and Internet access, good access to regional, national, and international communications networks.
Thriving Community/offer - with a flourishing and diverse local economy	Sustainable communities feature: a wide range of jobs and training opportunities, sufficient suitable land and buildings to support economic prosperity and change, dynamic job and business creation, with benefits for the local community a strong business community with links into the wider economy economically viable and attractive town centres.
Future proofed - climate resilient, adaptable, and fit for the future	Development and infrastructure should be fit for the future and incorporate resilience to climate change as well as allowing flexibility to adapt to new smart technology such as that emerging for independent living.

Cabinet – 5 February 2025

Community Grant Funding 2025/26

Purpose	For decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>The Council’s Corporate Plan prioritises the delivery of an annual Community Grants scheme to support organisations delivering wide-ranging services to different communities and to meet the needs of vulnerable residents in the district through the award of discretionary revenue and capital grants to support organisations which meet the Council’s objectives.</p> <p>Changes to the Community Grants application and decision-making process were implemented in 2024, ahead of this year’s process. This report proposes the award of financial grants following this new process.</p> <p>The proposals in this report include total awards of community revenue grants of £250,000, summarised as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) An increase to Councillor Community Engagement Grants from £600 to £1,000, totalling £48,000, from April 2025 b) Revenue grants of £152,500, of which £67,000 are longer term awards. c) The proposed budget for 2025/26 for the Community Transport schemes of £44,359, and, d) If taken forward, the set-up cost of a Community Lottery of £5,000. <p>An allocation of up to £100,000 is available toward capital community grant applications. The proposals in this report include total awards of community capital grants of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e) £77,871 <p>This report details the consideration of adopting a community lottery scheme to provide further</p>

	funding opportunities and support to local organisations.
Recommendations	<p>Part A</p> <p>As recommended by the T&F Group and Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel that the Cabinet approve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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, for inclusion in the Medium-Term Financial Plan and proposed budget for 2025/26 3. The Community Transport grants totalling £44,359, as set out in paragraph 25. <p>Part B</p> <p>As recommended by the T&F Group and Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel that the Cabinet request Officers 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.</p>
Reasons for recommendation	To complete the Community Grants process for 2025/26.
Wards	All
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Dan Poole – Housing and Communities
Strategic Director	Richard Knott – Strategic Director Housing and Communities
Officer Contact	Ryan Stevens Service Manager Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services 02380 285693 Ryan.stevens@nfdc.gov.uk

Introduction and background

1. The purpose of this report is to consider the recommendations of the Community Grants Task and Finish Group. Community grants are distributed to support groups and organisations located within the district who support our residents and communities. The Council is committed to supporting organisations through the Community Grants programme, which is a key priority in the Corporate Plan.
2. At the Budget Speech in 2024 the Leader announced an additional £40,000 for community grants to provide extra support to our communities. The Community Grants Task and Finish Group was tasked to consider and recommend how to utilise this additional budget, with the overall budget for 2025/26 being £250,000, which includes revenue, community transport grants and Councillor Community Engagement grants, which has been fully allocated and includes the full £40,000 additional support, and up to £100,000 for capital community grants, if required.
3. A full review of the Community Grants scheme was undertaken in 2024, with the revised eligibility criteria and process discussed at Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 17 July 2024 with final recommendations for change being approved by Cabinet on 7 August 2024.

Councillor Community Engagement Grants

4. Councillors currently have an annual Community Engagement grant of £600 each to award to local organisations that support the needs within their communities, with any unspent budget being carried over to the following year. Grant awards tend to be of smaller amounts, often therefore being ineligible for grant applications, including the Council's own Community Grant scheme where the minimum revenue grant award has increased from £1,000 to £3,000. The level of grant has not been reviewed in recent years and was not reviewed when the number of Councillors reduced from 60 to 48 in 2023. The Task and Finish Group discussed the value of Councillor Community Engagement grants and that all Members should be proactive and be aware of local needs and groups and organisations to support.
5. The Group discussed options, including maintaining the existing amount of £600 and increasing the grant by varying amounts. The Group were supportive of utilising £19,200 of the £40,000 additional budget to increase the Councillor Community Engagement grant from £600 to £1,000 a year. Members were reminded to actively engage with their communities and that

Officers are available to provide advice, information, and support, if required, to facilitate distributing their grant budget.

6. The Panel recommend increasing the Councillor Community Engagement Grant from £600 to £1,000 from 1 April 2025.

Community Grants

7. On 25 and 26 November 2024 the Community Grants Task and Finish Group met to consider the revenue and capital Community Grant applications received for the 2025/26 financial year. We received 24 revenue applications and 10 capital applications, from a range of organisations across the district, including several new organisations. Social media was used to promote the programme with the application window being open for two months.
8. The value of revenue grant applications totalled £277,163 (£617,199 in 2023) and capital grant applications totalled £86,371 (£243,640 in 2023).
9. Following a full review of the Community Grants programme earlier in 2024, new eligibility criteria and administration processes were implemented to reduce administration.

Revenue grants – the process

10. In accordance with the revised process, applications were scored against a matrix and placed into one of three bands, A, B and C. The matrix comprised of various categories, including, how the application demonstrated:
 - value for money
 - a local need
 - that it supports the Council’s corporate priorities
 - that funding is required
 - alternative or additional funding raising activities had been explored
 - that it supports Council services
 - the area of the district covered
 - if the service is duplicated elsewhere
11. Applications scoring highly and placed in Band A are key partners who work closely with the Council and support our services and communities. Longer term awards of up to 3 years will be granted to provide financial security and enable future planning, with grants paid annually. The potential impact of Local Government Reorganisation does not affect the delivery of the projects, and the Council is keen to ensure longer term financial security to partners to support vulnerable households across the district. Officers will

develop Service Level Agreements, with annual reviews, and include objectives and targets, and payment agreements which will be regularly monitored and reviewed at partnership meetings. The recipients will report annually to Scrutiny and Overview Panel.

12. Applications in Band B were invited to present to the Task and Finish Group and provide details of their accounts, and how their application would meet the needs of, and benefit or support, residents in the district. Applicants were also asked to explain how their funding request linked to the priorities set out in the Council's Corporate Plan and their outcomes and key deliverables, with Members asking further questions about their application. Following the presentations, the Task and Finish Group thoroughly discussed and reviewed the applications. In formulating a recommendation for each grant request, members considered the agreed criteria, the Council's Corporate Plan priorities, and the value for money being offered. Due to the number and value of applications the Group had to make difficult decisions and in a number of instances the Group recommended grants of less than the amount being requested so as to support as many groups as possible and to recognise the benefits and work of the individual grant applications.
13. Applications in Band C did not meet the eligibility criteria and were not considered by the Task and Finish Group.
- 14. The Panel recommendations of each grant application are summarised in Appendix 1, with further details in Appendix 2.**

Capital grants – the process

15. In accordance with the new process, applications were scored against a matrix of criteria which comprised of various categories, including, how the application demonstrated:
 - value for money
 - community benefits
 - it supports the Council's corporate priorities
 - if there is community support
 - if the project is deliverable
 - if the project supports key infrastructure in the community
 - if the project will be used by the wider community
 - how the project positively supports climate change
16. The Task and Finish group fully discussed and considered the information provided in the applications and the scoring matrix to make their recommendations.

- 17. The Panel's recommendations for each grant application are summarised in Appendix 1, with further details in Appendix 2.**

Community Transport grants

18. The Task and Finish Group also considered community transport grants. There are currently 3 schemes the Council supports in partnership with Hampshire County Council for transportation projects, all funded from the overall annual budget for Community Grants. Community First Wessex administer the three schemes, which are:

- Wheels to work – This is a moped loan service which aims to help people aged between 16 and 25 with no access to suitable transport get to work, apprenticeships, training, or job interviews.

Current NFDC grant funding is £7,617, match funded by HCC. The contract is ending on 31 March 2025 and HCC, at the time of the Task and Finish Group meeting, had decided not to provide funding to extend this service.

- Call and Go – This is a bookable community transport service for anyone whose transport needs are not met by public bus services to go, for example, shopping, to visit a library or to see family and friends. Drivers will assist with carrying shopping and wheelchair accessible minibuses collect users from their home at a pre-arranged time. The cost will vary according to the distance travelled.

Current NFDC funding is £29,409, match funded by HCC. The contract is being extended and will end on 31 August 2025. HCC have stated that a procurement exercise will be undertaken to extend this contract.

- Group Hire – This scheme provides affordable wheelchair accessible minibuses to hire for voluntary or charitable organisations for a period of 3 hours to 1 week. The cost of hire depends on the distance travelled and duration of hire period.

Current NFDC grant funding is £14,080, match funded by HCC. The contract is being extended and will end on 31 August 2025. HCC have stated that a procurement exercise will be undertaken to extend this contract.

19. The total current funding in 2024/25 for the three community transport schemes is £51,106.

20. Following an HCC review and subsequent consultation due to the need to reduce budgets, HCC undertook a review of the Community Transport Schemes, as part of their wider budgetary review. Following this, HCC have initially decided to continue the contracts for Call & Go and Group Hire, but not for Wheels to Work. Due to the general election, there was insufficient time to complete the procurement process for Call and Go and Group Hire so both of these contracts have been extended to 31 August 2025 to allow time to conclude procurement and the award of the new contracts.
21. The Group reviewed the numbers using the three schemes, with Call and Go and Group Hire recovering following the pandemic, with both having over 5,000 passengers in 2023/24.
22. The Group was of the view that NFDC should maintain the same level of funding to support our communities, especially those in rural areas with limited transport links, for the Call and Go and Group Hire service.
23. The Group considered the Wheels to Work scheme and the decision of HCC to end their funding for this scheme. The Group considered three options; to increase funding to mitigate HCC's reduction in funding, to maintain the existing funding level and work with Community First to obtain additional alternative funding, or to end the funding. The Group considered the usage of the scheme, which was 14 users since 1 April 2024, and that the funding could be better utilised for revenue community grant awards to support a greater number of local organisations and residents. However, since the Task and Finish met and made their recommendations, HCC have reviewed their decision and confirmed that their funding may now be extended to 31 August 2025, in line with the other community transport schemes, should a feasibility assessment demonstrate the scheme remains viable. Should the Council wish to support this scheme, the funding required is £3,237.34; however, all available funding has been fully allocated so there is no residual funding to support this scheme.
24. The recommended funding allocation is within the annual budget available and is for the whole of 2025/26. When the new contracts are awarded from 1 September 2025, the grants awarded will be within these sums, i.e. there will be no increase. Should, for whatever reason, the contract not be extended then the grants are pro-rata'd accordingly.
25. **The Panel recommend the following:**
 - **Funding for Call & Go for 2025/26 to be £29,998**
 - **Funding for Group Hire for 2025/26 to be £14,361**

Community Lottery

26. The report approved by Cabinet on 7 August 2024 recommended the Community Grants Task and Finish Group explore and consider how a Community Lottery funded scheme could run alongside the Community Grant programme to provide further funding opportunities and support to local organisations across the district.
27. The Group received a detailed presentation from Gatherwell, including a question and answer session. Gatherwell are regulated by the Gambling Commission and operate regulated Community Lottery schemes in over 120 local authorities across the country, including several in Hampshire, which “support good causes raising money in the community”. Details were provided on how the scheme operates, including the allocation of the £1 ticket income which distributes 60% to good causes, 18.2% to prizes, 18.2% for running costs and 3.6% VAT (which can be claimed back by the Council). Weekly prizes range from free tickets and £25.00, up to £25,000, with no risk to the Council to fund any of the prizes, no matter how many tickets are sold.
28. The 60% allocated to good causes could be split so that, for example, 50% is distributed to nominated good causes and 10% retained by the Council to distribute. Benefitting organisations must meet specific eligibility criteria, determined and decided by the Council, before being accepted and included into the scheme.
29. The scheme includes safeguards, such as setting maximum ticket purchase limits and monthly payments by direct debit, and it is widely accepted across the charity landscape that participants are primarily seeking to support a particular organisation or range of charities rather than seeking to win a prize. The Gambling Commission states that society lottery schemes are low risk.
30. Once accepted into the scheme, local organisations are encouraged to market and actively promote the scheme to increase their funding. Based on our adult population size and estimated participation Gatherwell predict approximately £65,000 could be raised annually to support local organisations, with payments being made monthly to organisations.
31. As requested by the Group, Officers contacted other local authorities who administer a community lottery scheme which included Havant Borough Council, Wealden District Council and North West Leicestershire District Council, who all reported positive responses, recognising the additional support provided to local organisations in their communities. Acknowledgement was given to the initial Officer time to set-up the scheme, which can be significant, but the ongoing administration burden is low with Gatherwell, or other

provider, undertaking day-to-day operations, developing and maintaining the webpage and handling all customer support regarding notifying winners and payment queries.

32. The set-up cost is £5,000 with ongoing annual costs of circa £800, which could be funded from the VAT being reclaimed. The lottery provider supply resources, including promotional materials.
33. The Group considered the merits of a Community Lottery scheme and were supportive of the principal, recognising the additional support to local organisations and groups that benefit our communities and residents, noting the competitiveness and resource requirements of applying for grants, and to supplement our existing Community Grants scheme.
- 34. The Panel recommend that Cabinet further consider the option of a Community Lottery scheme to run alongside the existing community grants scheme.**

Corporate plan priorities

35. The contents of this report support the key priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan by providing grants to organisations that support and meet the needs of the district's communities and vulnerable people and working closely with key partners to help resolve issues, including those associated with cost of living, homelessness, and health and wellbeing, as well as supporting vibrant arts and culture.

Options appraisal

36. Details of the options and discussions are included in the paragraphs above.

Consultation

37. The Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel at the meeting on 22 January 2025, considered the report and supported the recommendations detailed in part A of this report. The Panel also recommended that Cabinet advise officers to prepare a report on how a community lottery scheme could be run the district.

Financial and resource implications

38. The proposed recommendations of this report are included in the overall budget allocated to community grants of £350,000, of which £250,000 is allocated to revenue projects, which has been fully allocated and funded via the general account, and up to £100,000 to capital projects, funded from reserves.

39. The proposals in this report include total awards of community grants of £327,730, summarised as:
- (a) An increase to Councillor Community Engagement Grants from £600 to £1,000, totalling £48,000 from April 2025
 - (b) Revenue grants of £152,500, of which £67,000 are longer term awards
 - (c) Capital grants of £77,871
 - (d) The proposed budget for 2025/26 for the Community Transport schemes of £44,359, and,
 - (e) If taken forward, the set-up cost of a Community Lottery of £5,000. The community lottery will generate additional funding to be distributed to local organisations, with some Officer time required.

Legal implications

40. There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. However, should a Community Lottery be adopted compliance with the relevant rules and regulations with the Gambling Commission will require review and implementation.

Risk assessment

41. There are no risk assessments required. However, applicants are required to confirm that relevant policies are in place.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

42. There are no significant environmental or climate and nature implications arising from this report, although applicants to community grants did have to provide details of their activities to support the Council's commitment to climate sustainability, such as recycling bikes and making buildings more energy efficient.

Equalities implications

43. Our Community Grants programme continues to support a wide range of organisations across the district that support, engage, provide opportunities, and benefit our diverse communities and residents, including those with mental health and disabilities, and vulnerable households. Applicants have to demonstrate through the application form and process how corporate priorities will be met, for example supporting residents with the greatest need.

Crime and disorder implications

44. There are no crime and disorder implications directly arising from this report. However, several of the organisations proposed to receive grant funding support ex-offenders, and vulnerable people

to sustain accommodation and maximise income, and work with communities and partners to reduce crime.

45. It is a widely held view that providing support to these groups increases stability and positive behaviours, as well as reducing the likelihood of people falling victim to crime.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

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

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Details of grant applications and award recommendations

Appendix 2 – Summary of recommendations

Background Papers:

None

Appendix 1 – Community grant applications 2025/26

Revenue Grants - Band A

ITEM	APPLICANT	AMOUNT REQUESTED	RECOMMENDATION	PREVIOUS YEAR 2024/25 AWARD
1	Community First Wessex	35,000	30,000	35,000
2	New Forest Disability Information Service	5,000	5,000	17,000
3	The Crossings	10,000	10,000	8,000
4	The Handy Trust	10,000	10,000	5,000
5	Youth and Families Matter	12,000	12,000	9,500
Total		72,000	67,000	

Revenue Grants - Band B

ITEM	APPLICANT	AMOUNT REQUESTED	RECOMMENDATION	PREVIOUS YEAR 2024/25 AWARD
6	Families Matter	5,000	5,000	5,000
7	Forest Forge	20,000	7,500	7,000
8	Hammersley Homes	25,000	3,000	4,000
9	Hampshire Cultural Trust (Forest Arts)	10,000	10,000	7,500
10	Helping Older people	20,000	10,000	0
11	Honeypot Childrens Charity	11,516	6,000	5,000
12	Lyndhurst & District Community Association	5,000	0	N/A
13	15 TH New Forest Milford and Keyhaven Sea Scouts	3,000	0	N/A
14	New Forest Basics Bank	3,500	3,500	5,000
15	New Forest Bike Project	5,000	3,000	1,000
16	New Forest Mencap	10,000	5,000	5,000
17	SPUD	15,000	7,500	5,000
18	St Barbe	12,000	3,000	5,000
19	The Branch	8,000	4,000	N/A
20	The Dementia Care Club	15,875	7,500	N/A
21	Wessex Cancer Trust	10,780	3,000	0
22	Youth in Romsey	19,992	7,500	N/A
Total		£199,663	£85,500	

(Note: N/A means there was no application received for 2024/25)

Revenue Grants - Band C

ITEM	APPLICANT	AMOUNT REQUESTED	RECOMMENDATION	PREVIOUS YEAR 2024/25 AWARD
23	Fawley and District Care Group	3,000	0	N/A
24	Marchwood Mens Shed	2,500	0	0

(Note: N/A means there was no application received for 2024/25)

B. Capital Grants

ITEM	APPLICANT	AMOUNT REQUESTED	RECOMMENDATION
1	Cadnam Cricket Club	10,000	10,000
2	East Boldre Memorial Hall	25,000	25,000
3	Fluid Motion	4,218	4,218
4	Hants Cultural Trust	1,000	0
5	Lymington Cricket Club	5,000	0
6	New Forest Disability Information Service	5,000	2,500
7	Paulton's Cricket Club	24,000	24,000
8	Thorney Hill Community Centre	6,500	6,500
9	Three Score Club	2,000	2,000
10	Totton and Eling Cricket Club	3,653	3,653
Total		£86,371	£77,871

Appendix 2 – Summary of recommendations

A. Revenue Grants – Band A

1	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	Community First Wessex (CFW)	CFW provides support across the New Forest with the aim to create a thriving and successful voluntary sector. This involves activities such as DBS checks, training, funding advice, volunteer recruitment, assistance with setting up and operating groups, and building the voluntary sector capacity. CFW acts as a voice for the sector and, in partnership with other groups, is involved in many working groups across the district to deliver a range of projects that support residents.

Request

£35,000

Recommendation

That a grant of £30,000 be given

Reason for decision:

CFW contributes to the Council's priorities by supporting organisations and numerous groups, including to support employment, young carers, training, and skill development, advising groups on economic development, mental health and delivering services digitally. The Group were pleased to hear that CFW worked with numerous organisations, such as the Local Childrens Partnership, and helped groups secure additional funding. CFW has contributed to Community Engagement conversations and the Group recognised the improved working relationship with CFW and developing this further to support our communities.

2	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	New Forest Disability Information Service (NFDIS)	NFDIS provides specialised, free, impartial, and confidential disability related information, advice, and guidance to anyone with a disability who lives or works within the New Forest area. NFDIS are the only organisation within the New Forest that support and represent the most vulnerable disabled clients at welfare benefit tribunals. NFDIS specialise in providing mobility aids and equipment, and collaborate with community and other organisations to help people maximise their wellbeing and live safely and as independently as possible in their own home.

Request

£5,000

Recommendation

That a grant of £5,000 be given.

Reason for decision:

NFDIS is the only organisation of its kind in the district and provides an essential service to the vulnerable in the face of ever-increasing demand and supports the council in many ways, including with the Just Got Home, working from Lymington and Fordingbridge hospital, and Independence Matters projects. The Group acknowledged the great work of NFDIS in supporting vulnerable and disabled residents and the proposed expansion of outreach work.

3	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	The Crossings	The Crossings offer support and help to homeless people and those at risk of homelessness and marginalised in the Waterside area. They operate three drop-in centres which provide a welcoming, non-judgemental space in which people can feel safe to discuss their current issues, which can be multiple and complex. The Crossings support people to make Homesearch, Universal Credit or other benefits applications, some of whom struggle with literacy or numeracy, or they are digitally excluded, and provide signposting advice and information.

Request

£10,000

Recommendation

That a grant of £10,000 be given.

Reason for decision:

The Group recognised the valuable work to support vulnerable people and the joined up working with our Homelessness Teams where there is attendance and collaboration at drop-ins to support residents with multiple issues around housing. The grant will enable The Crossings to continue their weekly drop-ins, attend Jobcentre Plus in Hythe, and expand their home visits capacity. The longer-term aim is for The Crossings to expand beyond the Waterside which The Group fully support.

4	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	The Handy Trust	The Handy Trust provides full youth support services to children and young people aged up to 25. They work in the Waterside area offering a 24/7 service at home, in schools, providing drop-ins and advice and support on relationship, sex and drug issues, as well as in the community with supporting families, and provide holiday clubs and run youth clubs.

Request

£10,000

Recommendation

That a grant of £10,000 be given.

Reason for decision:

The Group recognised the value of the grant and the huge work and outcomes achieved by The Handy Trust in supporting young people and families, including with education, activities, skills, mental health, and supporting those in crisis. The Handy Trust work with many other organisations, including Community Safety.

5	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	Youth & Families Matter (YFM)	YFM is a small charity that works in Totton to improve the health and wellbeing of children, young people, and families whose lives are complex and impacted by many forms of disadvantage, mental illness, serious illness, addiction, or abuse.

Request

£12,000

Recommendation

That a grant of £12,000 be given.

Reason for decision:

YFM met the Council's objectives by assisting in the wellbeing of local people and supporting families, through working with young people and vulnerable families by a combination of support sessions, training, benefit applications, and groups. YFM actively work with many partner organisations, including schools, run a foodbank supports the Food Larder, with 30-40 households being supported each week, as well as providing support with fuel poverty, a warm space and works with the Council as part of the Cost of Living Steering Group.

Revenue Grants - Band B

6	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	Families Matter	Families Matter is a small local charity based in Hythe which helps families in need in the Waterside area. They support parents through parenting classes and groups for parents and children with special needs, autism and mental health, and through a crisis, i.e. separation, domestic violence, behavioural problems. They work closely with local schools, supporting children and also run groups for people with dementia and their carers and for families with drug and/or alcohol addictions.

Request

£5,000

Recommendation

That a grant of £5,000 be given.

Reason for decision:

The organisation contributes to the Council's priorities through assisting wellbeing of those in the district, working with vulnerable children and young people and parents, and low-income households. Families Matter work in partnership with other organisations, run parenting courses to those families struggling with their child's anxiety or extreme angry behaviour, support elderly people with dementia, and their carers, with monthly groups. With an increasing demand, the grant would be used to continue this work, including commencing support to those affect by domestic violence.

7	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	Forest Forge Theatre Company	Forest Forge is theatre that provides creative learning and outreach activities and tours to communities and schools across the New Forest with an emphasis on creative learning and using theatre to tackle wider social issues such as bullying and mental health. The organisation encourages participation in a variety of activities such as workshops; work experience and targeted outreach projects (e.g. teenagers).

Request

£20,000

Recommendation

That a grant of £7,500 be given.

Reason for decision:

Forest Forge provides creative learning activities across the district and contributes to community cohesion and wellbeing. It supports local business and provides experience for young people's employability and seeks to be fully inclusive by engaging with all communities. It works in schools, tours a production about mental health, has a youth theatre with over 100 attending, and a group for over 55's.

8	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	Hammersley Homes	Hammersley Homes apply a person centred approach to provide emotional and practical support for people with mental health and aims to provide supported living accommodation for vulnerable adults so that they can live independently. They provide an outreach programme and aim to keep people out of hospital by providing support in their own home.

Request

£25,000

Recommendation

That a grant of £3,000 be given.

Reason for decision:

The Group supported Hammersley Homes ambitions and aims and the importance of the work they do with supporting vulnerable people, focusing on those with mental illness and their families, including the increased outreach work and partnership work. The funding will enable Hammersley Homes to continue their work whilst they seek to become more financially sustainable.

9	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	Hampshire Cultural Trust (Forest Arts Centre)	Forest Arts Centre is part of FOLIO, a collaboration of arts and heritage organisations, and provides a leading venue for quality live music, comedy, theatre, arts, activities, and events based in New Milton and has an extensive outreach programme. The Centre's priorities include providing high quality cultural programming and community benefit and targets working with schools, adults with learning disabilities, and older people with dementia or Parkinson's disease.

Request

£10,000

Recommendation

That a grant of £10,000 be given.

Reason for decision:

Forest Arts contributes to the Council's priorities of delivering a vibrant arts and culture with events, activities, and projects and by helping local business grow by supporting artists and attracting visitors to the area. The venue also seeks to provide accessible and affordable space for hire, e.g., Hampshire Autism, host activities and events, offering opportunities to showcase artistic output at affordable prices. Forest Arts seeks to improve mental and physical wellbeing and reduce isolation, for example Dance for Parkinson's, and seeks to develop outreach work, as well as a LGBTQ+ youth drop-in. The grant is ring-fenced to the Centre, ensuring our residents benefit.

10	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	Helping Older People	Helping Older People provide free support, advice and befriending services, including home visits, as well as running two charity shops.

Request

£20,000

Recommendation

That a grant of £10,000 be given.

Reason for decision:

The Group considered the demographics of the district and recognised the work undertaken to support the elderly and expanding their reach across the district, including to reduce isolation, support those with limited mobility or capacity, and working with partners to receive and provide referrals, and that the grant will be used to provide additional support.

11	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	Honeypot Childrens Charity	Honeypot Childrens Charity support young carers aged between 5 and 12, including offering respite breaks at their home.

Request

£11,516

Recommendation

That a grant of £6,000 be given.

Reason for decision:

The Group were supportive of Honeypot and their plans to reach out to more young carers, a cohort who have very limited support available from other sources and often struggle with their mental health, stress, anxiety and social isolation. Honeypot Childrens Charity work with other organisations and work with schools to utilise the building during term times.

12	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	Lyndhurst and District Community Association	Lyndhurst and District Community Centre has halls, meeting rooms and a charity shop that serve the local community.

Request

£5,000

Recommendation

That no grant be given.

Reason for decision:

Although the Group recognise the value of community buildings and providing a facility for external groups to use, it considered that when considering other grant applicants and the budget available, funding could be utilised elsewhere to directly support organisations that benefit our residents.

13	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	15 TH New Forest Milford and Keyhaven Sea Scouts	The 15 th New Forest Milford and Keyhaven Sea Scouts group provide young people with activities and opportunities for fun, development, and skills for life.

Request

£3,000

Recommendation

That no grant be given.

Reason for decision:

The Group were supportive of the group but considered the recent grant received from Milford Parish Council and with additional fund raising activities the relatively small amount requested could be achieved, with priority therefore being directed to other applications.

14	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	New Forest Basics Bank	New Forest Basics Bank operate a Food Bank from Lymington which supports the surrounding areas, including schools and community hubs.

Request

£3,500

Recommendation

That a grant of £3,500 be given.

Reason for decision:

The Group recognised the work of the volunteers and the support given to vulnerable families, especially with the cost of living, and the work New Forest Basics Bank do with schools and supporting the Food Larders with additional supplies and resources, as well as working with partners and providing additional support and provisions.

15	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	New Forest Bike Project (NFBP)	NFBP is a not-for-profit Community Interest Company that re-cycles bikes and sells them at reduced rates, benefiting residents by offering an affordable source of bikes and parts, especially to those on a low income, to keep people on the road, fit and healthy, reducing the need for car journeys and the impact on the environment. It provides opportunities and a place to help those with issues in their lives improve their confidence, self-esteem, practical and social skills.

Request

£5,000

Recommendation

That a grant of £3,000 be given.

Reason for decision:

The Group support the work of this project, especially as part of the greener agenda and to encourage recycling and cycling, providing more affordable access to bicycles for households struggling with the cost of transport, as well as providing volunteering opportunities and training.

	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
16	New Forest Mencap	New Forest Mencap support residents with learning disabilities and their families, including through sessions and activities, and providing employment and volunteering opportunities, advice and information, and operate a charity shop.

Request

£10,000

Recommendation

That a grant of £5,000 be given.

Reason for decision:

The Group recognised the work Mencap do to support those with learning disabilities and the work with partner organisations.

17	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	SPUD	SPUD is an arts and education charity that creates opportunities for people to creatively engage with art, architecture, design, and the environment. SPUD supports people works with and support various groups including, youth, disabled, autism, LGBTQ+ and dementia.

Request

£15,000

Recommendation

That a grant of £7,500 be given

Reason for decision:

The Group support the work SPUD does with vulnerable groups, which aligns closely with the 'Culture in Common' programme that the Council is involved in delivering across the district. SPUD's work with residents with dementia and with young people to support their mental wellbeing was noted, as was their outreach programme that builds on the community partnerships. The Group supports the work SPUD does, acknowledging the increase in utility costs, and was impressed with the impact of SPUD. With limited funding, the Group unfortunately could not support the full grant request.

18	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	St Barbe Museum and Art Gallery	St Barbe is a museum and art gallery providing a cultural hub and educational facilities on the heritage, culture, history, and character of the New Forest. It is part of FOLIO, and provides learning services for schools and interest groups, including workshops, exhibitions, and curriculum-based activities. St Barbe also support groups, e.g. an Elderly Programme for “memories” and works with low-income families, e.g. holiday workshops and activities and Food programme.

Request

£12,000

Recommendation

That a grant of £3,000 be given.

Reason for decision:

St Barbe supports NFDC priorities through assisting with the wellbeing of those in the district, as well as attracting visitors. St Barbe provide a wide range of activities, for all ages, and is a vibrant community hub, working with schools, disabled groups, those suffering with dementia or autism, holiday programmes, and a Young Curator group, as well as working with apprentices as part of the government Kickstart programme. The Group were very supportive of the outreach programmes and the summer camps for children eligible for free school meals. Whilst the Group fully supported its work, regrettably pressures on budgets meant that it was not able to recommend meeting the grant request in full.

19	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	The Branch	The Branch is a multi-purpose community hub in Fordingbridge, providing an inclusive and accessible affordable café which facilitates the provision of events, wellbeing and support.

Request

£8,000

Recommendation

That a grant of £4,000 be given.

Reason for decision:

The Group were supportive of community spaces which bring together communities and organisations to support residents and were encouraged by the plans to expand the opening hours and support available, including volunteer experience and developing further networks of partners.

20	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	The Dementia Care Hub	The Dementia Care Hub provide a comprehensive service to support families and people living with dementia in community settings, including education, awareness, advice and information and support for carers. Their aim is to ensure families and people living with dementia live as well as they can for as long as possible, at home.

Request

£15,875

Recommendation

That a grant of £7,500 be given.

Reason for decision:

The Group recognised the need for supporting those with dementia and the work of The Dementia Care Hub and the range of activities undertaken, such as therapeutic programmes for carers, onset carer groups, art classes, and social and wellbeing groups, as well as working with partner organisations.

21	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	Wessex Cancer Trust	Wessex Cancer Trust provide emotional support to people, and their families, affected by cancer, including counselling, therapy, emotional support groups and a befriending service.

Request

£21,000

Recommendation

That a grant of £3,000 be given.

Reason for decision:

The Group recognised the need for supporting those affected by cancer, the work of Wessex Cancer Trust and the number of people supported in the previous year. Plans to reach more people was welcomed by the Group.

22	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	Youth in Romsey	Youth in Romsey provide services for young people aged between 5 and 25, including counselling, therapeutic support, youth groups, sexual health, career advice, and support groups for those with anxiety or low self-esteem.

Request

£19,992

Recommendation

That a grant of £7,500 be given.

Reason for decision:

The Group were supportive of the work of Youth in Romsey and recognised the need to support young people, particularly with mental health, self-harm and bereavement, and the increased demand and lack of support available. The Group were encouraged by the partnership working and the further development of networks, and had assurances that any grant will be used to support residents of the New Forest.

B. Capital Grants

1	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	Cadnam Cricket Club	To improve the drainage, outfield, and fencing of the cricket ground

Total Cost	Other Funding	Request
£20,000	£10,000	£10,000

RECOMMENDATION:

That a grant of £10,000 be given.

Reason for decision:

The Group were supportive of improving the facilities to ensure the pitch can be used by all groups associated with the club and increase participation.

2	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	East Boldre Memorial Hall	To improve the existing building, including a new roof, create extra space, kitchen refit, improve storage, flooring and audio and visual equipment for the stage.

Total Cost	Other Funding	Request
£60,660	£35,660	£25,000

RECOMMENDATION:

That a grant of £25,000 be given.

Reason for decision:

The Group recognise the Memorial Hall is a community asset in a rural area, with wide and extensive community use of the building which would be enhanced by the project and the environmental benefits, which would also support the financial sustainability of the building.

3	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	Fluid Motion	Fluid Motion is a creative Hub in Totton seeking to improve the existing building, including accessibility, lighting, water, windows and to make better use of space.

Total Cost	Other Funding	Request
£8,345	£4,217	£4,218

RECOMMENDATION:

That a grant of £4,218 be given.

Reason for decision:

The Group were supportive of regenerating the building to provide a creative space for arts and crafts for use by a range of groups from across the community, including to support the mental health and wellbeing of young people.

4	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	Hants Cultural Trust	Car park line painting and creation of additional parking spaces

Total Cost	Other Funding	Request
£1,896	£896	£1,000

RECOMMENDATION:

That no grant be given.

Reason for decision:

The Group considered that the application did not meet the corporate aims and could be secured from alternative funding streams.

5	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	Lymington Cricket Club	New LED electronic scoreboard which is moveable and provides an instant update of scores

Total Cost	Other Funding	Request
£5,000	£0	£5,000

RECOMMENDATION:

That no grant be given.

Reason for decision:

The Group considered that 50% of the project cost had not been secured from other funding sources and therefore did not meet the eligibility criteria. Additionally, the Group considered that the scoreboard does not directly support or benefit residents, or increase participation, when judged against other bids.

6	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	New Forest Disability Information Service	New secure storage unit for equipment

Total Cost	Other Funding	Request
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£5,000	£2,500	£2,500
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RECOMMENDATION:

That a grant of £2,500 be given.

Reason for decision:

The Group were supportive of the project to enable New Forest Disability Information Services to store additional items safely and securely, including those for sale, to support the organisation financially.

7	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	Paultons Cricket Club	New training net facilities, including groundwork

Total Cost	Other Funding	Request
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£50,000	£26,000	£24,000
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RECOMMENDATION:

That a grant of £24,000 be given.

Reason for decision:

The Group were supportive of the project to provide safe, secure and fit for purpose dual lane training nets facilities for all members of the club and the proposed partnership with a local school to increase junior

participation. To replace the existing play area equipment to provide a new and inclusive play area

8	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	Thorney Hill Community Centre	To replace the existing play area equipment to provide a new, safe and inclusive play area.

Total Cost	Other Funding	Request
£13,071	£6,500	£6,500

RECOMMENDATION:

That a grant of £6,500 be given.

Reason for decision:

The Group were supportive of regenerating the play area in a rural area with a range of equipment, which was done in consultation with local residents, where opportunities for recreation are limited.

9	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	Three Score Club	Floor renovation of the hall

Total Cost	Other Funding	Request
£4,308	£2,308	£2,000

RECOMMENDATION: Floor renovation for the hall.

That a grant of £2,000 be given.

Reason for decision:

The Group were supportive of the project and recognise the building is a community asset which is used extensively by the community which would be enhanced by the project.

10	APPLICANT	SUMMARY
	Totton and Eiling Cricket Club	New battery-operated lawn mower

Total Cost	Other Funding	Request
£7,307	£3,654	£3,653

RECOMMENDATION:

That a grant of £3,653 be given.

REASON FOR DECISION:

The Group were supportive of the project to provide better facilities and playing conditions, as well as to reduce carbon emissions and be more sustainable. The Group noted the partnership with Testwood School and the enhanced playing facilities of this project which should result in increased junior participation.

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

CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	1
2.	CURRENT SCHEME	2
3.	PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING OUR REVIEW	2
3.1	THE PUBLIC SERVICE PRINCIPLE	2
3.2	THE FAIR REMUNERATION PRINCIPLE.....	2
4.	CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	3
4.1	BASIC ALLOWANCE	3
4.2	SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES (SRAs).....	7
	CO-OPTEEES’/ INDEPENDENT PERSONS & ICT ALLOWANCE	133
4.3	TRAVELLING AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCE.....	133
4.4	DEPENDANTS’ CARERS’ ALLOWANCE	144
4.5	PARENTAL LEAVE	155
4.6	INDEXING OF ALLOWANCES.....	155
4.7	REVOCATION OF CURRENT SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES / IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW SCHEME	155
5.	OUR INVESTIGATION	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.6
5.1	BACKGROUND	166
5.2	COUNCILLORS’ VIEWS ON THE LEVEL OF ALLOWANCES	16
6.	APPROVED COUNCILLOR DUTIES	166

Appendix 1	Basic Allowance/Special Responsibility Allowances/ Co-optees’ Allowance/ Independent Person/ Dependents’ Carers’ Allowance / Chairman/Vice Chairman Allowances – Summary of Recommendations	17
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*

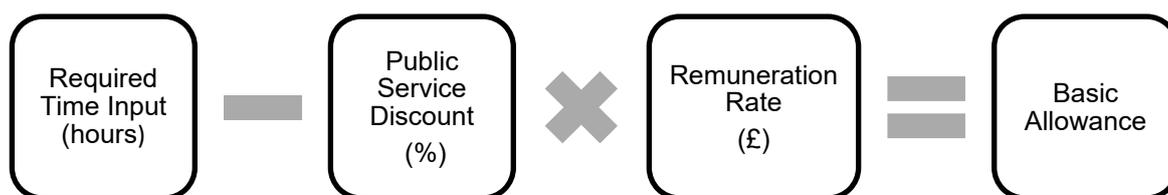
on the rate at which, and the number of hours councillors ought to be remunerated.”³

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)

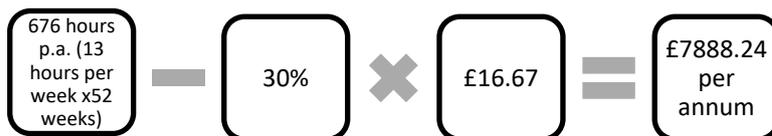
- 4.1.8 From the information analysed, we found councillors espoused a high sense of public duty. Given the weight of evidence presented to us concerning, among other factors, the levels of responsibility, the varied nature of the role, the need for learning and development, and the increasing accessibility 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.

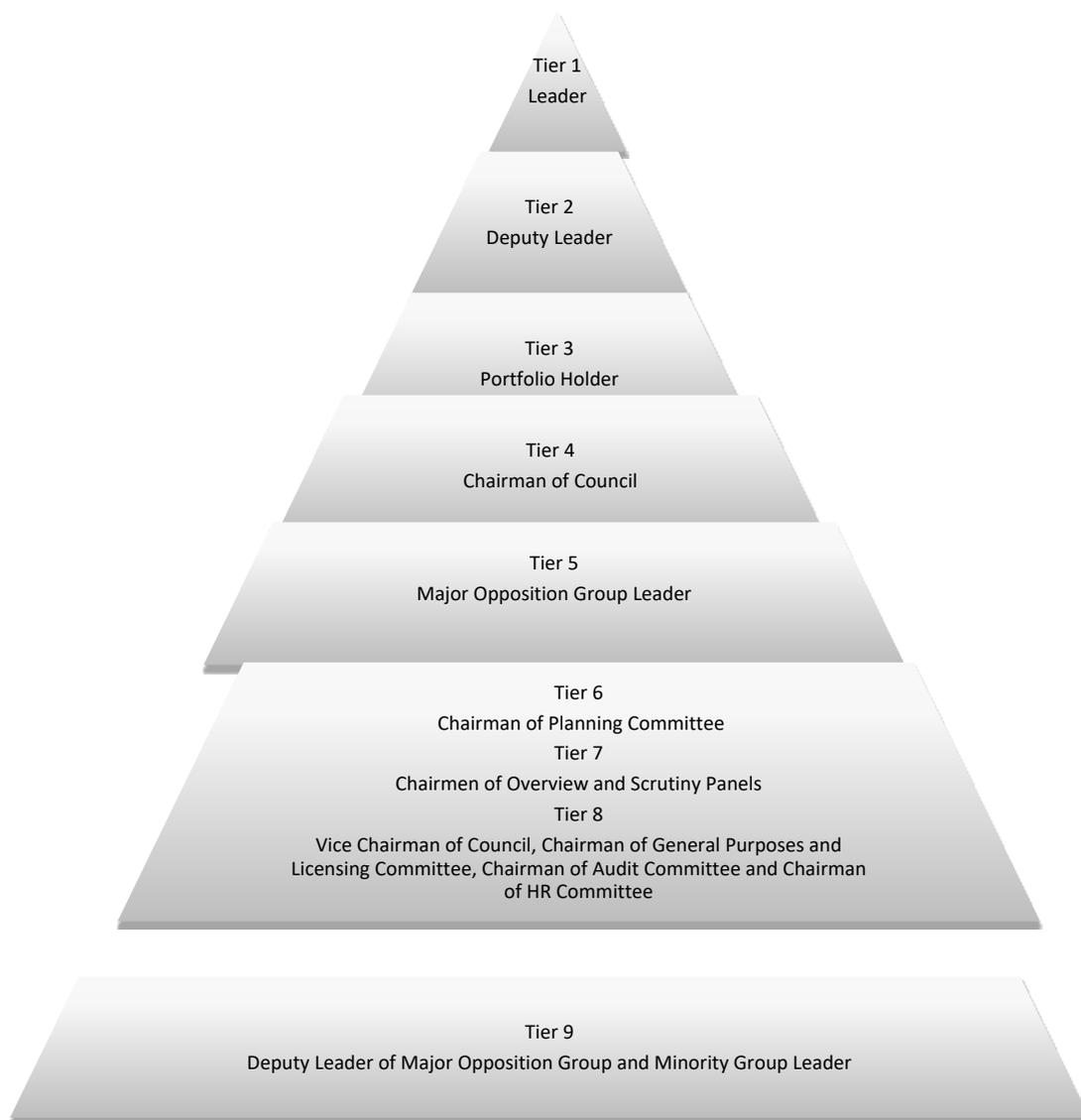
The Maximum Number of SRA's Payable

- 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	

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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

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