

NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting:	CABINET
Date and Time:	WEDNESDAY, 2 APRIL 2025 AT 10.00 AM
Place:	COUNCIL CHAMBER - APPLETREE COURT, BEAULIEU ROAD, LYNDHURST, SO43 7PA
Enquiries to:	democratic@nfdc.gov.uk Tel: 023 8028 5071 - Karen Wardle

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, 28 March 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 meetings held on 19 February and 21 March 2025 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. ALLOCATION OF COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) TO LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS (Pages 3 - 14)

5. UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (UKSPF) 25/26 ALLOCATIONS (Pages 15 - 38)

6. COMMUNITY LOTTERY SCHEME (Pages 39 - 54)

7. DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY 2025-2028 (Pages 55 - 80)

8. PEOPLE STRATEGY (Pages 81 - 130)

9. DIGITAL STRATEGY (Pages 131 - 150)

10. CORPORATE PLAN: KEY PERFORMANCE DATA FOR QUARTERS 1, 2 AND 3 2024-25 (Pages 151 - 186)

11. CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE REPORT AND ACTION PLAN (Pages 187 - 242)

12. PRINCIPLE RISK AND RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY (Pages 243 - 278)

To:

Councillors

Councillors

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

Jeremy Heron
Dan Poole
Derek Tipp

Cabinet – 2 April 2025

Allocation of community infrastructure levy (CIL) to local infrastructure projects

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	This report seeks agreement from Cabinet for formal approval of the funding of a programme of local infrastructure projects for the financial year 2025/26, in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Expenditure Framework as approved by the Council in October 2024.
Recommendation(s)	<p>That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approves the list of 31 projects for inclusion in the capital programme for 2025/26 with a total budget of £998,100.87; 2. Approves the opening of the local infrastructure bid windows, for bids up to £100,000, for the 2026/27 financial year for two-months during Spring 2025; 3. Approves a two-month expression of interest window is opened to explore the potential for further local and strategic infrastructure projects within the district; and 4. Authorises the Strategic Director for Place, Operations and Sustainability, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy, to make such amendments as they deem appropriate to the approved project lists within 10% of the total budget. Any such amendments will be in accordance with financial regulations and reported to Cabinet via the financial monitoring reports.
Reasons for recommendations	CIL is collected to mitigate the impacts of new development on its infrastructure. The CIL Expenditure Framework sets the process to

	<p>spend this money and the proposals in this paper align with the framework.</p> <p>The recommendations align with priorities across the place, people and prosperity elements of the Council’s Corporate Plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place Priority 1: Shaping our place now and for future generations. • People Priority 2: Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives. • Prosperity Priority 2: Supporting our high-quality business base and economic centres to thrive and grow
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Tipp – Planning and Economy
Strategic Director(s)	James Carpenter – Strategic Director Place, Operations and Sustainability
Officer Contact	<p>Dean Brunton</p> <p>Service Manager – Planning Policy, Infrastructure and Delivery</p> <p>023 8028 5454</p> <p>dean.brunton@nfdc.gov.uk</p>

Introduction and background

1. New development needs to be supported by physical, social, and green infrastructure. Developer contributions are collected to make new developments acceptable in planning terms, providing mitigation that serves to minimise the impacts on the local community and infrastructure.
2. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) provides funding to help deliver this infrastructure and has been collected by this Council since 2015. Annual reports of how CIL is collected and spent is available to view at <https://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/1891/Infrastructure-Funding-Statement>.
3. In October 2023, a CIL Expenditure Framework (hereafter ‘the Expenditure Framework’) was approved. This identified that CIL monies would in future be apportioned into three funds: recreational habitat mitigation, strategic infrastructure, and local infrastructure.

The approval also allocated £1m of held CIL funds towards local infrastructure projects. Following a successful bidding round, 26 projects were awarded funding.

4. In October 2024, the Expenditure Framework was revised to allow for further rounds of local infrastructure allocations over the course of the Corporate Plan period. Bids have subsequently been submitted from across the New Forest area for the 2025/26 period, with the bidding window closing on 13 December 2024. The Council received 79 bids in total for amounts ranging from £500 to £250,000, and the total value of all bids received was more than £2.8m.

Analysing the bids received

5. The format of reviewing the bids took two forms, a desktop review by officers followed by a Task and Finish Group meeting with cross party elected members.
6. Once bids had been received, they were validated to ensure that the basic eligibility criteria had been met. At the validation stage, 6 bids were not taken forward to screening as either they did not qualify for infrastructure funding by being a revenue project or the bid was over the £100,000 limit. The remaining projects were then scored against the criteria in para 4.6 of the [CIL Expenditure Framework](#). following questions (out of 10, except for the Local Plan which was out of 20).
7. All projects were scored fairly based on the information provided in the bidding form.
8. Following this a cross-party Task and Finish group was held in January 2025. The members of the Task and Finish group were provided with all necessary information on the bids including:
 - the project summary
 - location
 - total cost of project and CIL requested
 - officer scoring of bids against the prioritisation criteria
 - officer recommendation
9. Following the conclusion of the Task and Finish group sessions, the 31 top scoring projects were identified to be taken forward for inclusion in the 2025/26 capital programme with an anticipated allocation of £998,100.87. This forms the first recommendation of this report.

10. Whilst the geographical location of the projects was not directly considered for scoring purposes, the resulting projects do provide a good mix of projects across the New Forest.

Next Steps

11. Subject to the recommendations being approved, all parties who bid for monies will be notified in writing immediately after the decision. Those whose bid was not successful on this occasion will be offered a chance to speak to officers to discuss and explore whether the reasons for not proceeding at this time can be addressed.
12. Successful bidders will be asked to sign a grant award letter, and officers will work with them to agree the programme for delivery and to agree future communication protocols and publicity for the project.
13. Monies will only be released to the successful bidders on submission of paid invoices and satisfactory completion of works unless other arrangements are specifically agreed with the Council beforehand.
14. Where projects will have ongoing maintenance costs, officers will look to steer applications to options to reduce these costs, and with alternative funding options. Officers will also look to direct those unsuccessful bidders to alternative sources of funding available.
15. In the context of wider discussions about infrastructure needs in the future and the key corporate priorities of this Council as embedded in the Corporate Plan, it is considered appropriate to move to now quickly open up the 2026/27 bidding window for local infrastructure projects. By doing this it will give the Council the opportunity of a broader understanding of options available to spend CIL in the coming months, and give the opportunity to accelerate the approval of the next years projects and potentially fund even more deserving projects earlier. This forms the second recommendation to this report.

Corporate plan priorities

16. The Corporate Plan 2024-28 outlines the vision, values, and priorities for the Council over the next four years.
17. 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. By awarding CIL funds to a wide range of projects across the district it will enable new infrastructure projects to be delivered, and existing facilities

enhanced, therefore providing several benefits to both residents and communities.

Options appraisal

18. Options have been considered in the light of proposed local government reorganisation as to whether to pause allocations at this time or even increase the funding of £1m local infrastructure funding.
19. Officers discussed this with the Task and Finish group. It was agreed that that it was appropriate to continue with this round of local infrastructure bids in recognition of the time taken by bidders to prepare the bids.
20. Options were also considered in relation to the introduction of some smaller projects to take the proposed allocation for 2025/26 just over the £1m. This was discussed with the Chair of the Task and Finish group who agreed with the proposal to not include these, but to open the 2026/27 bidding window earlier.

Options for further projects

21. When the Expenditure Framework revisions were approved in October 2024, it was proposed that there would be an annual opportunity for 'Expressions of Interests' (EOI) for further strategic projects over and above the five agreed at that time.
22. It is recommended that an EOI is now opened for two months to understand what demand is in the district for projects and for what type. This would be open to all infrastructure providers and partners. Whilst not a formal bidding process, it would help shape the Council's thinking for future use of CIL. This forms the third recommendation to this report.
23. Whilst there would be the intention to then repeat the £1m local infrastructure funding round later in 2025 it will also allow a full review of the remaining CIL that the Council holds.

Consultation undertaken

24. All District Council and County Council Members were advised of the bids received and offered to make comments. Where comments were received this was fed back to the Task and Finish Group for their information.
25. Where a project submitted was within the New Forest National Park then the views of officers of the National Park Authority were sought and considered by officers when scoring.

26. Where a project was proposed for formal open space (or located in an area of formal open space) then the District Council's Health and Wellbeing Manager was consulted for their views.

Financial and resource implications

27. CIL is collected and allocated in accordance with the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended). The monies proposed to be allocated are all held by the Council and therefore there will be no direct cost to the Council.
28. It is recognised that on occasions budgets may need to be amended for projects where unforeseen circumstances arise. Should this situation be encountered, and to allow the continued delivery of schemes, it is proposed to authorise the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy, in conjunction with the Chair of the Executive Advisory Task and Finish Group, to make such amendments as they deem appropriate to the approved project lists within 10% of the total budget. This forms the fourth recommendation to this report.
29. At the time of bids for local infrastructure being submitted, a similar round of funding bids was undertaken for the Community Grants programme. Some bids submitted through this CIL process also sought funds through the Community Grants programme. The Task and Finish Group were made aware of these instances during the meetings. Any proposed award under CIL funds has taken account of any other grants awarded and the Expenditure Framework which states that only one bid per project per bidding round per council funding scheme.

Legal implications

30. Whenever the Council provides a subsidy, regardless of the form it takes (e.g. grant funds including CIL, loans, land at an undervalue etc) to another organisation, it needs to ensure such subsidies are permitted under the Subsidy Control Act 2022. Due to the level of grants being awarded no further action is required from the Council in respect of the subsidy control regime and it will not be in breach should the decision to award the grants be made.

Risk assessment

31. There are no requirements for a formal risk assessment arising from this report, however, the following risks should be noted. These risks will be continually monitored by officers.

- Failure to allocate CIL funds to projects may not secure investment in infrastructure (schools, health, broadband, transport etc.), and making development stifled and/or unsustainable.
- Ensuring the appropriate mechanism and timescales for reporting on CIL funds is followed through publication of an Infrastructure Funding Statement by 31 December each year.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

32. The projects proposed will deliver environmental benefits as well as health and well-being and climate change benefits through enabling greater use of existing open space, the creation of new or sustainable walking routes, enhanced cultural facilities and facilitating sustainable travel for young people.

Equalities implications

33. Through investing in the local infrastructure projects identified it will enhance facilities for all communities across the district, and by enhancing these facilities it will create opportunities with consequential benefits for disadvantaged communities and those that currently do not feel that such areas are accessible to their needs.

Crime and disorder implications

34. Through investing in the projects identified it will seek to enhance facilities for communities across the district, including opportunities to positively address/design-out any existing crime and disorder issues.

Data protection/ Information governance/ ICT implications

35. Alongside the CIL Expenditure Framework is a series of internal governance/process notes. The initial bidding round for the allocations in 2024/25 was robustly audited by our internal audit team who found that the process was in order.

New Forest National Park/ Cranborne Chase National Landscape implications

36. With some of the approved projects providing upgraded and designated routes this will help conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area comprised in the National Park and National Landscapes by providing a safe trail route.
37. Additionally, with investment in other some of the other projects in the area, such as new and enhanced play parks, this can help to take

some visitor pressures from the National Park by providing alternative destinations at times.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Officer proposed schemes for CIL allocation in 2025/26 following Task and Finish Group

Background Papers:

[CIL Expenditure Framework October 2024](#)

Appendix 1 - Officer proposed schemes for CIL allocation in 2025/26 following Task and Finish Group

The following 31 projects are proposed for allocation and listed alphabetically by location.

Location	Organisation submitting bid	Proposal	CIL request
Bransgore	Thorney Hill Community Centre Association	New Play area	£25,232.00
Brockenhurst	The Brockenhurst Village Trust	MUGA	£43,200.00
Copythorne	Copythorne Parish Council	Installation of Village Gateways	£4,000.00
Damerham	Hampshire County Council	Bridleway Damerham to Sandheath improvements	£81,500.00
East Boldre	East Boldre Village Hall	Redevelopment of the Village Hall	£100,000.00
Fawley	Fawley Parish Council	Improvements to Gang Warily sports hall, new specialist floor new sockets for badminton nets and basketball hoops	£7,498.00
Fordingbridge	Whitsbury Parish Council	Introduce road markings and modify road signage	£2,900.00
Fordingbridge	Fordingbridge Town Council	Refurbished and enhanced pedestrian link between Fordingbridge Car Park and the High Street	£72,500.00
Hale	Hale Village Hall (New Forest)	Solar panels	£10,000.00
Hordle	Hordle Parish Council	Replacement upgraded MUGA and cycle rack	£70,000.00
Hythe and Dibden	Hythe and Dibden Parish Council	Play area improvements (multiple locations)	£10,433.00
Hythe and Dibden	Hythe Pier Garden	Community Garden	£1,000.00
Hythe and Dibden	Wildground Infant School	Creation of an outdoor space that offers a secure and nurturing environment	£13,704.50

Location	Organisation submitting bid	Proposal	CIL request
Lymington and Pennington	Lymington and Pennington Town Council	Sea Water Bath improvements	£35,775.00
Lymington and Pennington	Lymington and Pennington Town Council	Withy Woods project	£44,250.00
Lyndhurst	Lyndhurst Parish Council	Replace the zipwire at the Coles mead Rec Ground	£22,308.37
Lyndhurst	Lyndhurst Parish Council	New footpath at Great Mead open space	£4,725.00
Marchwood	Marchwood Parish Council	Solar panels on the village hall at Lloyd Rec Ground	£9,995.00
Milford on Sea	Milford on Sea CofE Primary School	install a lockable bike shelter with storage racks for bikes, as well as 2 scooter racks	£6,339.00
New Milton	The Friendly Dog Club	demolish and replace an old community dog training temporary building	£75,000.00
New Milton	Forest Arts Centre - Hampshire Cultural Trust	To replace the current fixed seating at Forest Arts Centre with retractable seating	£32,329.00
New Milton	New Milton Town Council/New Forest District Council	Enhanced recreational mitigation of the sensitive Nature 2000 sites – Carrick Wood	£40,000.00
New Milton	New Milton Town Council	Hollands Wood Drive public open space off Fernhill Lane – multi play unit	£41,550.00
New Milton	New Milton Town Council	Ashley Recreation Ground provision of a Sports Wall and Sensory Board.	£32,000.00
Ringwood	Hampshire County Council	promote awareness, use and enjoyment of the Castleman Trailway through signage, information boards and benches.	£20,960.00
Rockbourne	Rockbourne Roman Villa - Hampshire Cultural Trust	Reinforcement of grass car park surface	£9,672.00
Sandleheath	Sandleheath Parish Council	Traffic management improvements	£99,934.00

Location	Organisation submitting bid	Proposal	CIL request
Sway	Sway Parish Council	Drainage infrastructure improvements for Cricket Pavilion	£14,332.00
Sway	Sway Village Hall	Enhancements to Sway Village Hall; Kitchen and Sound System	£26,964.00
Totton and Eling	Totton and Eling Town Council	new pieces of accessible and sensory play equipment at seven of the existing play areas	£30,000.00
Woodgreen	Woodgreen Community Shop Association Ltd	Solar Panels	£10,000.00

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Cabinet – 2 April 2025

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) 25/26 allocations

Purpose	For Review
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	This report sets out the projects proposed to be funded from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in the financial year 2025/26.
Recommendation(s)	<p>That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. notes the continued purpose of the UK SPF; 2. supports the allocation of 25/26 UKSPF funding towards specific projects as set out in this report; and 3. delegated authority is given for future decision making associated with the finalisation of the project programme for 25/26 UKSPF spend to the Strategic Director for Place Operations and Sustainability, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy.
Reasons for recommendation(s)	To progress proposals for the allocation of UK SPF funding to projects for delivery in the financial year 2025-2026.
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Derek Tipp – Planning and Economy
Strategic Director(s)	James Carpenter – Strategic Director of Place, Operations & Sustainability
Officer Contact	<p>Tim Guymer Assistant Director for Place Development tim.guymer@nfdc.gov.uk</p>

Introduction and background

1. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) was launched in April 2022 by the previous Government and was designed to reduce inequalities between communities, replacing previous EU funding.
2. New Forest District Council was previously awarded £1 million in 2022 to cover the period 2022-2025. At that time, a Local Investment Plan was required to be prepared and submitted by this Council to demonstrate how the money would be spent in the district against the three national investment priorities as then set out:
 - a. Communities and Places
 - b. Supporting Local Businesses
 - c. People and Skills
3. Further details of the awarding of the original funding in 2022 was set out in a report to the Council's [Cabinet in July 2022](#). This included an explanation of the breakdown of the funding for each financial year, community engagement activities and the basis for preparing the Local Investment Plan.
4. Whilst the UKSPF was originally a three-year programme, the funding was heavily weighted to year 3 (2024-25) where c.£730k of the £1 million awarded was to be spent (c.£90k in 2022-23, c.£180k in 2023-24).
5. Officers have been overseeing and managing this expenditure during this period and expect the existing funds to be fully spent by the end of March 2025. A separate report will be prepared detailing the outcomes of this funding and any lessons learnt.
6. Meanwhile, in December 2024 the Government announced further UKSPF funding to be allocated to each local authority across England. For New Forest District, the total sum is £327,146 with £60,401 for capital expenditure and £266,745 for revenue expenditure. However, there is a degree of flexibility and previous guidance indicate that councils may increase the proportion of capital in response to local identified need. Government has continued to stipulate that a minimum of 10% of the overall allocation must be capital (i.e. £32,715).
7. Unlike the previous funding rounds, there is no requirement for local authorities to submit a local investment plan to secure this funding. Instead, local authorities are expected to update the Government through existing reporting arrangements. Up to 4% (£13,085.44) of

the fund allocated can be used by the Council to help support the administration of the fund.

Government criteria for how 25/26 funding can be spent

- 8. The priority investment areas of the UKSPF have not changed from the original prospectus with a focus on the following:
 - Communities and Place
 - Supporting Local Businesses
 - People and Skills
- 9. Figure 1 illustrates how these priority areas link to the five key national policy themes (and 12 sub-themes) set by the Government in December 2024.

Figure 1: relationship of Government missions to UKSPF priorities



- 10. The role of the lead local authority (New Forest District Council) remains the same as before from a delivery perspective, ensuring that collaboration and value for money is secured in delivering key local projects.
- 11. Reporting as per the 2025/2026 guidance will be simplified reducing the burden on the lead local authority, thus allowing it to focus on the delivery of positive outputs and outcomes. Further guidance from Government (via the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) is expected in due course in this regard.

Identifying 2025/26 projects for New Forest District

12. In identifying a shortlist of projects for potential funding in 25/26, officers are mindful that the number and types of programmes funded in the existing 2022-25 programme has resulted in a significant administrative burden for officers over and above the 4% administrative charge that could be drawn. As such, it is suggested that this years' funding is focussed on fewer projects, with opportunities taken to minimise administrative resource where possible.
13. To collate a list of projects for consideration this year, two principal sources were used:
 - a. Existing UKSPF projects that provided positive outputs and outcomes and could readily be continued into 25-26;
 - b. Projects previously discounted from the 22-25 UKSPF programme and additional projects identified by officers taking account of established and emerging priorities for the District, including the Corporate Plan the priorities set out for a future Freeport Delivery Plan as agreed by [Cabinet in April 2024](#) and the work currently underway to develop a New Forest Skills Action Plan;
14. Appendix 1 provides a table of the projects considered, including their estimated cost, expected outcomes, alignment with UKSPF and Corporate priorities, consideration of project readiness and whether the project could be considered eligible for future CIL funding.
15. The proposed projects for funding from the 2025-26 UKSPF are set out in Table 1 below. A total of 9 projects are proposed, totalling an indicative cost of approximately £313k which, combined with the allowable administrative costs of £13k represents the total fund available for 2025-26.

Table 1 – Proposed projects

	Project	Cost (indicative)
1	Start up support programme	£25k
2	New Forest Apprenticeship Hub	£30k
3	Digital Skills Initiative for Business & Community	£35k
4	NEET Support Programme	£40k
5	Business growth accelerator programme	£50k
6	New Forest HEAT project	£20k
7	Replacement public litter bins	£53k

	Project	Cost (indicative)
8	Replacement noticeboards (Go New Forest)	£30k
9	Repairs to Hythe Promenade	£30k
	Total cost	£313k

16. Further details of these potential projects, along with those not recommended to be progressed for funding at this time, are set out in Appendix 2.
17. The projects listed in Table 1 include six projects with a particular focus on skills and business support, recognising the increasing imperative at a national and local level to upskill the workforce (and those currently not working). Three of these projects are proposed to be a continuation of existing projects delivered through the 2022-25 UKSPF, whilst a further three are new projects focussed on supporting those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs), improving digital skills and supporting the growth of maturing businesses.
18. The indicative cost for these projects is expected to be in the region of £200k and all projects would be considered 'revenue spend'. As such, the opportunities to fund these through alternative measures (such as the Community Infrastructure Levy) is very limited.
19. The remaining three projects proposed are capital funded projects, aligning with the communities and place priorities of the UKSPF. They all directly relate to replacing/repairing existing community infrastructure. The litter bins replacement project would see approximately 75 replacement litter bins for those that have reached the end of their designed life and no longer reflect current waste standards, aligned to the new waste collection service.
20. The project to replace a series of dilapidated noticeboards of varying ages and designs across the New Forest to be replaced, providing better wayfinding and direct visitors to New Forest businesses. Income generated from advertising receipts for these boards would be used to support Go New Forest (as a Community Interest Company) in other tourism related activities, as well as supporting the ongoing maintenance of the boards.
21. The project to repair Hythe Promenade is in recognition of the need for significant maintenance to be undertaken on this important local facility over and above typical annual expenditure. Investment through this project will enable local people to access the waterfront next to the village centre with key views across Southampton Water.

Corporate Plan priorities

22. Appendix one sets out the links between the project's outputs, the Government missions and the UKSPF and Corporate Plan priorities. The UKSPF provides opportunities to fund projects across the Place, People and Prosperity priorities of the Corporate Plan.

Options appraisal

23. As set out in the appendices, there were a number of potential projects considered for allocating funding to from the UKSPF. Clearly, not every project could be funded for 25-26 and therefore officers have prioritised those listed in Table 1 which retain a predominantly revenue focus to expenditure.
24. Those projects that have not been proposed to be funded for next year have not been discounted because they don't have merit. Rather, that that when considered against the guidelines for expenditure of the UKSPF, local priorities and considering the prospect of alternative opportunities (including potentially Community Infrastructure Levy), the projects listed in Table 1 are considered to justify their inclusion for the coming year.
25. Those projects that are unsuccessful on this occasion will be considered again in the context of any suitable future funding opportunities becoming available.

Consultation undertaken

26. The original setting of the UKSPF funding for 2022-25 included meeting the New Forest Partnership Board, engaging with local MPs and engagement with local community representative groups which helped to inform the proposed projects.
27. The preparation of this report has taken into account this previous engagement, alongside extensive work with local business, infrastructure providers and education and skills providers in relation to the New Forest Skills Action Plan.
28. The Place & Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Panel considered the basis of this report at its meeting on 13 March 2025. The Panel supported the recommendations set out in this report, noting that whilst there were a number of commendable projects for consideration, the ones identified in Table 1 met a number of key UKSPF and corporate objectives and were clearly able to proceed within the timescales required with the potential for longer term sustainable benefits. Other projects that were not proposed to be funded for this financial year from the UKSPF were encouraged to

continue to consider alternative funding options or would otherwise be looked at again if future rounds of UKSPF funding became available. This included a discussion on the potential funding of a replacement of the Hythe Pier Pontoon, where Members found that whilst there was merits to this project there remained considerable uncertainties about the details of the project.

Financial and resource implications

29. The UKSPF is a government awarded grant fund and therefore there are no direct costs to the Council in allocating funds to individual projects. With just over £13,000 available from the fund to cover the administration of the funds, it is unlikely that this will cover the officer costs of resourcing in full. However, any additional administrative costs are considered capable of being met from existing budgets and within the officer resources as provided for in the Economic Development Team.
30. The Council's procurement and contract management guidelines will be followed to ensure that the full funding allocation is spent within the 25/26 funding period, avoiding any project overspend.

Legal implications

31. Directly related to the content of this paper there are no legal implications to consider. However prior to finalising projects ready for delivery, a number will need to be tested in line with the Subsidy Control Act 2022 to ensure rules and regulations related to subsidy control are not breached. Officers will also need to ensure compliance with procurement rules and regulations.

Risk assessment

32. No formal risk assessment is required for this report. The funding of projects will be subject to significant monitoring and reporting throughout 2025/26 which will ensure any risks arising are identified, managed and mitigated at the earliest opportunity.
33. Officers in consultation with potential delivery bodies, will prepare forecasted outputs and outcomes attributed to each project. This will support the ongoing management of the UKSPF 25-26, whilst mitigating any impacts should a project become unviable by ensuring there are a range of worked up schemes ready to replace any that drop out.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

34. Addressing sustainability and developing activity which directly supports the Climate Change and Nature Emergency is a key feature across the potential projects.
35. Reducing the environmental impact of all projects will be considered through the project design and procurement processes. Officers will seek to reduce risk and maximise added-value opportunities wherever possible.

Equalities implications

36. The UKSPF schemes are intended to improve life chances of all residents, increasing accessibility to services, fostering a pride of place and strengthening social cohesion. Within this context particular attention is given to those most vulnerable to remove barriers to participation both economically and socially.

Crime and disorder implications

37. Actions to improve the public realm, and address social exclusion are anticipated to have positive impact on crime and disorder, improving public perceptions around safety and foster pride in neighbourhoods.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

38. None.

New Forest National Park / Cranborne Chase National Landscape implications

39. There are no direct implications in this regard.

Appendices:

Appendix One – Appraisal of projects
Appendix Two - Further details of potential UK SPF projects for 2025/26

Background Papers:

July 2022 Cabinet Report: [Decision - UK Shared Prosperity Fund Council Services](#)

Appendix 1 – Appraisal of projects

Project	Cost (indicative)	Direct outcomes for Apr 26	UKSPF Priorities	Corporate Priorities	Capable of being funded through CIL?	Project readings (1 = high; 5 = low)
Revenue projects recommended to take forward for delivery through 2025-26 UKSPF						
Start up support programme	£25k	Continued delivery of focussed support for pre-start and newly established businesses	People and Skills; Supporting Local Business	People Prosperity	No	1
New Forest Apprenticeship Hub	£30k	Continued support for businesses in NF in securing apprenticeships (and similar) and understanding skills needs	People and Skills; Supporting Local Business	People Prosperity	No	1
Digital Skills Initiative for Business & Community	£35k	Delivery of new digital skills training to complement the roll out of high-speed broadband	People and Skills; Supporting Local Businesses; Community and Place	People Prosperity Place	No	2
NEET Support Programme	£40k	New programme to target those young people Not in Education, Employment or	People and Skills; Supporting Local Business	People Prosperity	No	2

Appendix 1 – Appraisal of projects

Project	Cost (indicative)	Direct outcomes for Apr 26	UKSPF Priorities	Corporate Priorities	Capable of being funded through CIL?	Project readings (1 = high; 5 = low)
		Training in New Forest District				
Business growth accelerator programme	£50k	New programme to support businesses into maturity (i.e. beyond 2 years)	Supporting Local Business	Prosperity	No	2
New Forest HEAT project	£20k	Continue support for energy efficiency and home energy resilience programme	Community and Place; People and Skills	People Place Prosperity	No	1
Capital projects recommended to take forward for delivery						
Public litter bins aligned to new waste collection services	£53k	Replacement of existing bins at end of life and below standard	Community and Place	Place	No (replacement)	1
Noticeboards (Go New Forest)	£30k	Improved wayfinding to local businesses & destinations	Community and Place	Prosperity	No (replacement)	2
Hythe Promenade	£30k	Repaired promenade	Community and Place	Place	No (repair)	2

Appendix 1 – Appraisal of projects

Project	Cost (indicative)	Direct outcomes for Apr 26	UKSPF Priorities	Corporate Priorities	Capable of being funded through CIL?	Project readings (1 = high; 5 = low)
Projects not recommended to take forward for delivery through 2025-26 UKSPF						
Hythe Pier Pontoon	£62.5k-£250k	Reinstated (and enhanced?) Hythe Ferry service	Community and Place	People Prosperity	Only if additionality secured i.e. to enable new services	2-3
Defibrillators	£20k	Emergency resuscitation facility in accessible locations	People and Skills	People	Yes	3
Calshot bus connectivity	£25k - £150k	Increased frequency of bus service connecting Calshot to wider network (1 extra service at c.11:30 = £25k)	Community and Place	People Prosperity	No	3
Access improvements at Hordle Cliffs	£30-£50k	Improved pedestrian access to beach from Hordle Cliffs	Community and Place	Place	Yes	4
Provision of additional CCTV cameras	Not currently available	Expansion of CCTV network in district	Community and Place	People and Place	Yes (for capital cost)	4

Appendix 1 – Appraisal of projects

Project	Cost (indicative)	Direct outcomes for Apr 26	UKSPF Priorities	Corporate Priorities	Capable of being funded through CIL?	Project readiness (1 = high; 5 = low)
Refurbishment of Public Conveniences	Not currently available	Refurbished public conveniences in district	Community and Place	People Place	No (refurb)	5
Solar canopies for public car parks	Not currently available	New solar canopy over a car park	Community and Place	Place	Yes	5

Revenue funded

Project 1 - New Forest start up support programme

1. The existing New Forest start up support programme, funded through the 2022-25 UKSPF, provided a face-to-face one-to-one mentoring service for pre-start businesses. At the time of launch this programme met an identified gap in business support and skills provision and since its inception has delivered support to 42 new/prestart businesses and 23 businesses that have been trading between 1 and 3 years.
2. Feedback from those that attended, and officers, has been very positive. In potentially funding such a programme for 2025-26, officers propose to consider a range of delivery partners to ensure continued best value.

Project 2 - New Forest apprenticeship hub

3. The apprenticeship hub programme funded by the 2022-25 UKSPF provides businesses in the New Forest with advice and guidance related to skills programmes. This included apprenticeships, T-Levels and work experience, support to undertake skills needs analysis for the business and guidance on how to secure an apprenticeship transfer levy.
4. The programme has performed well and delivered substantial outputs against its key performance indicators (KPIs) such as 46 businesses engaged in skills programmes and £191,000 apprenticeship levy transferred to businesses in the New Forest.
5. Officers recommend that this project is funded for 2025-26, recognising the significant benefits that have been secured to date.

Project 3 - Digital skills initiative for businesses and communities

6. A newly proposed programme providing revenue funding to deliver digital skills to businesses and residents in the New Forest. This is proposed to complement the £14m capital investment via Project Gigabit delivering highspeed fibre broadband infrastructure to circa ten thousand homes across the district.
7. Ensuring that businesses and residents have the right digital skills is essential to maximise the benefits associated with a highspeed broadband service. Benefits for businesses include efficiency improvements and access to wider markets. For residents especially in rural areas there are health and wellbeing benefits through

Appendix 2 – Further details of potential UK SPF projects for 2025/26

reduced isolation and economic benefits through increasing the digital skills for existing and potential employers, as well as greater value for money through access to a wider shopping experience.

8. Finally, environmental benefits can be realised through the opportunity for residents to work from home, thereby reducing congestion on the road network and, by proxy, CO2 emissions.
9. Currently under consideration is the potential to leverage further revenue funding from additional sources to create a multi-year programme. This will enable skills provision to track the infrastructure rollout, encouraging take up and ensuring the full benefit of fibre broadband is realised for the district. It is however recognised that UKSPF funding must be spent in the 2025/26 financial year. Therefore, if additional revenue is leveraged, SPF funding will be front loaded allowing alternative funding to be spent in later years.

Project 4 - NEET support programme

10. The NEET support programmes objective would be to reduce the percentage of young people (currently circa 4% of 16 – 17 year olds) in New Forest District who are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET).
11. Officers will consult with education specialists with an interest in the New Forest to ensure a balance for the programme between output/outcome coverage and impact.
12. A partnership approach is proposed to be adopted for this programme with a focus on collaboration with education establishments, community groups, voluntary organisations and private sector delivery partners.
13. The programme will move away from traditional skills support such as C.V. writing and interview techniques, instead delivering a well-rounded support package that meets the complex needs of the NEET target group.
14. If approved, officers will develop a framework for the programme ready for consultation with stakeholders once support is obtained through the NFDC governance process.

Project 5 - Business growth accelerator programme

15. The New Forest is a place of entrepreneurs with a business birth rate of 11% (the proportion of new businesses established in the area

Appendix 2 – Further details of potential UK SPF projects for 2025/26

compared to total number of active businesses) in 2023. However, unfortunately whilst many businesses start up there is a trend that sees a considerable number not make it through their first two years.

16. The business growth accelerator programme is proposed to act as a pilot project to address this issue, by providing extended tailored support to enhance the growth of businesses in the first two years of trading.
17. Whilst still under development, examples of the support that could be provided includes: -
 - Mentorship and coaching
 - Networking opportunities
 - Funding and investment identification and securing
 - Educational workshops and training
 - Product development and innovation
18. It is important to note that this programme moves beyond the support proposed to be available for the New Forest start up support programme, by providing specialist wrap around and extended growth advice targeted at businesses that have the desire and potential to grow exponentially.
19. As per the other programmes, officers will carry out due diligence to test current available provision. This will ensure the avoidance of duplication, guaranteeing effective use of public funding.

Project 6 - New Forest HEAT Project

20. The New Forest HEAT Project was previously funded through the 2022-25 UKSPF with the aim of supporting area-wide energy efficiency and home energy resilience, in addition to delivering green skills and creating opportunities for access to employment. The project has successfully delivered a wide range of outcomes, far exceeding its targets.
21. To date, three paid part-time roles have been created – Project Coordinator, Technical Coordinator and Project Mentor, with 56 volunteer energy advisors successfully trained (against a target of 15). Of these volunteers, 21 have subsequently participated in City and Guilds Level certified and equivalent courses in low carbon skills (against a target of 4).
22. The 22-25 HEAT project initially intended to provide 400 New Forest households with energy advice, albeit 677 contacts have been achieved (via home visits, info packs and event engagement). 17

community facilities have also been supported through thermal imaging surveys, energy savings advice and grant applications (against a target of 5).

23. The HEAT project has received a high level of community support and, if continued, could have greater reach across the New Forest District. Improving energy efficiency will support households with the cost of living, have positive impacts on health and wellbeing and enable greater energy resilience through reduced local demand.

Capital funded

Project 7 - Public litter bins

24. Waste management is a significant expenditure for NFDC, therefore, the purchasing and installation of up to 75 public litter bins to replace existing bins reaching the end of their life and not reflecting current standards has the potential to assist in reducing that cost. Investment via UKSPF will support the wider delivery of the NFDC waste management strategy, whilst also supporting key corporate priorities associated with prosperity and place.
25. New Forest residents and visitors have an expectation of a clean New Forest. By utilising UKSPF funding to support meeting this expectation there are direct economic, environmental and wellbeing impacts that can be achieved.
26. A litter free New Forest will attract recurring visitors and their associated spend, supporting the tourism sector and the wider economy. It will also protect the natural capital which is one of the key drivers for the visitor economy. Finally, a clean and green New Forest will attract residents and visitors to enjoy outdoor physical activity supporting health and wellbeing.

Project 8 - Noticeboards

27. Over the course of many years, the District Council has erected a number of noticeboards across the district which in recent years have been used to support tourism activity by enabling local businesses to advertise on the noticeboards. Upon the formation of Go New Forest as a Community Interest Company (previously the tourism service within NFDC) in 2017, the responsibility for managing these noticeboards was passed to this company as well as the income generated through selling the advertisement space. That income has been used to help support the wider tourism activities of Go New Forest since 2017.

28. Unfortunately, when Go New Forest was formed and responsibility for managing the noticeboard was transferred from the District Council, the ongoing maintenance of the noticeboards was not addressed. Subsequently the condition of the noticeboards has worsened, with many in a poor state of repair and a variety of historic NFDC branding (some dating back to at least the 1990s) on display.
29. The condition of these noticeboards is now hampering the ability of Go New Forest to sell advertising space with consequential impact on the reliability of this income stream to support their wider work as a Community Interest Company. The noticeboards themselves are also increasingly detracting from the quality of the environment which they are located within and present a somewhat confusing message of the District Council's brand.
30. Funding the replacement of the 11 current noticeboards managed by Go New Forest, and potentially looking to fund up to a further 4 noticeboards to address potential gaps in coverage (e.g. Calshot and Totton) provides an opportunity to provide a more contemporary and resilient group of noticeboards for Go New Forest to attract advertising revenue in support of their visitor marketing activities. It would also provide an opportunity for the District Council (or an alternative authority) to provide fresh and consistent branding across these locations.
31. If there was support for the principle of funding such an initiative, officers are keen to ensure that the maintenance of the noticeboards as an asset are resolved through an agreement with Go New Forest to take responsibility and fund through the income they receive through advertising the space.

Project 9 - Hythe Promenade

32. Hythe Promenade provides residents and tourists with the ability to navigate the seafront area at Hythe. Its attraction for visitors includes a prominent position to take in the local natural capital and is recognised as prime spot for watching activity on Southampton Water. The promenade adds to the wider visitor offer for Hythe and complements other attractions such as the pier and the ferry.
33. Unfortunately, the promenade has suffered from under investment, resulting in the planks that make up the walkway needing replacement. There is little doubt that this will impact residents and tourists utilising the promenade impacting on the wider prosperity of the area.

34. It is proposed that maintenance funded via the UKSPF will return the promenade to its original condition. This in turn will support NFDC corporate objectives associated with place and prosperity.

Hythe Pier Pontoon

35. The ferry route between Hythe and the City of Southampton has its origins dating back to at least the late eighteenth century. Twenty years ago, the ferry carried over 430,000 passengers each year, albeit by the start of the Covid-19 pandemic its patronage had fallen to just under 200,000 passengers a year.
36. In 2023, the ferry company operating the service was purchased by Red Funnel and in late 2024, ownership of the pier (enabling access to the deep water needed for the ferry service), was transferred to a new company (Hythe Pier Company Ltd). Earlier in 2024, the pontoon at the end of the pier necessary for the ferry to be used was found to need of immediate replacement. The current estimated cost of replacement is £250k and until/unless this is funded the ferry remains out of action. It is understood that the pontoon remains in the ownership of Red Funnel.
37. A number of public bodies, including Hampshire County Council and Southampton City Council have been approached to ask for funding for this replacement but have declined. More recently this Council has also been approached for potential funding by Red Funnel, and local district councillors, with enquiries also being received from the Department of Work and Pensions as to when the ferry service will reopen. There is a history of public money being used to support the ferry service in recent years.
38. Clearly there are a number of potential benefits to enabling the ferry to reopen which don't need to be rehearsed in detail here but include:
- **boosting the local economy** through encouraging tourists and visitors into Hythe and as a gateway to the wider New Forest;
 - **improving connectivity across Southampton Water** including access to jobs, education/skills training and leisure as an alternative to car based travel and longer public transport routes;
 - **environmental benefits** - The ferry offers a more eco-friendly alternative to road transport, potentially reducing congestion and carbon emissions.
 - **community support** - The ferry is an important part of local heritage and culture

39. Conversely, there are a number of potential issues arising with considering directing funding for this project including:
- **Cost Burden** - There has already been significant public subsidy given to the Hythe Ferry over recent years and there is no guarantee that the ferry will continue to operate on a sustainable financial footing in the future. In this regard, the complexity of the ownership of the different components of the service creates further uncertainty;
 - **Lack of wider funding commitment** – linked to the above, officers have not been made aware of any other funding commitments made by either the current operator/owner or indeed the two councils with statutory responsibility for transport on this route (Southampton City Council and Hampshire County Council)
 - **Impact on Waterside bus service** – the reinstatement of the ferry service would potentially displace some demand away from the bus service, albeit there is no evidence available of any significant adverse impact on the viability of the bus service;
 - **Lack of detail about proposal** – at this stage, there is no substantive information or detail available to inform a positive decision about funding. For instance, what options have been looked at? Is there any potential to secure an improvement to the service/infrastructure, rather than a like-for-like replacement? What other funding opportunities are being explored? Are there any other foreseen costs arising? What is the long term business case?
40. At this time this project is not proposed for funding for the 2025-26 UKSPF. However, if infrastructure improvements can be secured through a new pontoon over and above the previous operation model, the project may be eligible for bidding for funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Reconnection of bus services to Calshot

41. Some ballpark figures from Bluestar: reinstate the hourly frequency to Calshot on Bluestar 9 would be around £180k p.a. Bear in mind that there are no fewer people using the reduced level of service now than when the service ran hourly, so for me there's a question mark over value for public money here. One additional journey from Calshot to Southampton at say 11.35 which would fill the current gap in service would cost circa £25k p.a.

42. Following changes to the bus timetable in 2024, the regular Bluestar bus service connecting Calshot village and beach to the rest of the Waterside and Southampton was replaced by a less frequent service which has left significant times of the day when Calshot is not able to be accessed by public transport. This reduction of connectivity to a part of the District which has significant challenges in terms of deprivation is disappointing, particularly so given its wider function as a coastal destination.
43. Investment back into this service could range from the reintroduction of an hourly service at an estimated annual cost of £180k to a single additional service to fill a significant gap in late mornings at £25k per annum. This could have the potential to improve access for residents that otherwise do not have access to private vehicles. Wider outcomes associated with this approach include supporting access to employment and skills.
44. Tourism could also benefit from the proposed investment by improving connections of Calshot's foreshore to the main bus route attracting more visitors to local attractions boosting tourism and local businesses.
45. However, historical data has shown limited patronage to the service (12 passengers) that calls is into question the financial sustainability of the service once UK SPF funding has been used. This has wider implications in terms of continued subsidy to maintain the service, should take up remain low, especially in the current economic climate.
46. Finally, due to the small population at Calshot and the potential of limited demand the wider outputs and outcomes that could be attributed to this project are likely to be significantly less than other interventions. This in turn would limit the impact when compared with other investments. For these reasons officers have not recommended this project for UKSPF funding for 2025-26.

Defibrillators

47. Installation of defibrillators across the New Forest could have multiple benefits for residents and visitors to the area. Public safety is enhanced, whilst reducing pressure on elements of the wider health care system. Defibrillators also provide confidence for residents and visitors in the area that should a serious cardiac incident occur, the relevant health infrastructure is in place allowing people to act quickly.

Appendix 2 – Further details of potential UK SPF projects for 2025/26

48. Defibrillators can also promote health awareness when deployed as part of a wider health and wellbeing campaign. The reason for officers not recommending this project for funding this time is two-fold. Firstly, that it is unclear as to the extent to which defibrillators are already in place across the District. Secondly, such a project could equally well be considered for funding through alternative sources of funding including the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Hordle Cliff access

49. Hordle Cliff is a popular tourist destination that provides valued sea views and is serviced by range of facilities including beach huts.
50. Recent storms have destroyed access to certain areas of the beach with steps allowing visitors to ascend and descend the cliff at key locations unusable.
51. There is a potential opportunity to reintroduce access points maintaining the popularity of the area and supporting the local economy. Health and wellbeing benefits can also be attributable to this potential project by allowing residents and visitors to enjoy physical outdoor activities through the navigation of the popular location.
52. However, at this stage there are no detailed proposals as to where such improved access could be secured with no surveys having been undertaken or design work carried out. Given that any UKSPF project would need to be completed by April 2026, it is highly unlikely that this project could meet this timeline

Provision of additional CCTV cameras

53. Deployment of CCTV provides a range of benefits including deterring illegal fly tipping and acting as a deterrent against anti-social behaviour, allowing residents and visitors to feel safe when navigating areas of the New Forest. There is a direct link between these outcomes and the corporate priorities of place and prosperity, however, it should be noted that the CCTV network has recently been extended and there is no evidence to suggest further extension is required at this point in time.
54. Additionally, as with the Hordle Cliff and Public Toilet projects there are no detailed plans in place. This raises concerns in terms of the deliverability of this project, especially when considering the short delivery timeframe of April 2026.

Refurbishment of public toilets

55. The refurbishment of public toilets across the New Forest District meets corporate priorities associated with place and prosperity. From a place perspective the improvement of aesthetics enhances their appearance creating a more welcoming environment. This is particularly important when considering the economic benefit the New Forest receives from the millions of visitor per year, and the positive impact this has on the local economy which supports prosperity for businesses, communities and residents.
56. However, at this stage there are no detailed proposals linked with this project and the short timeframe by which to defray UKSPF funding would suggest it is highly unlikely that this project could be delivered by April 2026.

Solar Canopies for public car parks

57. NFDC own and manage a number of public car parks across the district, many of which could be suitable sites for the installation of solar PV canopies. Such canopies would provide a range of added value benefits whilst preserving car parking facilities.
58. Benefits would include:
- Renewable energy generation – this could be: used to power onsite electrical equipment; direct wired into adjacent buildings; fed into the grid network for income generation; sold to local customers through a PPA (power purchase agreement); stored in batteries to boost capacity during periods of high local demand.
 - Cost reduction – reducing the current running of costs of car park facilities e.g. EV chargers, lighting, ticket machines, security/comms devices. It could also provide power to adjacent NFDC operated buildings to reduce utility costs.
 - Weather protection – canopies would provide shade from the sun and shelter from rain. This would be of benefit to car park users, but also provide protection to the carpark surfacing and infrastructure. Climate change projections indicate that weather conditions will become more extreme in the future.
 - Maximisation of space – development space within the district is tightly constrained, with many initiatives and priorities competing for space, particularly within towns and villages. The installation of solar canopies over car parks would provide additional benefits without requiring additional land.
 - Climate action – NFDC has declared a Climate Change and Nature Emergency and is committed to taking action to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to extreme weather. This was reemphasised in the Corporate Plan 2024-28. Investment in

solar canopies would demonstrate delivery and corporate leadership in addressing the climate agenda.

59. Suitable sites are yet to be identified, and it is acknowledged that the physical impact of installing canopies would need to be carefully considered, along with an assessment of grid capacity and connections prior to confirming the suitability of sites to accommodate. At this stage there are no detailed proposals for this project. Once proposals have been developed, this project may be a suitable candidate for CIL funding, and therefore not a priority project for UKSPF funding.

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Cabinet – 2 April 2025

Community Lottery scheme

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>This report details the additional consideration of adopting a community lottery scheme to provide further funding opportunities and support to local organisations, including how this could be successfully operated and the short and longer-term implications for the Council.</p>
Recommendations	<p>Part A</p> <p>That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider the proposal of adopting a Community Lottery scheme to provide additional financial support to local organisations. <p>If Part A supported:</p> <p>Part B</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To request officers approach Gatherwell to be the External Lottery Manager (ELM) to run the operational side of the lottery; 2. To agree the criteria for which good causes should participate in the lottery, as detailed in sections 6 to 9; 3. To agree the set-up costs of £5,200; and 4. To authorise the Chief Executive to agree named licence holders and to

	<p>approve the appropriate policies and procedures.</p> <p>5. That a report is presented to Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel after 1 year for an update and a review of the scheme.</p>
Reasons for recommendation	To consider the adoption of a Community Lottery scheme to provide additional financial opportunities and support to local organisations that directly support and benefit our local residents and communities.
Wards	All
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Dan Poole – Housing and Communities
Strategic Director	Richard Knott – Strategic Director Housing and Communities
Officer Contact	<p>Ryan Stevens Service Manager Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services 02380 285693 Ryan.stevens@nfdc.gov.uk</p>

Introduction and background

1. 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. Subsequently, following Task and Finish Group and Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel supporting the recommendation, on 5 February 2025 Cabinet approved for a more detailed report regarding a Community Lottery to be produced.
2. The purpose of this report is to consider how a Community Lottery scheme which, if adopted, could be successfully run alongside the existing Community Grants programme to provide additional financial support to a greater number of local organisations and groups.
3. Since 2015 around 120 Councils have set up a Community Lottery to provide a valuable income stream for local voluntary and community organisations. These are administered by an External Lottery Manager (ELM) who undertake the day-to-day operations and administration of the lottery.

4. The Community Grants Task and Finish Group received a detailed presentation from an ELM, Gatherwell Ltd., including a question and answer session, explaining how a community lottery scheme could operate. Gatherwell Ltd. 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”.
5. A Community Lottery is primarily a fundraising platform for local good causes and would provide support to many organisations, where there is a high demand for grants throughout the sector and often these groups do not have the resources and infrastructure to operate their own lottery. Some organisations only require small levels of funding, excluding them from our Community Grants scheme where the minimum amount is £3,000, and the need maybe temporary, for example a specific project. Residents who participate in a community lottery can choose which organisation(s) to support, knowing they can provide direct financial support to them.

Eligibility Criteria

6. The Community Lottery enables local organisations and charities (good causes), to ‘sign-up’ to take part in the lottery with revenue from ticket sales going directly to the good cause selected by the purchaser. There is no cost to the good cause for joining the lottery and they can be raising money within a few days once their application is accepted.
7. The Council would need to define eligibility criteria against which applications for good causes wishing to join the lottery would be assessed and accepted. Similarly to the Community Grant scheme, it is proposed that applications must be either:
 - a registered charity or voluntary group, with a board of trustees, or
 - a not-for-profit constituted group with a volunteer management committee with a minimum of three unrelated members that meets on a regular basis (at least three times per year) or.
 - a registered Community Interest Company (CIC) or Charitable Incorporated organisation (CIO).
8. It is proposed that good causes wishing to join the lottery should:
 - Be located within the district and actively provide services or activities that directly benefit residents

- Be independently established for charitable, benevolent, or philanthropic purposes
 - Have a constitution or set of rules setting out its aims and objectives
 - Place no undue restrictions on membership
 - Have appropriate policies in place, for example if working with children or vulnerable adults
 - Have a minimum level of financial reserves in place
9. Furthermore, it is proposed that we should NOT accept applications from any organisations that:
- Does not provide services within the boundaries of the district
 - Have no established management committee or board of trustees
 - Aim to make and distribute a profit
 - Promote particular political or religious beliefs
 - Are from private organisations or individuals
 - Submit an incomplete application
10. Applications will be online with decisions delegated to nominated Officers. Successful applications will need to provide the relevant information and agree certain principles, such as proceeds must be spent to directly benefits residents, notify the Council of any changes, for example if disbands, and to include the lottery logo on any communications.
11. The ELM will establish a website, which will include text and imagery all depicting the NFDC area and manage the publicity and recruitment of good causes. There are no upper limits to the number of good causes and the most successful lotteries support the largest number of causes. Once accepted into the scheme, local organisations are encouraged to market and actively promote the scheme within their community to increase their funding. The process for good causes to join the lottery is as follows:

The good cause visits the website and fundraisers section where they can find information and how to apply



The good cause applies to join using an easy to use online form



The application is considered by the Council and if eligible approves the application



The good cause is then live on the website and they can start to actively promote the lottery to their supporters



Every month the good cause will receive the raised funds paid directly to them, once approved by the Council

Scheme operation

12. Supporters can only purchase a ticket online, accessible by computer, mobile phone, or tablet, costing £1.00, with no tickets being sold in shops, offices or on the street. For individuals who are not comfortable or do not have access to online purchases there is a dedicated local phone number (provided by the ELM) to purchase tickets. Appendix 1 provides a summary of how a lottery scheme works. Ticket sales are administered by the ELM, as are all payments of prizes and distribution of proceeds to good causes. The allocation of the £1.00 ticket income is distributed as follows:
 - 50% to good causes,
 - 10% to a central fund held by the Council (optional)
 - 18.2% to prizes to supporters,
 - 18.2% for running costs incurred by the ELM
 - 3.6% VAT (which can be claimed back by the Council)
13. The percentage of ticket sales going to good causes is significantly higher than those lotteries offering larger jackpot prizes, for example the National Lottery is 28%.
14. The lottery is based on the Australian Super 66, a lottery that uses only numbers 0 to 9 which are randomly drawn by computer every Saturday. Supporters are able to choose 6 numbers, and to win a prize they must match both the numbers and sequence as drawn. This draw is approved by the Gambling Commission.
15. Weekly prizes range from three 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. The top prizes are covered by the ELM (External Lottery Manager) and is funded from the prize fund, which itself is funded by the ELM's share of the ticket sales. The Council is not exposed to prize fund risk due to the contract it will hold with the ELM. Supporters do have the option of donating their winnings to their chosen good cause (experience from other local authority lotteries has shown that approximately 10% of winners have donated their prize back to the good cause).

16. The table below details winning odds and their prizes:

Numbers matched	Winning Odds	Prize
6 numbers	1: 1,000,000	£25,000
5 numbers	1: 55,556	£2,000
4 numbers	1: 5,556	£250
3 numbers	1: 556	£25
2 numbers	1: 56	3 free tickets
Overall odds of winning a prize	1: 50	n/a

17. To help recruit new and retain current lottery players the ELM can provide seasonal prizes.

Administering a community lottery scheme

18. To set-up a community lottery scheme is likely to take around six months from the date of engagement to approval by the Gambling Commission. The lottery will require branding and a name, for example New Forest Community Lottery. The ELM oversees all aspects of the lottery, this includes:

- providing a bespoke website, which works across all devices, and is secure and with an assured 99% availability. This is regularly updated to maintain interest.
- a dedicated local telephone number and email address for support.
- providing professional marketing materials, which include artwork, magazine articles, etc, and social media campaign management.
- managing payments and administering winner and 'good cause' payment administration, and winner communications. Winners may choose to donate their winnings back and this is also handled by the ELM with minimum effort.
- having a client deposit account ensuring all supporters' money is safe, and there is no risk to the council to cover prize winnings.

19. Based on our adult population size and estimated participation of between 0.5% and 1.0% of the adult population participating, Gatherwell Ltd. predicts between approximately £34,000 to £67,000 could be raised annually to support local organisations, with

payments being made monthly to organisations by the ELM from a safe client deposit account.

20. The lottery may provide many benefits and selling points that resonate with participants, including:
- Delivering proceeds locally for the benefit of local good causes
 - Maximising benefits to the community with 60% of the proceeds being given to local good causes
 - Minimal costs to set-up and broadly self-financing
 - Positive public relations with a constant stream of opportunities for positive PR
 - Empowering good causes to raise their profile and raise money for themselves
 - Providing support to local organisations that support our corporate priorities, including vulnerable households and promoting health and wellbeing
 - Providing a more sustainable source of funding for local organisations in both the short term, and potential longer term following any uncertainty created by local government reorganisation
 - Promote the Council's perception with residents as an enabler

Community Lottery safeguards

21. There could be concerns with the ethical issue of gambling and participation in a lottery, including participants getting into debt. The scheme includes various safeguards and controls to ensure that the risk of gambling related harm is low risk, including:
- Tickets can only be purchased in advance and cannot be purchased on credit cards. There are no cash purchases.
 - Supporters have to sign-up prior to the draw, so tickets cannot be purchased on the spur of the moment, therefore no immediate gratification or instant wins
 - There is a maximum of 20 tickets per supporter before internal processes are triggered
 - Promotion of the lottery will be mainly via the good causes to their supporters
 - The lottery will be fully compliant with the Gambling Commissions Licencing Conditions and Codes of Practice
 - The minimum age for lottery participation is 16, however the ELM has increased the minimum age to 18, with back office and random checks undertaken to ensure compliance.
 - Evidence of age must be provided before receiving the jackpot prize.

- Any marketing is conducted in a responsible manner with reminders to “play responsibly” and information and signposting to support organisations, such as BeGambleAware.
22. The ELM has a self-exclusion process in place which allows a player to self-exclude from playing a lottery for a chosen period of 6 months to 5 years. Players who self-exclude will not be allowed to purchase lottery tickets and will not receive any direct marketing material during their chosen self-exclusion period. Self-excluded players must take a positive step to opt back into the lottery after their self-exclusion period ends.
 23. A lottery does not offer any ‘instant win’ products. Funds must be received for a ticket purchase before the ticket is entered into a draw. This reduces the risk of repeated impulse purchases. The ELM also has safeguards in place to ensure that ticket purchases are not excessive. As an example of an ELM, Gatherwell Ltd’s policy is to contact players with a recurring high-ticket yield of 20 or more tickets to ensure that they are fully aware of their purchase and number of lottery entries. Data from Gatherwell confirms that only 0.01% of participants have over 20 tickets per week.
 24. If a player is identified as a problem gambler by the ELM, the ELM will refer them to BeGambleAware. BeGambleAware provides support to individuals who feel that they have a gambling problem and can also refer problem gamblers to other support organisations.
 25. Lotteries are regulated under the Gambling Act 2005. It is widely accepted across the charity landscape that participants primary motivating factor is to support a particular organisation or range of charities rather than seeking to win a prize. Lotteries are considered to be low risk of gambling-related harm. In 2019, the Gambling Commission commissioned national research to understand why people gamble, the choices they make and how gambling fits into their lives. The research indicated that individuals who play lotteries typically fall into a typology which are the lowest risk from a problem gambling perspective.

Corporate plan priorities

26. 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 local needs of the district’s communities and vulnerable people, including those associated with the cost of living, health and wellbeing, as well as supporting vibrant arts and culture. A Council run community lottery will empower local organisations to increase their resilience and community engagement, as well as to influence services and outcomes in their local area.

Options appraisal

27. On considering a community lottery scheme, the options available are:

Option 1 – not to adopt a Community Lottery. The reasons for not proceeding are essentially around resources and potentially encouraging gambling.

Option 2 - to adopt an in-house lottery scheme. This option would require creating new posts, systems and processes which is costly, for example a Lottery Manager and procurement of software systems. There would also be a financial risk as this is borne by the Council.

Option 3 – to appoint an External Lottery Manager with an existing supplier of community lotteries, utilising their skills and experience and passing the financial risk to the provider.

28. The typical model for other Council community lottery schemes is to retain a proportion of the ticket income for a central fund, usually 10%, with Councils deciding how to distribute this income. As the Council already has an established, and well funded, annual Community Grants scheme and Councillor Community Engagement grants, which are increasing from 1 April 2025, it is proposed to allocate the full 60% of ticket income to local good causes.
29. Whilst there are several organisations that can support a community lottery, there is only one provider identified that has extensive experience of doing so in partnership with local authorities. Gatherwell Ltd, who are registered with the Gambling Commission, has been identified by other local authorities who have undertaken market research as specialising in local authority and school community lottery schemes and is an External Lottery Manager for all 120 local authority based community lottery schemes, overseeing the operations of the lottery. With a proven track record, and positive feedback from other local authorities (see “Consultation” below) it is therefore proposed to appoint Gatherwell Ltd. as the ELM, should a scheme be adopted, who are the market leader and specialise in local authority community lottery schemes.

Consultation

30. The Community Grants Task and Finish Group have previously received a presentation from the potential supplier, Gatherwell Ltd, and considered the merits of adopting the scheme. The Group were supportive of the scheme, 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.

31. Community First Wessex report that many smaller organisations do not have the resources for continual funding applications, and generally there is a challenging landscape for grants, due to availability and demand. A community lottery scheme would generate and provide much needed financial support to local organisations.
32. As previously requested by the Task and Finish Group, an Officer 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. All of the schemes use Gatherwell Ltd. as the ELM. More details of the consultation are provided in Appendix 2.
33. The Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 19 March 2025, considered the report. Members supported the recommendation to Cabinet of adopting a community lottery scheme, and, if adopted, requests that a full report is presented to the Panel after one year of the scheme commencing.

Financial and resource implications

34. If taken forward, the set-up cost of a Community Lottery scheme is £5,200, which includes website design, hosting, maintenance, and development, managing payments, dedicated support number, marketing strategy support and design creation, training and application support. There are annual ongoing costs of approximately £1,045, for the licence fee and Lotteries Council membership, but this cost could be funded and offset in full by reclaiming the VAT on the ELM fees. There is no annual fee to the ELM, their costs are covered by the 18.2% administration costs recouped from the ticket sales, as detailed in paragraph 10. Consideration could be given to provide funding for a launch event, but kept as low as possible.
35. The community lottery will generate additional funding to be distributed to a wide range local organisations of up to £67,000 per year, providing much needed ongoing financial support to a sector where many organisations are struggling financially.
36. There is no financial risk to the Council to fund prizes as this is covered in full by the ELM.

37. Acknowledgement is given to the initial Officer time to set-up the scheme, which could be fairly significant in the first 6 months planning for launch. It is expected the resources required can be met within existing budgets. The ongoing administration burden is low with the ELM, undertaking day-to-day operations, developing, and maintaining the webpage and handling all customer support regarding notifying winners and payment queries.
38. If adopted Council resources will be required to:
- A. Set-up
 - Apply for a local authority lottery licence from the Gambling Commission
 - Confirm webpage design and content, along with communications, and application form
 - Clarify the eligibility criteria for good causes and assess applications
 - Promote the scheme and central fund (if adopted)
 - B. Ongoing
 - Authorise payments to the good causes (monthly)
 - Authorise the Lottery Return form, which the ELM submits to the Gambling Commission on the Council's behalf.
 - Assess new applications from good causes applying to join the lottery
 - Any communications, if appropriate
 - Ensuring licences are paid each year
 - Officer report to Scrutiny Panel on the progress of the scheme

Legal implications

39. Lotteries are regulated under the Gambling Act 2005 and the act stipulates eight categories of permitted lottery, including a "local authority lottery", who are permitted to run a lottery, either in-house or in partnership with an ELM. An ELM is defined in section 257 of the Act as someone that is a person or a body who makes arrangements for a lottery on behalf of a society or local authority, but is not a member, officer or employee of the society or authority should a Community Lottery be adopted compliance with the relevant rules and regulations with the Gambling Commission, such as the Gambling Act 2005, will require review and implementation to ensure compliance as the Council will be responsible for ensuring that the lottery operates lawfully. This will include applying for an operating licence and at least one licence holder.
40. It is also recommended that the council becomes a member of the Lotteries Council, which provides a range of services for its members, including acting as independent arbitrator for lottery

providers should a dispute arise, free access to advice from specialists, and representation with regulators and legislators. The Lotteries Council will also make a contribution to the Responsible Gambling Trust on behalf of each of its members.

Risk assessment

41. There are of course risks associated with establishing a successful Community Lottery, such as:
 - (a) the voluntary and community sector choosing not to engage with the initiative; or
 - (b) the lottery not performing as well as expected and not producing the anticipated levels of income; or
 - (c) Reputational risks linked to success, or issues caused by the operation of the lottery.
 - (d) concerns of displacement of existing donations to charities
42. These risks have not yet arisen in other local authority operated lotteries, and are considered to be low risk and outweighed by the potential to generate new funding for a number of local voluntary and community organisations. The worst-case scenario is that the initial start-up costs are effectively written off.
43. There could be concerns around gambling, however paragraphs 21 to 25 provide details of the safeguards. Additionally, research undertaken by Gatherwell Ltd. shows that giving to good causes is a key motivation for playing and the average age of players is between 50 and 60 years old.
44. The top prizes are covered by the ELM and is funded from the prize fund, which itself is funded by the ELM's share of the ticket sales. The Council is not exposed to prize fund risk due to the contract it will hold with the ELM.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

45. There are no significant environmental or climate and nature implications arising from this report, although applicants to benefit from a community lottery scheme could support the Council's commitment to climate sustainability.

Equalities implications

46. Our Community Grants programme supports 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. By adopting a Community Lottery scheme this will provide additional support to a wide number of groups and organisations, some of whom will support vulnerable households across the district.

Crime and disorder implications

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

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

48. Information will be shared with the ELM, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations. There are no ICT implications as the ELM will host and maintain the website and payments.

Appendices

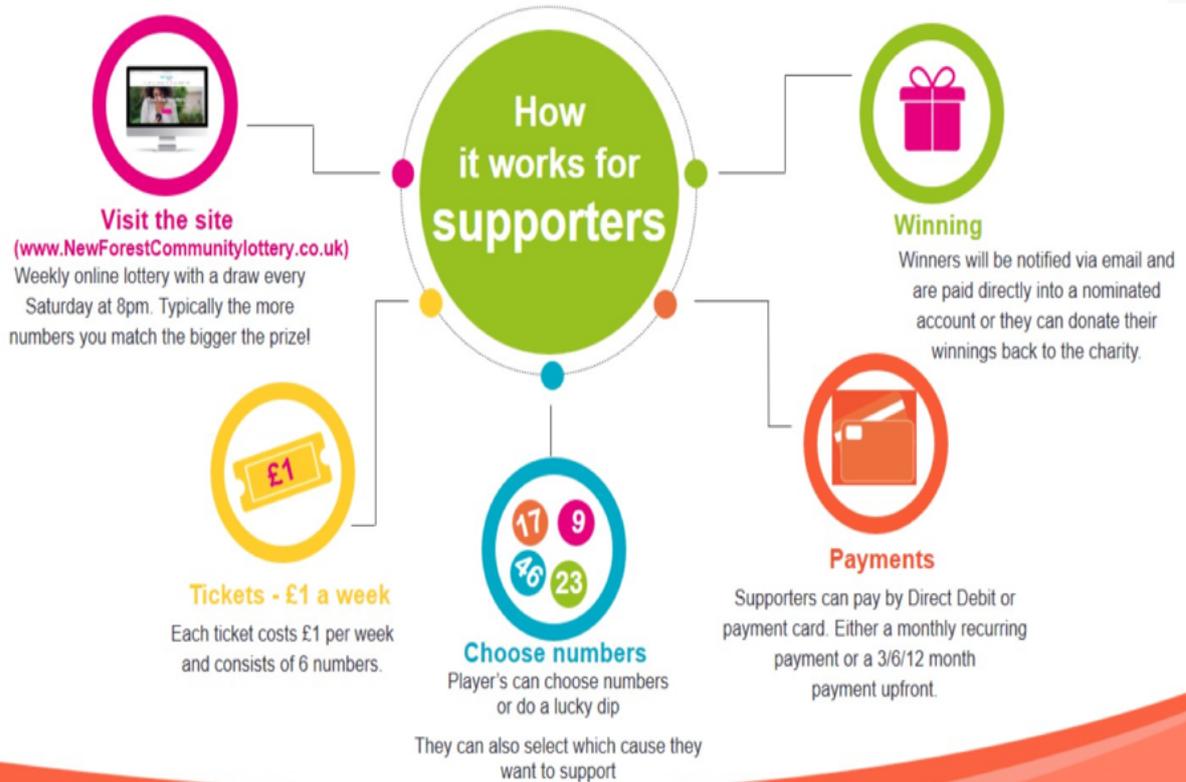
Appendix 1 – How a lottery works
Appendix 2 – Consultation responses from other Local Authorities

Background Papers:

None

Appendix 1 – How a Lottery works

How a Lottery works



Appendix 2 – Consultation responses from other Local Authorities

	Council A	Council B	Council C	Council D
Impact on Officer time and the administration involved?	Initial set-up requires admin (launch, good causes on board), once done day to day admin is minimal, community fund takes time as review applications, present to panel who decide.	Initial set-up requires work, but once operational on average up to 5hrs per month – admin, comms team, customer services liaise with prize winners	Pre-approval work and set-up, lots of comms work – Legal checking contract. Good cause checks Ongoing admin is minimal	Lots of work to start – gambling commission licence, policies, Legal and data protection team checked. Launch event and promotion. Once live not much admin, do comms to promote scheme, check good causes when sign up.
Take up	Community fund is about £15k	1,150 tickets per week – 1% of pop	3 months raised £6k	2,000 tickets per week, 0.75% of pop.
Do you have a Central Fund (10% for distribution)?	2 windows a year – grants up to £2k, organisations apply. Have £7k budget.	100% community fund – Once a year - 17 applications in £1,000 max. Panel decide – church, young people, business, Cllr etc.	40/20 split – Council is a good cause and distribute to be decided – applications. Recoup costs from ticket sales. Claim VAT back	Need to consider how to distribute funding.
Have you done lots of comms/publicity?	Light touch	Regular schedule to promote – showcase good causes, e.g. PTA for pirate ship	Limited – encourage groups to do their own	Encourage the groups to promote themselves and do work themselves
How are the ELM to work with?	Really good – no complaints, quick responses, helpline is very good.	Very good, no issues	Yes – could do more	Yes – good response to emails, advice, and guidance.
Have you experienced any issues/problems with the scheme?	No - some concerns with gambling so not heavily promoted. Aim to get good causes to promote the scheme themselves.	Aim to get good causes to promote the scheme themselves – ELM give comms.	No - some groups not sure how to promote so supported.	Some good causes that are dormant – no one is choosing them, and they are not self-promoting? Retain in case they do restart promotion?
Has subscriptions/income been constant or has this tailed off?	Check good causes groups – some dip then increases so fluctuates. Some smaller groups rely on monthly funds from general fund. Maybe £800pm	Benefits smaller groups. Ticket sales have been constant. Top causes – Council fund, school, autism trust, bowling club, scout group, bird group.		Constant now after slight increase each month
What are the costs/risks?	Officer time. Annual fee. No real costs. No risks.	Officer time. Annual fee. No real costs.	Marketing costs and gave £1k for super draw (3 vouchers). Legal team looked at	Staff time VAT that is used to pay licence fees (£3k) reclaimed

		No risks. More money going into the community	contract – took time.	
How many good causes do you have?	110 good causes	150 good causes. Over 7 years £235k back into the community	55 good causes. Good scheme – not ring-fenced grants	100 – range of little groups
Any other additional information	No Cllr grants or community grant pot/budget	No Cllr grant – supporting community grant instead. Communities and groups cherish.	Approve bank details.	Have community grant programme as well and small grants. No capital grants. No local Cllr Grants.
Would you recommend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Cabinet – 2 April 2025

Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025-2028

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 placed new duties on local authorities, requiring tier 2 councils (district & borough councils) to co-operate with the lead local authority, so far as is reasonably practicable.</p> <p>Section 84(4) of the 2021 Act requires persons exercising public functions, to have regard to the guidance in the exercise of those functions.</p> <p>The Act requires that the council must ensure that victims of domestic abuse and their children can access the right support in safe accommodation when they need it.</p> <p>New Forest District Council (NFDC), through the statutory functions of the Community Safety Partnership 'Safer New Forest', recognises Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) as a strategic priority in supporting victims/survivors and tackling offenders.</p> <p>NFDC's Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025-2028 sets out to prioritise domestic abuse with 4 key priority areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness & early intervention - Workforce development - High quality service provision - Multi-agency working and pathway development. <p>The priorities are aligned to Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership and informed by the national Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and serious violence duty.</p>

Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet approve the draft Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025-2028 for formal consultation.
Reasons for recommendation(s)	<p>The Domestic Abuse Strategy supports the objectives within the Corporate Plan as outlined below:</p> <p>People - Helping people in the greatest need and creating balanced, resilient, and healthy communities who feel safe and supported with easy access to services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priority 1: Helping those in our community with the greatest need. - Priority 2: Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives. <p>The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 placed new duties on local authorities, requiring tier 2 councils (district & borough councils) to cooperate with the lead local authority, so far as is reasonably practicable.</p> <p>Section 84(4) of the 2021 Act requires persons exercising public functions, to have regard to the guidance in the exercise of those functions. The Act requires that the council must ensure that victims of domestic abuse and their children can access the right support in safe accommodation when they need it.</p> <p>The implementation of the Domestic Abuse Strategy outline the council’s commitment to meeting its obligations of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.</p>
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Dan Poole
Strategic Director(s)	Richard Knott – Housing & Communities
Officer Contact	Brian Byrne Service Manager – Community Safety & Support

Introduction and background

1. Domestic abuse is recognised as one of the most harmful crimes in society with far reaching and long-lasting consequences impacting on both adults and children.
2. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 outlines the requirement for tier 1 local authorities to create and implement a Domestic Abuse Strategy, including strategic priorities for the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (HDAP).
3. The HDAP outlines four strategic priorities:
 - **Prevention:** providing resources and education to prevent domestic abuse through early intervention
 - **Professional Care:** supporting victims and survivors, including professional care for children and young people
 - **Pursuing:** actively identifying and engaging perpetrators
 - **Partnership:** working together as one community to tackle domestic abuse
4. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) placed new duties and functions on Local Authorities under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 to provide support for domestic abuse survivors and their children residing in safe accommodation. The aim is to ensure victim-survivors of domestic abuse have access to the right accommodation-based support when they need it.
5. In recognising the continued prevalence of domestic abuse, acknowledging underreporting and the devastating impact it has on the individual, their family, community and wider society Officers have drafted a 4-year Domestic Abuse Strategy to set the aims for the council.
6. The development of this strategy sets out NFDC vision's, priorities and commitments with the overall aim of reducing incidents of domestic abuse to ensure all those affected receive appropriate support. This strategy fulfils our statutory requirements as set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and also incorporates Violence Against Women and Girls Agenda (VAWG agenda) and the Serious Violence Duty 2022.

7. The Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025-2028 is based on 4 priorities:
 - Awareness & early intervention
 - Workforce development
 - High quality service provision
 - Multi-agency working and pathway development.
8. The draft strategy has been through informal consultation with NFDC staff and members of the New Forest Domestic Abuse Forum. Feedback was reviewed and is reflected in the draft strategy. Overall, responses were supportive of the priorities and commitments outlined.

Corporate plan priorities

9. The Domestic Abuse Strategy supports the Corporate Plan 2024/28 priorities:

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

- **Priority 1:** Helping those in our community with the greatest need.
- **Priority 2:** Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives.

Options appraisal

10. The Domestic Abuse Strategy has been considered and it is deemed appropriate and proportionate for NFDC to publish these documents as best practice.
11. The Domestic Abuse Strategy has been devised with regard to the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (HDAP) strategy. Through alignment, this will enable effective delivery of combined commissioned and third sector support and prevent services.

Consultation undertaken

12. The New Forest Domestic Abuse Forum, convened by NFDC and chaired by the Community Safety Manager (safeguarding lead officer and deputy single point of contact for domestic abuse).
13. The forum consists of partners from domestic abuse commissioned services, Integrated Care Board through representation of midwifery and Primary Care services, Victim Support, Hampshire Constabulary, NFDC Housing Service and third sector services.

14. The Domestic Abuse Strategy was developed and reviewed by all partners of the forum, with views and recommendations incorporated into the draft Domestic Abuse Strategy.
15. Cllr Dan Poole, Portfolio holder for Community, Safety and Wellbeing and chair of the Safer New Forest Strategy and Delivery Group, following consultation has endorsed the strategy as outlined in the Foreword (Appendix 1).
16. The Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel supported the proposed draft Domestic Abuse Strategy. Members recognised staff training had been identified as a key priority which would enhance early identification and enable staff to respond to domestic abuse. This would be supported with a single point of contact within service areas. It was also noted that there would be awareness campaigns and information would be provided, to raise awareness and increase knowledge of this underreported crime.

Financial and resource implications

17. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 placed new duties on local authorities across England to ensure that victims of domestic abuse and their children can access the right support in safe accommodation when they need it.
18. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC – now MHCLG) provided new burden funding of £257 million allocated to local authorities for delivery of their duties, which included nearly £4.8m for Hampshire, and just over £70k by NFDC.
19. Hampshire County Council has provided a Whole Housing Approach (WHA) Grant of £53,364, which we are working with Stop Domestic Abuse to provide a 1-year co-located post to ensure that all victim-survivors of domestic abuse can access appropriate support.

Legal implications

20. The implementation of the Domestic Abuse Strategy outline the council's commitment to meeting its obligations of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Risk assessment

21. Operational delivery of the strategic priorities is risk assessed and in line with health and safety and lone working procedures.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

22. Whilst the report has no direct implications, this may present opportunities to contribute to the Council's climate objectives.

Equalities implications

23. The proposed strategy improve the council's response to domestic abuse for victim-survivors. It is recognised that every individual will have unique needs and experiences and people will face additional barriers and concerns in seeking and accessing help and support, including those in marginalised groups. The strategy sets out the council's commitment to supporting and preventing domestic abuse.

Crime and disorder implications

24. The objectives of the Domestic Abuse is to support and protect victims-survivors of domestic abuse from the harm of domestic abuse.
25. Prevention of perpetrated domestic abuse behaviours is supported by a range of perpetrator programmes aimed at encouraging healthy, non-abusive relationships, aimed at preventing reoffending behaviours.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

26. The collection, retention and deletion of resident's data is governed by GDPR and associated guidance. All data is collected and maintained in line with the required legislation and shared in accordance with defined and established information sharing protocols and procedures.

New Forest National Park / Cranborne Chase National Landscape implications

27. The objectives as outlined within the strategy are to support all residents of the New Forest district area. As partners of the Safer New Forest Strategy and Delivery Group, the National Park work alongside statutory partners in keeping residents and visitors safe and free from harm.

Conclusion

28. The Domestic Abuse Strategy sets out the council's strategic approach and priorities in increasing early awareness of DA thorough employee development and training. Placing the client at the centre, working in partnership with key agencies and commissioned support and prevent services to reduce the incident rate and harm of DA.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Draft NFDC Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025-2028

Appendix 2 – Draft Domestic Abuse Strategy Action Plan

Background Papers:

Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership Strategy 2023-2025
[domestic-abuse-strategy-2023.pdf](#)

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Domestic Abuse Strategy

2025 – 2028

Contents

- p3** Foreword
- p4** Introduction
- p5** National context
- p7** Local context – Hampshire
- p9** Local context – New Forest
- p10** Our strategic priorities
- p11** Priority 1 & 2
- p12** Priority 3 & 4

Foreword

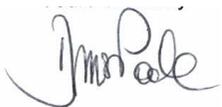
I am delighted to introduce the 2025-2028 New Forest Domestic Abuse Strategy on behalf of the council and our partners.

Domestic abuse can be one of the most harmful crimes in society with far reaching and long-lasting consequences impacting on both adults and children. Growing up in a household of fear and intimidation can impact health, wellbeing and development with lasting effects into adulthood. Within the New Forest we have various services, both statutory and voluntary, who work to support families and individuals affected by domestic abuse. In conjunction with the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership this approach strengthens and coordinates commissioned services, specifically for domestic abuse to ensure that survivors get the best and most appropriate support where possible whilst delivering a range of perpetrator programmes aimed at encouraging healthy, non-abusive relationships.

An estimated 2.1 million people (aged 16 years and over) experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2023 in England and Wales (1.4 million women and 751,000 men)¹. Domestic abuse can affect anyone, regardless of age, disability, gender identity, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Home should be a safe place, where we can relax, nurture our families, invite our friends, enjoy our leisure time and a secure base to return to each time we go out into the world. However, for far too many, home is nothing like that because of domestic abuse.

No one organisation holds the key to taking effective action against domestic abuse, but it is recognised that domestic abuse is everyone's responsibility. This strategy builds on the work already undertaken in our district through effective partnership arrangements, including New Forest Domestic Abuse Forum and the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership.



Cllr Dan Poole
Portfolio Holder for Community, Safety & Wellbeing



¹ [Domestic abuse in England and Wales overview - Office for National Statistics](#)

Introduction

New Forest District Council’s Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025-2028 sets out to prioritise domestic abuse, building on the multi-agency approach and response in working closely with our partners and commissioned services.

NFDC recognises the continued high prevalence of domestic abuse, acknowledging underreporting and the devastating impact it has on the individual, their family, community and wider society.

The development of this strategy sets out our vision, priorities and commitments with the overall aim of reducing incidents of domestic abuse to ensure all those affected receive appropriate support. This strategy fulfils our statutory requirements as set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and also incorporates Violence Against Women and Girls Agenda (VAWG agenda) and the Serious Violence Duty 2022.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) placed new duties and functions on Local Authorities under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 to provide support for domestic abuse survivors and their children residing in [safe accommodation](#). The aim is to ensure victim-survivors of domestic abuse have access to the right accommodation-based support when they need it.

66

The social and economic costs of domestic abuse are estimated at £66 billion in England and Wales in year ending 2017.²

20% or 1 in 5 children have lived with an adult perpetrating domestic abuse.³

1 in 4 women and 1 in 6-7 men experience domestic abuse during their lifetime.⁴

Every 30 seconds a domestic abuse related call is made to the Police.⁵

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-economic-and-social-costs-of-domestic-abuse>

³ <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/domestic-abuse/>

⁴ <https://www.ncdv.org.uk/domestic-abuse-statistics-uk/>

⁵ <https://www.ncdv.org.uk/domestic-abuse-statistics-uk/>



The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Definition of domestic abuse⁶

The behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if: -

- A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and
- the behaviour is abusive.

The behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following: -

- physical or sexual abuse;
- violent or threatening behaviour;
- controlling or coercive behaviour;
- economic abuse
- psychological, emotional or other abuse;

It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

Domestic abuse most commonly takes place in intimate partner relationships, including same sex relationships. Intimate relationships can take different forms, partners do not need to be married or in a civil partnership and abuse can occur between non-cohabitating intimate partners. Young people can experience domestic abuse within their relationships although they may not self-identify as victims-survivors.

Domestic abuse may also be perpetrated by a family member: by children, grandchildren, parents, siblings or extended families. Children are recognised within the Domestic Abuse Act as being victims-survivors of domestic abuse as they see, hear and experience the effects of

The Act creates the statutory presumption that victims-survivors of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in the criminal, civil and family courts, putting in place additional protections to support people experiencing abuse.

The prevention of domestic abuse and the protection of all victims-survivors lies at the heart of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (‘the 2021 Act’) and its wider programme of work. The measures in the 2021 Act seek to:

- promote awareness
- protect and support victims-survivors
- hold perpetrators to account
- transform the justice response
- improve performance

⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/part/1/enacted>

National context continued.....

On average, 2 women a week are killed by a current or former partner in England and Wales.⁷

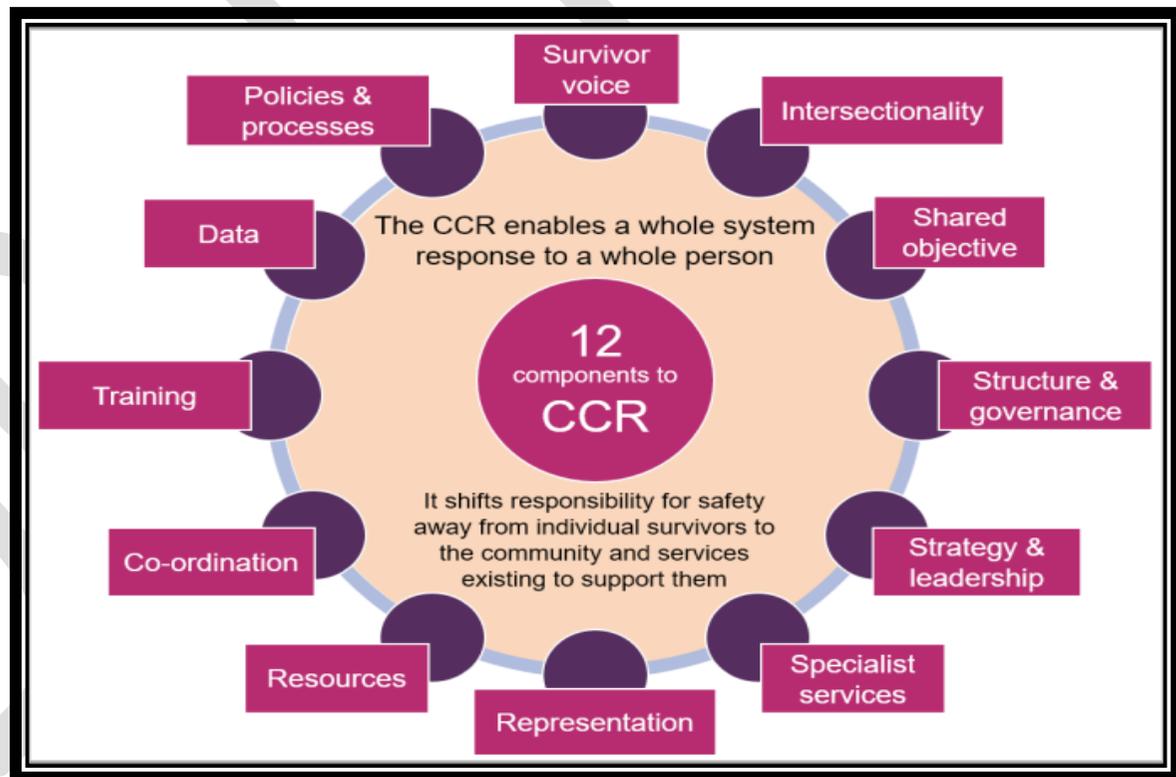
61% of young people demonstrating harmful behaviours are doing so towards their mother (2015).⁸

88 Domestic abuse is a largely hidden crime which goes unreported.⁹

More than one in four gay men and lesbian women and more than one in three bisexual people report at least one form of domestic abuse since the age of 16.¹⁰

To tackle and prevent domestic abuse, a Coordinated Community Response¹¹ (CCR) has been created. A CCR is an approach which brings together services, including health, housing, social care, education, criminal justice and communities.

The model below is widely accepted as best practice and one which New Forest District Council will be adopting. The aim is to ensure local systems keep survivors safe, hold abusers to account and prevent domestic abuse.



⁷ <https://refuge.org.uk/what-is-domestic-abuse/the-facts/#:~:text=Domestic%20abuse%20feels%20incredibly%20isolating,call%20999%20in%20an%20emergency.>

⁸ <https://safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Safe%20Young%20Lives%20web.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.ncdv.org.uk/domestic-abuse-statistics-uk/>

¹⁰ https://galop.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Galop_RR-v4a.pdf

¹¹ <https://www.standingtogether.org.uk/what-is-ccr>

Local context – Hampshire¹²



It is estimated that between **56,003 – 56,935** people over the age of 16 in Hampshire were subjected to domestic abuse in the last year 2023-2024.


40,063*


17,136*



19% of individuals (aged 16+) in Hampshire who are estimated to be subjected to domestic abuse have their experiences recorded as a crime by the police.

Between 2012-2023 there have been **10 Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)** in Hampshire.



Around **43,000** children aged under 18 have been exposed to domestic abuse between adults in their homes during their childhood in Hampshire.

18.9% of those estimated to be subjected to domestic abuse were aged between **16 and 24** years old.

*The total count here based on sex is slightly higher than the overall total as the prevalence % is based on England and Wales which is different demographically to Hampshire. This means that some demographic breakdown totals might not align with the overall total.

Of those crimes flagged by Police as being domestic abuse related during 2023-24 in Hampshire:

In Hampshire, the rate of DA flagged crimes per 10,000 population was **107** in 2023-24 compared to **119.6** in 2022/23.

The number of DA flagged crimes have decreased by 1701 in the last year.



The highest rate of individuals who were victims occurred in those aged between **25-34** years old.



36% were an ex-spouse/ ex-partner relationship.

Domestic abuse flagged crimes, rate per 10,000 population by year 2016-2024 for Hampshire, broken down into district/borough

District	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total
Basingstoke and Deane	88.59	98.77	101.14	111.99	120.40	151.42	122.86	113.03	113.88
East Hampshire	62.51	66.59	65.21	75.24	84.86	101.29	89.82	88.02	79.48
Eastleigh	81.45	93.50	90.72	98.56	107.56	137.63	110.58	105.44	103.51
Fareham	66.37	75.39	75.98	80.29	96.91	116.49	104.45	92.66	88.59
Gosport	122.11	130.02	130.89	138.68	151.66	197.41	186.69	161.26	152.37
Hart	50.72	69.39	60.86	61.47	63.87	73.62	79.92	69.25	66.32
Havant	121.76	142.02	134.69	152.43	168.12	196.31	178.32	153.43	156.04
Isle of Wight	102.42	109.86	117.16	131.77	144.49	165.31	146.40	155.58	134.19
New Forest	70.01	71.83	84.66	92.33	98.04	115.95	110.70	100.96	93.08
Rushmoor	108.37	116.88	127.97	123.69	157.65	173.51	144.07	132.25	135.79
Test Valley	71.57	83.30	82.78	87.85	107.05	127.34	111.82	98.03	96.61
Winchester	65.88	61.84	70.25	78.71	82.33	103.78	100.51	80.94	80.87
Total	83.46	92.06	94.39	102.42	114.20	137.10	122.04	111.38	107.37

A decrease in the number of crimes since June 2023 can be seen. This does not suggest that there has been a decrease in the number of individuals reporting their experiences to the police. The decrease can be primarily attributed to changes in crime counting rules.

¹²Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership

Local context – Hampshire continued¹²

Commissioned services

Between April 2023 and March 2024, approx. **9,200** referrals to commissioned survivor-victim services.

89% were women.

36% of interventions received were 1-2-1 outreach services.

Most common types of domestic abuse experienced by clients:

- Emotional
- Psychological
- Physical



Around **2,750** clients were supported.



51% were aged between 21-40.

From April 2023 – 2024 an estimated:

969 clients were supported by sanctuary schemes.

169 clients were supported through the domestic abuse health advocate's programme.

256 clients were referred to the commissioned perpetrator service.

91% of those were men.



75% were aged between 25-44.

During this period, **276** clients left the service with **27%** of those leaving completing intervention.

Multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC)



Hampshire & IOW (HIOW) Constabulary has **12** monthly



92% of victim-survivors discussed at MARAC were female.

Annually approx. **4,540** cases were discussed April 2023-March 2024.



The HIOW Constabulary area had a lower rate of cases with LBGT+ victims compared to the England average when adjusting for the population who are LBGT+.



The HIOW Constabulary area continued to have a significantly lower rate of cases where the victim had a disability (**1%**) compared to the England average (10.3%).

The number of cases discussed within MARACs in the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary area in 2023/24 was **33%** above the recommended number of cases.

¹²Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership Data

Local context – New Forest¹³



Overall, in the New Forest it is estimated that between **7,085** – **7,419** individuals were subjected to domestic abuse in the last year 2023-2024.



5,224



2,165

70.7% of those estimated to be subjected to domestic abuse were female.



Around **4600** aged under 18 have been exposed to domestic abuse between adults in their homes during their childhood in New Forest.

18% of individuals (aged 16+) in New Forest who are estimated to be subjected to domestic abuse have their experiences recorded as a crime by the police.

2.2% of those estimated to be subjected to domestic abuse were from ethnic minorities.

16.8% of those estimated to be subjected to domestic abuse were aged between **16 – 24** years old.



44.5% of those estimated to be subjected to domestic abuse are not in employment.

¹³Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership Data



In the New Forest, the rate of DA flagged crimes per **10,000** population is **101** was lower than the Hampshire average (107) in 2023/24.

In 2023-24 the highest rate of individuals who were victims occurred in those aged between **25-34** years old and was higher than the Hampshire average rate.



The highest rate of individuals who displayed abusive behaviours (suspects/offenders) also occurred in those aged between **25-34** years old and was higher than the Hampshire average rate for individuals who displayed abusive behaviours who were aged between **25-34** years old. **26.1%** of individuals who displayed abusive behaviours committed more than one DA flagged crime.

The number of DA flagged crimes have decreased by **94** in the last year (2022-23).



A trend with deprivation can be seen with the rate of DA flagged crimes being higher in the **20%** most deprived areas than the average across New Forest.



94

Number of non-fatal strangulation crimes between July 2022-Sept 2024.

¹³Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership Data

Our strategic priorities



Our response is constructed around 4 key priorities which form areas of work for 2025-2028. New Forest District Council's aim is to;

Prevent and reduce domestic abuse across the New Forest and ensure that when people experience abuse, they can access the help and services they need.

The priorities are aligned to Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership and informed by the national Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and serious violence duty.



Priority 1 – Awareness & early intervention

New Forest District Council (NFDC) is committed to responding to domestic abuse effectively.

By raising awareness and creating pathways to support for both victim-survivors and perpetrators, NFDC aims to reduce risk and harm and prevent homicide in the most serious of cases.

Victims-survivors can experience difficulty in accessing support services when breaking free from a perpetrator of abuse. A person's needs can impact on and be influenced by other members of a family or their environment. We will take a whole family approach to prevention and early intervention services.

With victim-survivors at the centre, we will share information across service providers to enhance cross collaboration and targeted delivery. We will encourage staff to have professional curiosity to explore and understand what is happening more widely within a setting, highlighting other services who should be involved, and connections made. This requires a collaborative response by all agencies. We will ensure that staff

Our commitments

- Increase knowledge, and awareness of domestic abuse through targeted campaigns.
- Enhance information and advice available on domestic abuse in community settings such as GP surgeries, community centres.
- Deliver additional training to support NFDC employees to be able to identify and respond effectively to domestic abuse at the first opportunity.
- To work collaboratively, improving outcomes for victim-survivors of domestic abuse, including children.
- Through a strategic approach, identify gaps in service delivery, seeking additional funding opportunities.

have appropriate training and supervision and are supported in their work.

Priority 2 – Workforce development

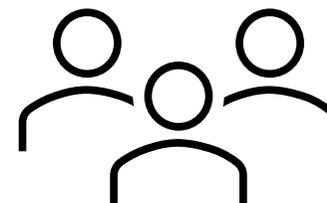
It is recognised that in addition to the mandatory safeguarding training already provided, all NFDC employees will participate in domestic abuse awareness training to enhance early identification and responses to domestic abuse.

Due to the variety of customer services delivered, departments across the Council will benefit from having a domestic abuse champion embedded within their service. The domestic abuse champions will support the dedicated Safeguarding Lead Officers, through enhanced training and awareness to support colleagues and customers.

The dedicated Safeguarding Lead Officers will seek to develop and enhance training opportunities for all staff with a focus on improving the customer journey and access to support.

Our commitments

- Provide a robust response to domestic abuse. All staff will be trained across NFDC departments to recognise, identify, and respond to those vulnerable to domestic abuse both within the community and workplace.
- Develop the knowledge and confidence for all domestic abuse champions. NFDC will ensure the champions receive a bespoke training.
- Domestic abuse champions to disseminate best practice whilst ensuring all reports are taken seriously and appropriate measures taken.



Priority 3 – High quality service provision

It is recognised that having the right support to protect and assist all victims-survivors of domestic abuse will make individuals and families safe, sooner.

As both a landlord and tier 2 local authority, NFDC Housing Services is at the forefront of delivering services to survivors of domestic abuse including providing early housing advice, housing options, prevention and homelessness services to survivors. We also engage with alleged perpetrators of domestic abuse, signposting to specialist support services.

74

We also provide a fully funded additional security scheme, allowing victims-survivors to remain in their homes through enhanced security measures, should they choose.

The New Forest is served by two dedicated domestic abuse services commissioned by Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (HDAP).

Stop Domestic Abuse supports and protects victims-survivors of domestic abuse and stalking, providing a range of services including, refuge and community-based support to adults, children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

Our commitments

- Through the collaboration between New Forest District Council and Hampshire County Council, we will ensure specialist domestic abuse safe accommodation and support needs of those accessing accommodation are met.
- Educate and develop a cohort of domestic abuse champions across the Council supporting and signposting colleagues and customers with accessing their most appropriate service provision.



The Hampton Trust delivers domestic violence perpetrator programmes within the criminal justice system. They also offer a range of community-based interventions for families experiencing domestic abuse.

Priority 4 – Multi-agency working and pathway development

Robust and joined up multi-agency processes are essential in responding to domestic abuse.

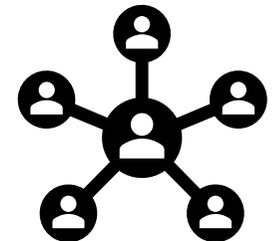
With victims-survivors at the core, proactive risk assessment and information sharing is essential when supporting and reducing risk to survivors and family members whilst providing access to perpetrator-based intervention programmes.

New Forest District Council chair and convene the New Forest Domestic Abuse Forum with the commitment of partner agencies from across the district. Participation includes, commissioned domestic abuse services, health, Hampshire Constabulary, Children & Adult Services, Victim Support with representation from youth services for LGBTQ+ community, Yellow Door, Community First, NFDC Housing and Homestart.

The Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership is a multi-agency group responsible for supporting the Hampshire County Council geographical area in its domestic abuse response, including the New Forest. The Board and Business Group are responsible in meeting its duty

Our commitments

- Ensure multi-agency working is embedded with clear pathways for agencies in accessing specialist domestic abuse support services.
- Providing a consistent response for victims-survivors, perpetrators, and family members.
- Establish a New Forest Domestic Abuse Strategic Board for effective monitoring and delivery of the domestic abuse strategy.



under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and for monitoring the partnership approach to all other areas of the Act.

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Number	DA strategy priority	Our commitment	Action / activity	Outcomes	Year 1 Q1	Year 1 Q2
1	Awareness & early intervention	Increase knowledge, and awareness of domestic abuse through targeted campaigns.	Deliver targeted awareness raising campaigns with the support of the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (HDAP).	It is fundamental that communities can identify, recognise and support victims-survivors of domestic abuse at an early stage. Domestic abuse is a hidden crime, so raising awareness through collaborative campaigns highlights the prevalence and need for communities to recognise the signs.	Ongoing and developed on trends, including calendar events i.e sporting, National campaigns	Ongoing
2	Awareness & early intervention	Enhance information and advice available on domestic abuse in community settings such as GP surgeries, community centres.	Ensure information on domestic abuse including support services is available within the New Forest is accessible to the whole community.	To prevent escalations and reduce exposure to the harmful consequences of domestic abuse, it is imperative that those experiencing domestic abuse access the support they require at the earliest opportunity. By providing community based settings with information such as support services and training, this improves the chances of victims-survivors having access to support services.	Ongoing and developed on trends, including calendar events i.e sporting, National campaigns	Ongoing
3	Awareness & early intervention	Deliver additional training to support NFDC employees to be able to identify and respond effectively to domestic abuse at the first opportunity.	Provide training to all NFDC employees to enhance knowledge and awareness of domestic abuse to support survivors-victims of domestic to receive the appropriate support they require. Ensure domestic abuse elearning training to be available for all staff through LMS (building on level 1 safeguarding elearning).	Training is vital for employees to recognise signs of domestic abuse. Providing all employees with further training will provide them with the skills they require to support both victims-survivors and perpetrators.	Research and develop	Research and develop
4	Awareness & early intervention	To work collaboratively, improving outcomes for victim-survivors of domestic abuse, including children.	Ensure NFDC employees work collaboratively and participate as an active partner in case conferences, sharing information across service providers and taking the whole family approach to prevention and early intervention. Identified staff to complete Multi Agency Risk Management (MARAC) and Hampshire Safeguarding Childrens partnership training calendar on Adult and Child protection conferences, Children In Need conferences,	Through attending multi-agency meetings will enhance appropriate information sharing and ensure that risk assessments/management can be considered.	Service Managers to identify cohort based on Role profile and training opportunities	Service Managers to identify cohort based on Role profile and training opportunities
5	Awareness & early intervention	Through a strategic approach, identify gaps in service delivery, seeking additional funding opportunities.	Utilising the expertise within the New Forest Domestic Abuse Forum, identify gaps in service and explore funding opportunities for survivors-victims and perpetrator support services and interventions.	This will enhance opportunities for residents to access services suitable for their needs.	Ongoing	Ongoing
6	Workforce development	Provide a robust response to domestic abuse. All staff will be trained across NFDC departments to recognise, identify, and respond to those vulnerable to domestic abuse both within the community and workplace.	Domestic abuse elearning training to be available for all staff to complete on LMS to provide a further awareness of domestic abuse.	This enables NFDC employees to provide a robust response to domestic abuse.	Research and develop	Research and develop

7	Workforce development	Develop the knowledge and confidence for all domestic abuse champions. NFDC will ensure the champions receive a bespoke training.	<p>Domestic abuse champions to be identified across NFDC departments providing in-depth training to support colleagues and clients/residents. Departments identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human Resources - Housing Options - Housing Estates - Customer Services - Environmental Health - Revenue & Benefits - Streetscene - Planning - Housing Maintenance - Housing Tenancy Accounts - Appletree Careline / CCTV 	This is to make sure each service is adhering to guidelines and legislation, increasing awareness and ensuring reports are taken seriously and appropriate measures taken.	Consult	Canvass to staff
8	Workforce development	Domestic abuse champions to disseminate best practice whilst ensuring all reports are taken seriously and appropriate measures taken.	<p>To develop the knowledge and confidence for all domestic abuse champions, NFDC will ensure the champions receive a bespoke 5 modular sessions covering the topics below from appropriate agencies. This can then be disseminated to colleagues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roles & responsibilities of DA champion - Domestic Abuse Act 2021 - Trauma informed approach - DASH risk assessment - Recognising the signs and indicators of abuse - Victim's Bill - Mental Capacity Act - Impact on survivor-victim - Learning from domestic abuse related death reviews - Real life stories - Different experiences, needs and expectations of individuals - NFDC staff domestic abuse policy and guidance 	Due to the amount of direct contact NFDC employees has with residents, enhancing the knowledge of domestic abuse through DA champions will support staff and clients.	Learning material preparation	Learning material preparation
9	High quality service provision	Through the collaboration between New Forest District Council and Hampshire County Council, we will ensure specialist domestic abuse safe accommodation and support needs of those accessing accommodation are met.	NFDC Housing to continue to work closely with Hampshire County Council when identifying the local need for specialist domestic abuse safe accommodation. Utilising the dispersed accommodation available delivered by Stop Domestic Abuse & The You Trust (providing the same level of support as refuge in self-contained accommodation which broadens the eligibility for victims-survivors who have previously not been able to access refuge.)	This will build upon the good relationships between NFDC & HCC. Housing Options attend safe accommodation meetings and a local practitioners meeting with other Housing departments to share knowledge and ideas.	Ongoing	Ongoing

10	High quality service provision	Educate and develop a cohort of domestic abuse champions across the Council supporting and signposting colleagues and customers with accessing their most appropriate service provision.	Following the DA champions receiving in-depth domestic abuse training, they will be supported by the Safeguarding Leads and Service Manager for Community Safety & Support. DA champion meetings will be arranged 4-6 times per annum.	Meetings are to: - Support the DA champions - Discuss confidentially any cases they have had - Share best practice and information - Ensure they are happy undertaking the role - Identify any further learning/training need.		
11	Multi-agency working and pathway development	Ensure multi-agency working is embedded with clear pathways for agencies in accessing specialist domestic abuse support services.	Through the training provided to all staff and DA champions highlight referral pathways to domestic abuse services to ensure all staff are aware. This will be supported through the membership of the DA forum replicating response protocols.	To enable to survivor-victim or perpetrator to access appropriate support at the earliest opportunity.		
12	Multi-agency working and pathway development	Providing a consistent response for victims-survivors, perpetrators, and family members.	To ensure that DA champions are available within the departments identified in activity 7 to provide up to date, accurate and consistent information.	Having in-depth knowledge throughout the council will support staff and prevent any delay in survivors-victims obtaining the appropriate support.		
13	Multi-agency working and pathway development	Establish a New Forest Domestic Abuse Strategic Board for effective monitoring and delivery of the domestic abuse strategy.	To develop and establish a New Forest Domestic Abuse Strategic Board to meet bi-annually to include: - NFDC Portfolio Holder - Strategic Director, Housing & Communities - Service Manager, Community Safety & Support - Community Safety Manager - Community Safety Officer - Service Manager, Housing Options - Service Manager, Human Resources - NFDC Tenancy Involvement Group - Stop Domestic Abuse - The Hampton Trust - Third Sector?	The purpose and outcome of the strategic board is to: - To oversee and scrutinise the on-going delivery of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 for a tier 2 authority. - To support the DA champions. - To ensure staff are supported by the DA champions effectively. - To explore collaborative working. - To advise and support when dealing with issues raised. - To escalate issues where there are unmet needs, gaps in services. - To address and embed the recommendations and learning from domestic abuse related death reviews. - Accessing external funds for localised commissioning of services.	Preparation	Preparation

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Cabinet – 2 April 2025

People Strategy

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>We have committed to the development of a people strategy to outline how we attract, retain, and grow talent.</p> <p>This people strategy describes our journey of 'employer of choice: grow connect empower' and a revised action plan following the publication of the Local Government White Paper to focus our work over the next two years.</p>
Recommendation(s)	The Cabinet recommend to Council the adoption of the People Strategy by Council.
Reasons for recommendation(s)	<p>To support the delivery of the Corporate Plan and achieve a key milestone in the Transformation Strategy aligned to the People and Capabilities theme.</p> <p>Support readiness for change for local government reorganisation.</p> <p>EMT approved for delivery and resourcing.</p> <p>HR Committee approved 13 March 2025.</p>
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Jill Cleary – Leader Councillor Jeremy Heron – Finance and Corporate
Strategic Director(s)	Alan Bethune – Strategic Director for Corporate Resource and Transformation
Officer Contact	<p>Kate Hardy</p> <p>Organisational Development and Change Specialist</p> <p>023 8028 5817</p> <p>Kate.hardy@nfdc.gov.uk</p>

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Introduction

1. New Forest District Council's Corporate Plan and Transformation Strategy commit to the development of a people strategy to outline how we attract, retain, and grow talent.
2. This people strategy describes our approach to its development through discovery, design and delivery, allowing the strategy to evolve through engagement with staff.
3. The strategy aims to take NFDC on a journey towards Employer of Choice through the themes of grow, connect and empower, recognising there need to be strong roots (or foundations) in place, and our culture must be centred on our values of learning, empathy, ambition and fairness.
4. Following publication of the Local Government White Paper, we have taken time to reflect and the principles in the strategy remain relevant. The delivery plan has been refined to include the critical work programmes required over a shorter timeframe to modernise, and best position our staff for future opportunities whilst feeling supported and ready for change in local government reorganisation.
5. The strategy is presented as a metaphor based on the roots, branches and green leaves of a tree to provide an easily understandable visual and conceptual framework to support our journey. We believe a strong visual framework will allow more people to connect to the strategy in a meaningful way.
6. A simplified and more dynamic version of the people strategy has been designed, to ensure it is engaging for our staff as well as applicants as part of our offer to employees.

Corporate plan priorities

7. The people strategy supports delivery of the Corporate Plan and Future New Forest programme.

Consultation undertaken

8. Feedback from the 2024 staff survey and focus groups as well as HR Peer Review recommendations and informal feedback from individuals and groups have all been considered in the design of this strategy. The people strategy has been further developed with feedback from different groups of staff and has evolved through this engagement process. Groups included:

- a. leadership team
- b. EDI groups
- c. HR and comms teams
- d. change champions
- e. Employee Side Liaison Panel

Financial and resource implications

- 9. Delivering the People Strategy has implications for both human and financial resources. Three additional roles have been identified to ensure effective delivery of the plan: organisational development facilitator; learning coordinator; and employee engagement officer.
- 10. In addition, a modest ringfenced budget for events, training, and other financial costs will be in place to support delivery of the strategy.

Risk assessment

- 11. No formal risk assessment has been completed, however there is a significant risk to the organisation (in terms of retaining existing and recruiting new staff, and being ready for change) if we do not invest in our people.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

- 12. The people strategy will be in support of the climate change programme, intending to create a sense of responsibility and accountability for our people to make changes aligned to becoming more sustainable. This element is captured implicitly across all four themes of strong roots, grow, connect and empower.

Equalities implications

- 13. Equity is critical in the delivery of the people strategy and the values of empathy and fairness capture how this will be thread throughout. Equality impact assessments will be part of all deliverables to ensure that activities are fair and inclusive. Regular reviews will be conducted to ensure no unintended consequences/impact on staff become apparent.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

- 14. Collecting and maintaining quality data about our workforce will be important to enable effective measurement of our success, whilst ensuring data usage complies with UK Regs and NFDC guidance.

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – People Strategy
- Appendix 2 – Simplified, designed and accessible version of people strategy

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People Strategy

Our journey to employer of choice: grow connect empower

February 2025

Version	Author	Date	Changes made
Final	Kate Hardy / Zoe Ormerod	28 January 2025	Updated content, action plan and shorter timescale to take account of local government reorganisation.
Final V2	Kate Hardy/ Zoe Ormerod	21 st February 2025	Updated points in our employer of choice commitment.

Contents

Introduction	3
Our three-phase approach	4
Discover	4
Design.....	4
Deliver	4
Key Findings.....	6
What we're doing well	6
Challenges.....	7
Employer of choice	11
Our journey to employer of choice	12
Grow.....	13
Connect.....	14
Empower	15
Strong roots.....	16
Culture.....	17
Delivery plan.....	18
Monitoring and governance	23
Measuring our ambition to be an employer of choice.....	24

Introduction

New Forest District Council's Corporate Plan and Transformation Strategy commit to the development of a People Strategy to outline how we attract, retain, and grow talent. The strategy provides the direction towards achieving our ambition as an 'employer of choice' and to guide the organisation in:

- how we engage our people, ensuring that every member of our team feels part of the organisation and feels valued for the contribution they make to the community and our organisational goals.
- investing in our people to ensure we have the skills we need to deliver the changes we must make and the work that makes a difference to our community,
- creating the conditions to enable change through our values, behaviours, and culture.

We know that when our people are at their best, we are most able to achieve our strategic aims. This strategy is a proactive framework, to create enhanced commitment, engagement and motivation, plan for future workforce requirements, and build capacity and competence to deliver for our communities today and in the future.

The likely changes arising from the local government white paper mean that the focus on our people is more important than ever. Through this strategy we will support our employees during significant change and position them with the right skills and behaviours to embrace future opportunities.

A three-phase approach has been taken to creating this strategy: Discover; Design; Deliver. The process of discovery and design has taken place over an 18-month period from the design of the corporate plan and transformation strategy, with new evidence and staff feedback brought together to create an engaging and ambitious plan for our people.

Our three-phase approach

Discover

The 'discovery' phase of the strategy development consisted of a period of evidence collection both internally and externally, from information already available as well as the collection of new evidence, for example from staff feedback. A comprehensive report describes the evidence in detail and the key findings have been extracted and summarised in the **Key Findings** section.

Design

Several key themes and principles emerged from the evidence collected in the discovery phase. These key themes alongside informal research on best practice through networks, people strategies from other similar organisations, webinars, and existing informal knowledge of best practice and experience of what has worked in ours and other organisations have also informed the design of the strategy.

The design process has been iterative, with initial themes and principles presented to a number of staff groups to test out the ideas and gauge reactions and understanding. Feedback supported the design of a simpler, snappier concept that is more accessible and understandable to all. Words that resonated for people were elevated and a visual representation created, to make it more memorable.

The strategy aims to take us on a journey to be an Employer of Choice through the themes of grow, connect and empower, recognising there need to be strong roots (or foundations) in place, and our culture must be centred on our values of learning, empathy, ambition and fairness.

Deliver

An **action plan** to deliver the outcomes in the strategy, aligned to the themes of grow, connect and empower has been designed with flexibility in mind, with implementation in two phases of establishing foundations and building our capabilities. An outline delivery plan is included in this document, with more detailed project plans to be created for the evolving organisational needs.

The delivery of the strategy will have a strong **governance** structure in place, aligned to the transformation programme, to ensure work is completed, unblock any challenges, maintain communication with key stakeholders, monitor outputs and measure success. Measuring the success of a people strategy is complex and there are many interdependent factors. The list of measures used in the delivery plan is extensive and reflects the complexity involved, with the combination creating an overall picture. The individual measures provide opportunity to address issues at a more granular level.

Key Findings

A summary of the key challenges faced, identified from the national and local context, are described below and set out what the people strategy must address. It is appropriate to first highlight the areas where New Forest District Council is already doing well, to ensure we recognise and build on existing good practice and strengths.

What we're doing well

Corporate plan. There is very good awareness and understanding of the corporate plan and the three pillars of place, people and prosperity. This understanding of the vision and purpose of the organisation provides clear direction and an excellent foundation for the people strategy.

Wellbeing support. Health and wellbeing support is appreciated and many have benefited from support when off sick, returning to work, with mental health concerns and from reasonable adjustments when needed.

Teams. Cohesion within small teams is clear, staff feel very connected within their teams and value colleague support.

Line management support. There are a number of excellent line managers across the organisation and those teams with good line manager support clearly benefit. The brief bites sessions support managers to learn best practice. Informal resolution of issues is high when supported by the HR team.

Recruitment. Significant improvements have been made in recruitment in the last 12 months. New employees recently going through the recruitment process are providing high praise for the warmth of the staff, the overall process, and the information provided, specifically the new application packs.

Early careers. A steadily growing number of apprentices and graduate trainees have been recruited and developed across our organisation. The individuals in these roles are usually successful and often stay.

Existing staff. The people who work for us are committed to the organisation and the community it serves and want to do the best job possible. They thrive on being experts in their areas, whilst also showing a keen appetite for change to make things better for the organisation and the community.

Challenges

Recruitment and retention

There are national recruitment and retention issues in local government, with skills shortages in specific areas such as planning and environmental health. These challenges are reflected in the new forest area and across the South East too. With an average age of 48, our workforce is ageing and we have many staff who are moving towards retirement. This ageing workforce reflects a national picture. Worryingly (although the national picture is not dissimilar) 28% of new starters left within 12 months of joining us as an employee. Alongside this, local government is not widely seen as an attractive sector to work in, and nationally the 'Make a Difference, Work for your Local Council' campaign aims to inspire individuals to explore career opportunities in local government that have a direct and lasting impact on the lives of local residents, capitalising on the growing trend for people to seek work that contributes to society. The Devolution White Paper requiring local government reorganisation may impact on our ability to attract and retain talent.

Despite the pay and terms of conditions of employment being determined by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services, our pay terms remain different than the nationally agreed pay scales and may create additional challenges in recruitment and retention.

Diversity and inclusion

Our staff tell us that we are inclusive. Our workforce data tells us that we lack diversity. Whilst we are attracting increasingly more diverse applicants (diversity of age and ethnicity), these appear to not pull through to hires. It is therefore unclear whether we are truly inclusive to more diverse colleagues.

Our male to female ratio is similar to the majority of local government organisations and our gender pay gap is low. However, there are significant differences in the ratio of men and women in middle management, with fewer women entering into those leadership roles.

4% of our staff have declared a long-term condition or disability. When compared to 16.1% of New Forest residents, and 17.8% in England and Wales, this indicates either low disclosure rates or lower than average numbers of staff employed who have a disability or long term condition.

Learning and careers

The apprenticeship levy is a key source of funding which can be used to support career development and this pot could be utilised more fully. Skills England will take over responsibility for the levy in 2025 and it is expected there will be significant changes in how this levy can be used which could enable us to offer new learning and career opportunities.

Many staff cite better prospects of career progression as a key reason for leaving, and this is reflected in the recent staff survey where only 31% agreed that they saw a career path for them in the organisation. In addition, other benefits and opportunities for training and development showed room for improvement. Our average training spend per employee in 2023-4 was £314. Although this is an important figure, there are many other opportunities to learn and develop, away from traditional paid courses and exploration of how we identify and support these opportunities will be important.

Feedback shows inconsistency in personal development opportunities with 72% completion of performance reviews as well as anecdotal feedback that performance review templates needed modernising and focusing on conversations.

Culture

For people who have worked in our organisation for a longer period, there is some legacy culture that is challenging, where some can feel fearful of making mistakes and therefore feel unable to make decisions, often deferring them upwards, which comes from a previous approach of centralised control. This has now changed positively with a new chief executive, and will take time and demonstrable examples to continue to change towards a more open and innovative organisation.

There have been some concerns raised around unacceptable behaviour and inappropriate language being used, and the feedback from the staff survey indicated that 40% of respondents were not confident that if they reported poor behaviour, it would be dealt with appropriately.

In seeing the first waves of transformational change, there is evidence to suggest that resilience and readiness for change is low, despite there being appetite for change. This is perhaps a result of limited experience of change for many staff who have worked in our organisation for a number of years.

Leadership and management

As described in the areas we are doing well in, we have some excellent managers, however, this is not a consistent view, with variable management practices taking place across the organisation, with a lack of clear expectations of managers.

Leadership development opportunities introduced in 2023/4 have been well received. It is important that leadership development isn't seen as a one off and there are new and ongoing opportunities to develop existing and future leaders, as there is more work to be done to develop the leadership capabilities of the future. One example is the feedback that there is a lack of accountability and autonomy, where 28% of respondents in the staff survey felt people were not held to account. It is a key leadership role to support appropriate accountability, decision making and autonomy.

Communication

There is much evidence and knowledge that there is a culture of silo working within the organisation, with examples of people working in the same office for many years having never met each other. There is a lack of open and collaborative working, with potential for projects and work to happen without key stakeholders involved. This seems to stem from a reluctance to being open and sharing expertise and information with others and is a challenge which can come from close knit small teams who can sometimes become introspective. There are limited opportunities for different groups of people to get together around a common interest or topic.

Although much information is available somewhere, there is a lack of easy to access information, guidance, reports that people need, as well as a lack of consistent messaging across the workforce by appropriate methods, for example the over reliance on e-mail to send messages to all staff, when a percentage of staff don't have any access to e-mails or ForestNet. It is unclear whether these messages get through at all to those people, so there is a need to create engaging and relevant communications which reach all staff. A perception of 'them and us' between the main office at Appletree Court and the depot bases is perhaps an example of the impact of this communication approach.

Employer of choice

Identifying what makes people choose to work for an organisation is complex and unique to individuals, based on personal motivations and values. Using the evidence and research collected in the discovery phase, we have defined our concept of being an employer of choice and therefore the outcomes we are aiming for through this people strategy.

To be considered as an employer of choice, we:

- attract and retain the best people.
- learn and develop in our roles and our careers, performing to our best ability.
- are recognised and rewarded for the contributions we make.
- have the confidence to put forward ideas, try out new concepts and take actions within clear boundaries and expectations.
- work together with our colleagues across the organisation, partners and community.
- include everyone and encourage a strong sense of belonging.
- know how our work makes a difference to the community we serve.
- are open, sharing our experiences, and learning from each other.
- fairly and consistently apply our processes and practices.

Our journey to employer of choice

Employer of Choice: grow connect empower

Our people strategy provides the direction needed, to take our organisation on a journey towards our ambition to be an Employer of Choice.

This work is important to our people and it is vital to ensure our approach is recognised and understood by everyone.

Our strategy of 'Employer of choice: grow connect empower' is presented as a metaphor based on the roots, branches and green leaves of a tree, and is relevant to the New Forest, the area we serve. We believe a strong visual framework will allow more people to connect to the strategy in a meaningful way to support our journey and enable existing staff and potential recruits to see how we are transforming our offer for people.



The branches of grow, connect and empower, capture the focus of our work, recognising there also need to be strong roots (or foundations) in place. Our culture, the way we do things which enable us to achieve our desired outcomes, must be centred on our values of learning, empathy, ambition and fairness.

Each of these elements are described in more detail below.

Grow

We believe that everyone should have opportunities to grow. We will all be able to learn, develop and contribute to our organisation in ways wider than our core roles and see career opportunities that excite us.

We will ensure everyone has access to protected time for learning and development activities, support people to move internally where relevant, and provide open access to a menu of learning activities, including core transferable skills, as well as offer targeted development for specific groups. This will include ongoing leadership and management development offers, ways for people to obtain skills fit for the future, and building personal development plans to support this, with regular and meaningful development conversations.

Our learning and development offer includes early career or entry opportunities, professional qualifications where appropriate and continuing professional development at all career stages.

We will identify future skills needs, opportunities for sharing of knowledge and best practice and support for people to move forward in their careers. We know that some people will move on during this period of significant change, and we aim to support people to leave well, with a positive experience and skills to benefit the New Forest and wider community going forward.

Connect

Whilst recognising individual, team and role differences, it's important to us that we are all connected. No matter where we work or our job role, we will feel part of a team, have opportunities to get involved, feedback our thoughts and ideas, and find out about what's happening in the organisation and in the wider geography.

We must be transparent in our approach, ensuring everyone has access the information and advice they need to do their job and to spark their interests.

To do this, we will enhance our engagement and internal communication methods across the organisation, promoting our successes, collaborating internally and externally, and generally find ways to better connect.

We will support both functional and matrix teams to connect and develop together through focused activities, and create more opportunity for individuals to connect with others who they affiliate with, by increasing our staff networks and peer support. This could include young people, those in early careers, people living with disabilities, women in leadership, and/or the global majority.

We will look outward and align our activities with local government partner organisations where it makes sense to, better connecting with our members, other partners and community too. We will enhance our reputation as a great employer as well as an ambitious and effective organisation through our connections with partners and the public. Our focus on putting customers at the heart of all we do will require us to be more proactive and engaging and our staff will be supported to develop these skills.

Empower

People will be supported to make the decisions, undertake the learning, and test out the things that truly matter to them and are appropriate, giving people autonomy over their work. We want people to want to come to work, know they are doing meaningful work, and have a clear purpose. All our staff will feel safe, both physically and psychologically, and therefore able to bring their best selves to work.

Through our 'grow' branch, our programme of transformational learning opportunities will empower people to use digital technology, manage change effectively, focus on customers and take an active role in reversing climate change. Making more use of digital technology with enhanced access and skills to enable automated decision making where relevant, will empower people to focus on those interactions and decisions which are complex and sensitive and where humanity is key. We will also continue to review our processes to ensure we complete our work in the most effective and efficient ways.

Support and development of our various 'champions' networks are key to empowering those who are most engaged to make the impact that is important to them, enhancing their roles in the organisation.

We will enable people to feel empowered to find their own learning and solutions which will help unlock individual potential and maximise performance. This will be supported through access to coaching, mentoring and peer learning.

Strong roots

Our roots are centred on our values which flow through the branches of our organisation and create the culture we are aiming for.

With employees as our most important asset, all employees should feel this is the best place for them to work. To achieve this, we must have clear processes and expectations which are applied fairly and consistently, providing the stability that holds up the organisation.

Our behaviours framework, once developed, will set out the expectations for how we all want to be treated and treat others at work, as well as ensure a customer and community focus across all of our work, and create the conditions for effective change management.

We must also review the language and approaches in our critical workforce and other policies and procedures, to create a safe environment for people to be able to join us and thrive.

Our recognition scheme will seek out and celebrate individual and team contributions aligned to our values and organisational aims.

We proactively support wellbeing and resilience, with effective and compassionate support when people most need it, knowing that this approach pays back in effort and contributions at other times.

Culture

Culture describes how we go about our day-to-day work, the elements that you can't see, the norms, beliefs, systems and rules that influence our behaviour at work.

Our LEAF values are strong and recognisable, and coupled with our ambition for strong roots, growth, connection, and empowerment, these describe the influences we want people to listen to and the culture we want to see throughout our organisation.

We will embark on a culture development programme to thread our values through everything we do and put us on the front foot in readiness for local government reorganisation. Culture change is not a quick fix, it takes time and energy, and we are committed to the journey.

The overall picture that our measures provide, will be used to assess the impact of our cultural change programme which runs through all the deliverables featured under the themes of grow, connect, empower, and strong roots. We will also assess whether staff would recommend our organisation as a place to work as a key benchmark internally and against similar organisations.

Delivery plan

Our delivery plan is broken down by our themes of grow, connect, empower and strong roots, each of which has two parts to the timeline: establishing foundations (year 1); and building our capabilities (year 2).

Strong Roots

Theme	Purpose	Activity	Year 1				Year 2			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
strong roots	Fit for future	Improve transactional HR processes, including recruitment and internal job moves. Create more guidance and information to support people to self serve to reduce HR contacts for highest volume enquiries.	Review	Review	Amend	Amend				
strong roots	Culture and behaviours	Develop and launch a behaviours framework and tools to support implementation, including develop and launch a refreshed staff recognition scheme aligned to our values and behaviours.	develop	launch	embed	embed	BAU	BAU	BAU	BAU
strong roots	Fit for future	Develop an organisational change management approach and toolkit to include tools, templates, guidance.	develop	develop and launch	embed	embed				
strong roots	Fit for future	Research and create staff personas to support targeted interventions across all aspects of the people strategy, e.g. internal comms, learning opportunities, ways to connect, wellbeing.								
strong roots	Fit for future	Establish core transformation competencies and create learning opportunities to upskill where needed. May include self awareness, managing change, customer service, systems thinking, co-production.	research	develop framework	launch learning	learning	learning	learning		

Theme	Purpose	Activity	Year 1				Year 2			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
strong roots	Culture and behaviours Learning and development	Create leadership and management competency framework and develop learning opportunities to support leaders and managers to reflect upon and achieve competencies and bring our values and behaviours to life.			develop	develop and launch	learning	learning	learning	learning
strong roots	Fit for future	Identify and review key people policies where essential to reflect employment law and organisational changes.	Review and plan	review and update key policies as per plan						
strong roots	Fit for future	Improve workforce data quality and create service dashboards to support baseline measurement and empowerment of managers, as well as be devolution ready.	develop	develop	develop	develop	implement	implement	implement	implement

Grow

Theme	Purpose	Activity	Year 1				Year 2				
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
grow	Learning and development	Review and develop mandatory course matrix by staff groups.									
grow	Recruitment and retention. Learning and Development	Continue to utilise, and enhance coordination and management for successful apprenticeships and other development opportunities for existing staff, new recruits and hard to fill roles. E.g. young authority of the year, DCN management programme, projects.									
grow	Learning and development	Review and update appraisals and 1:1 processes to include behaviours framework and better support personal development planning, allowing for a flexible approach as we navigate change. To include clear guidance, training, and recording expectations.			review and plan	implement	implement				

Connect

Theme	Purpose	Activity	Year 1				Year 2			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
connect	Engagement and Communications	Review, enhance and measure internal communication and engagement channels, media, purpose and messaging. To include content creation (corporate presentations, written briefings etc), a clear plan of campaigns which run aligned to the people strategy, with appropriate staff surveys to test engagement and identify new actions. To include a regular campaign to raise awareness of wellbeing resources.	Review	Review	launch new approach					
connect	Engagement and Communications	Enhance staff intranet with accessible and engaging content.		Design approach	Content review and creation with services					
Connect	Engagement and Communications Culture and behaviours	Create new and develop existing peer forums / staff networks / learning circles / collaboration cafes (both diversity and role related).								

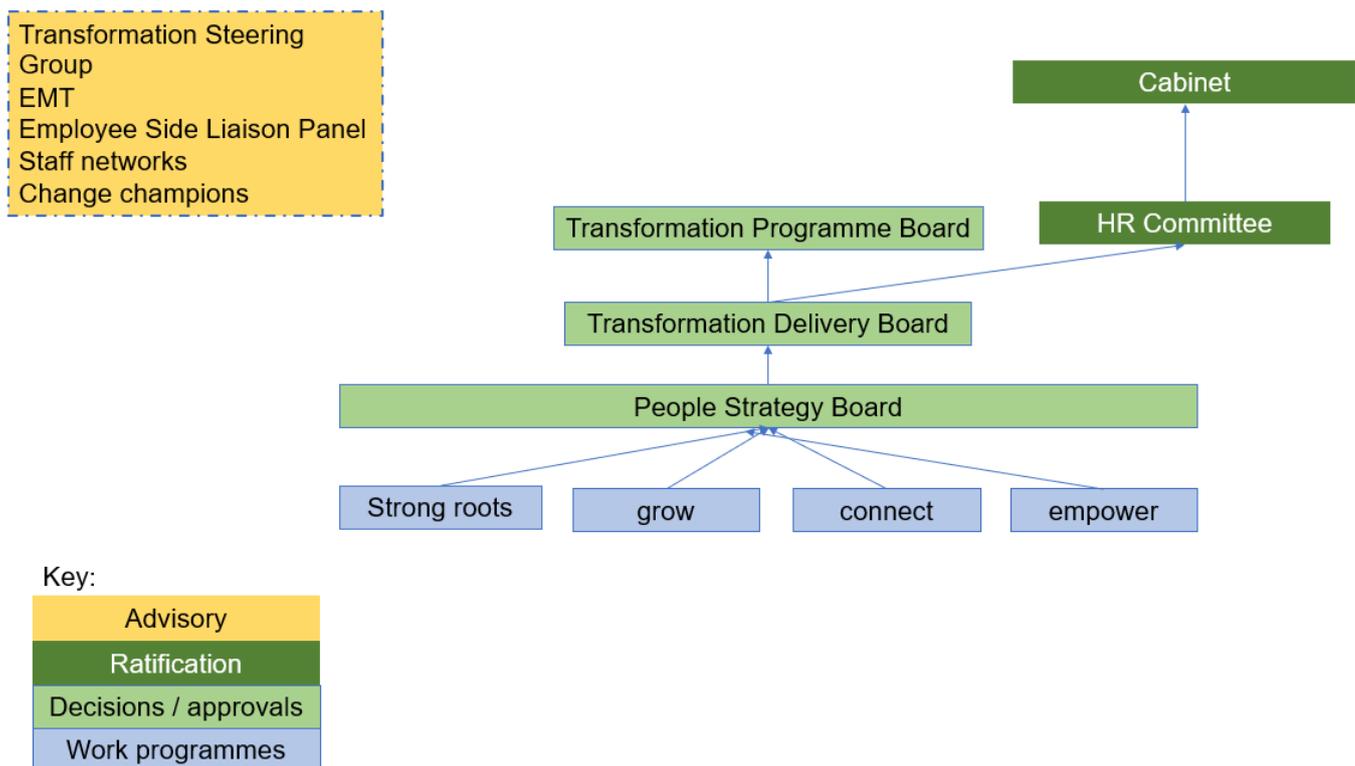
Empower

Theme	Purpose	Activity	Year 1				Year 2				
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
empower	Fit for future Learning and development	Implement a 'Digital Skills for All' programme.	plan	plan	Implement						
empower	Engagement and Communications Learning and Development	Create a learning hub. To include a menu of opportunities, detailed guidance for staff on learning and development opportunities and process to access and record.									
empower	Learning and development Culture and behaviours	Provide coaching, mentoring, buddy and shadowing opportunities. To include training in coaching and mentoring, guidance for buddying and shadowing, a hub of information on sharepoint to show opportunities available and contact details.									
empower	Learning and development	Develop a menu of targeted learning opportunities for different staff groups, for example a people managers essentials programme for first line chargehands and supervisors. Learning needs to be identified via skills audits and identification of staff personas.	Dependent on need. People management for chargehands and supervisors required Year 1, Q1								

106

Monitoring and governance

It is critical that the programme of work in support of our journey to create strong roots, grow, connect, and empower, is monitored, measured and governed appropriately. This strategy forms an important part of the Future New Forest transformation programme and will align with the governance structures already defined as the diagram shows below.



A full programme plan, and individual project plans will be developed and maintained to keep track of actions, and create accountability. The People Strategy Board will meet monthly and report to transformation delivery and programme boards as required, with reports to HR Committee ad hoc as and when ratification is required for specific initiatives or changes.

Measuring our ambition to be an employer of choice

A set of measures will be collected annually to review progress year on year towards our ambition to become employer of choice, against each outcome. The Local Government ‘employee engagement index’ (LGEEI) is a set of core questions that will enable us to benchmark ourselves against other similar organisations in the sector and are included within these measures.

Outcome	Key Measures
Are included and have a strong sense of belonging.	% of staff would recommend the council as a great place to work
	% staff satisfied with the amount of information they receive about what is going on at the council
	% staff receive the information they need to do their job well
	% staff feel well informed about things that affect them at work
	% staff agree they have the freedom to work in a way which suits them
	% staff believe the council has sufficient wellbeing support in place for staff
	% staff agree they can strike the right balance between work and home life
	% staff feel well supported by their line manager
	% of staff subjected to bullying and harassment at work
	% of working time lost due to sickness absence
	% of staff agree the Council is open minded, accepting of differences, and everyone is made to feel included
	% of staff agree they can be themselves at work
% of staff feel treated with fairness and respect at work	
Are open, sharing our experiences, and learning from each other.	% staff feel confident to freely share any work issues with their colleagues/team.
	% staff response to staff survey
	% staff agree that any suggestions or comments they make are listened to
	% staff who agree that if they have any problems or concerns, they feel able to discuss them with their line manager / supervisor
	% of staff confident that any reported inappropriate behaviour by colleagues whilst at work, would be dealt with appropriately
	% of staff agree that the leadership team have a good understanding of the challenges staff face
	% of staff agree that in their team, mistakes are seen as learning opportunities
	Analytics of sharepoint usage
Are recognised and rewarded for the contributions we make.	% staff agree that their manager gives them regular feedback on performance
	% staff agree they are praised and recognised for good work
	% staff feel valued and rewarded fairly for the work they do

Outcome	Key Measures
Attract and retain the best people.	% turnover
	Agency use
	Diversity of our workforce (gender, age, ethnicity, disability)
	% of staff who leave within 12 months
	Number of workplace issues / employee relations cases (to include conduct, capability, grievance, disciplinary)
	Gender pay gap (and Race, Disability pay gap if feasible)
	% vacancies filled first time
	Diversity of job applicants
	Number of job applications per campaign
Have the confidence to put forward ideas, try out new concepts and take actions within clear boundaries and expectations.	% of managers agree they are empowered to manage resources to deliver their target outcomes.
	% staff feel able to contribute to improvements in their area of work
	% staff encouraged to try new tasks to develop and improve
	% staff feel able to approach the leadership team if needed
	% staff agree they clearly understand what is expected of them
	% of staff feel trusted to do their work in the way they think is best
	% staff agree that all employees are held accountable for their personal performance and contribution
Learn and develop in our roles and our careers, performing to our best ability.	% of staff with a personal development plan in place
	% who agree they have had the training and development needed to perform current duties
	% staff agree there are training and development opportunities to support them to achieve their ambitions / progress their career
	Number of apprenticeships and other early career placements
	Average learning / development activity per head
	Training spend per head
	% of roles filled by internal candidates
	% completion of mandatory training
	% staff agree they have the skills and equipment to do their jobs
Work together with our colleagues across the Council, partners and community.	% staff feel that in their team, they help and support each other
	% staff agree that their manager / supervisor encourages them to work collaboratively with other colleagues and departments to achieve own / organisational objectives
	% staff feel that they work well across teams on shared objectives
	% staff who agree that we put our community and service users at the heart of what we do
	% of staff who believe their work makes a difference to the organisation / community
	% of staff who agree that we deliver a great service to residents and the community

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111

People Strategy



Our journey to employer of choice





Foreword



Cllr Jill Cleary
Leader of the Council



Kate Ryan
Chief Executive

113

As part of the council’s ongoing transformation programme, ‘Future New Forest, transforming tomorrow together’, we are committed to being an employer of choice. A fundamental part of this is developing and delivering a people strategy that outlines how we attract, retain, and grow our talent, giving us direction to deliver for our employees as well as for our community.

The strategy is based on a wealth of evidence from a wide range of sources: from data and feedback from our current workforce; to external reviews and best practice from both within and outside local government. We aim to be agile to enable us to react to current trends and be fit for future changes.

Underpinning the strategy is the development of our positive work culture, through our LEAF values, with a new behaviours framework to show how we live our values and foster a strong sense of belonging at work.

Our journey to employer of choice: Grow Connect, Empower, is represented visually as a tree with people at the heart, where we start with strong roots, build on these through the branches of Grow, Connect, and Empower, culminating in our LEAF culture which flows through all we do.

Our strategy document describes our strong roots and branches with why they are important, what we do well, what we aim to

achieve and how each will be measured and reviewed. These will continually evolve as new opportunities and challenges emerge.

We firmly believe that having the best staff, who are well-supported, is key to delivering the best outcomes for our residents.

We are committed to developing our people to be fit for the future, and this strategy enables us to achieve this in a context of significant change, as well as deliver our corporate plan priorities for the communities we serve.



The purpose of our people strategy

114

Our Corporate Plan and Transformation Strategy commit to the development of a people strategy to outline how we attract, retain, and grow talent.

The people strategy provides the direction to guide the organisation in how we:

- engage our people
- invest in our people
- create the conditions to enable change

Engaging our people

It is important that every member of our team feels part of the organisation and feels valued for the contribution they make to the community and our corporate plan objectives.

Investing in our people

This is about ensuring we have the skills we need to deliver the changes we must enable and the work that makes a difference to our community.

Creating the conditions to enable change

Continuously applying our values, behaviours, and culture.

The focus on our people is more important than ever. Through this strategy we will support our employees during significant change and position them with the right skills and behaviours to embrace future opportunities.

We know that when our people are at their best, we will be best placed to meet our strategic aims.

It is a proactive framework, to enable enhanced commitment, engagement and motivation, plan for future workforce requirements, build capacity and competence to deliver current and future requirements for our communities.

How our people strategy sits within our council

115

Our people strategy aligns with our overarching corporate plan and fits with the 'people and capabilities' theme in our transformation strategy.

The people strategy links closely to the other themes within the transformation strategy; 'customer and digital', 'assets and accommodation', and 'finances & delivery' ensuring all our colleagues are working towards shared goals, with clear expectations and the resources they need to succeed.



Read our corporate plan at:

[link to document](#)



Read our transformation strategy at:

[link to document](#)

The process of creating our people strategy

116



Discovery

During this phase, we collected data, research, and feedback. Our sources included:

- our corporate and HR peer reviews
- staff feedback, including leadership team, staff groups, and staff survey
- our corporate plan, transformation plan, and LEAF values
- external sources and best practice



Design

At this phase, we developed initial themes and principles using our findings from stage 1 with the inclusion of our corporate values.

Through an iterative process, the initial themes and principles were presented to multiple staff groups to gain insight into their understandings and reactions.

Feedback supported the design of a simpler and concise concept that is more accessible and understandable to all.



Delivery

Using the core themes of grow, connect, and empower, a 2-year action plan has been created.

We will ensure outputs are monitored, communication with key stakeholders is maintained, and progress and successes are measured.

What we're doing well as a council

Staff support

When asked, our staff say we care about their wellbeing, they have positive relationships with their managers, and that they enjoy working in our organisation. We know that there is strong cohesion within small teams and many agree that they help and support each other.

Early careers

We have been growing our early career roles to develop new skills in some of our hard to recruit areas. At the launch of this strategy we had the highest ever number of apprenticeships and our first graduate trainees across our services.

Commitment to our purpose

Our staff have a good awareness and understanding of the corporate plan and values and a strong sense that their work makes a difference to the organisation and community.

Recruitment

New employees are providing positive feedback on the overall recruitment process, the warmth of the staff, and the information provided, specifically our improved application packs.



We actively collaborate with local learning providers to build relationships with young talent and promote ourselves as a key local employer.

This includes attending careers fairs and supporting apprenticeships, providing students with insight into council roles and career paths.

In 2024, we were recognised as Brockenhurst College's "Employer of the Year" recognising our commitment to developing our brand and networks.

What challenges we need to address

Engagement and collaboration

The challenge: connection between individuals and teams, access to information, and the ability for corporate communications to reach all parts of the organisation is limited in some areas, holding back our people from sharing information, ideas and best practice, and learning from each other.

Skills

The challenge: national recruitment issues, an ageing workforce, fast moving technology, and skills gaps in some professional areas, mean we must grow and develop both our new and existing staff.

Learning and careers

The challenge: opportunities for career progression and a lack of clear personal development opportunities and career pathways are a particular challenge presented by our staff survey feedback.

Management practices

The challenge: a lack of clear expectations of managers has led to variable practices across the organisation, with an additional need to further develop our leaders and managers to face the challenges of change over the next few years.

Defining what employer of choice means to us

Using the evidence collected in the discovery phase, we have defined our concept of being an employer of choice.

To us this means we will:

- attract and retain the best people
 - learn and develop in our roles and our careers, performing to our best ability
 - be recognised and rewarded for the contributions we make
 - work together with our colleagues across the council, partners and community
 - include everyone and encourage a strong sense of belonging
- have the confidence to put forward ideas, try out new concepts and take actions within clear boundaries and expectations
 - know how our work makes a difference to the community we serve
 - be open, sharing our experiences, and learning from each other
 - fairly and consistently apply our processes and practices



Our corporate values are already established. Collectively known as 'LEAF', our values underpin the culture and behaviours we are aiming for, to achieve our commitment to becoming an employer of choice.

Learning

Empathy

Ambition

Fairness

Our journey to employer of choice

This journey will be led by our 4 themes,
and they are:

Strong roots

Grow

Connect

Empower



The 4 themes:

1. Strong roots

Strong roots

Our roots are centred on our values which flow through the branches of our organisation and create the culture we are aiming for.

With employees as our most important asset, all employees should feel this is the best place for them to work. We will achieve this through clear processes and expectations which are applied fairly and consistently, by proactively supporting wellbeing and resilience, by promoting our behaviours framework which sets out the expectations for how we all want to be treated and treat others at work, and by recognising and celebrating when individuals and teams align with our values.



Spotlight: Strong roots

Meet 4 of our colleagues who have shared how they recognise themselves or their work in our values.

122



Learning

Andy Rowe, waste & recycling supervisor:

"I am embracing all learning opportunities. Since joining the Waste & Recycling team, I have moved from Refuse Loader through to HGV Driver, then Senior Chargehand and I have just been successful in a promotion to Supervisor. Without the learning opportunities both formal and on the job I would not have been able to reach this potential".



Empathy

Christina Morgan, housing allocations officer:

"In my role I feel empathy is essential, many people have had difficult and complicated lives and, as a result of this, can be difficult to engage with or have difficulties understanding the processes we need to go through in order to re-house them.

I make sure I take time to be patient and listen to people when they talk which enables me to get a better understanding of them and their situation. I am always mindful that I do my job every day, but the person I am dealing with, is going through the process of being housed potentially for the first time and does not know what to expect".



Ambition

Kasia Lewis, homelessness prevention officer:

"I still feel there is more to give and achieve in my role. I am keen to take on more responsibility and I feel well supported by my managers to expand my role and responsibilities. I believe NFDC are an employer that nurtures ambition and provides support to move and change within the organisation."



Fairness

Phil Thompson, environmental health officer:

"The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme helps our residents choose where to eat out or shop for good food by giving them clear information about a business's hygiene standards. As a national standard, businesses and customers alike can have confidence in its openness and fairness".

The 4 themes:

2. Grow

Grow

We believe that everyone should have the opportunities to develop, with protected time for learning and development activities for current and future skills needs.

This will include core transferable skills as well as targeted development, early career opportunities, qualifications and continuing professional development at all career stages.

We will create positive learning experiences to benefit our people and the wider community.



Spotlight: Grow



Here's Ned, who joined us as an apprentice in 2022, he has now completed his Accounting Level 3 apprenticeship and has been successful in securing a further training contract to complete the Level 4. Ned said "Completing my level 3 AAT apprenticeship has allowed me to gain a professional qualification whilst also working alternate weeks for the Sundry Income Team and the Service Accountancy Team." He continues, "Upon completion of my level 3 apprenticeship, I have taken up the Junior Finance Assistant role and I am now working towards my level 4 AAT qualification. Overall, I have grown in confidence throughout my time at New Forest District Council and enjoy the varied job role having the opportunity to work for two separate departments".

Pam and Ned's line managers both agree that they are developing into important members of the team, helping to ensure our services are delivered in a professional and timely way. They have the time and opportunity to learn and develop, but they also bring new ideas and learning back to help evolve how both teams move forward.



Meet Pam Zuva, currently undertaking a degree apprenticeship with us in Environmental Health. Pam is mid-way in year two, and loving the development opportunity with us. She was key to the NFDC stand at the New Forest Show, helping educate visitors on food safety with her new knowledge. Pam said "It was an honour to share my newly acquired knowledge and instil awareness of the importance of food hygiene." She continues, "The simple practical activity of identifying hazards in the fridge enabled me to encourage the children and their guardians to reconsider how this could positively impact their health. The activity became popular at the NFDC stand and I am grateful to have contributed to our community in such a meaningful way".

Colleagues out on one of our regular wellbeing walks

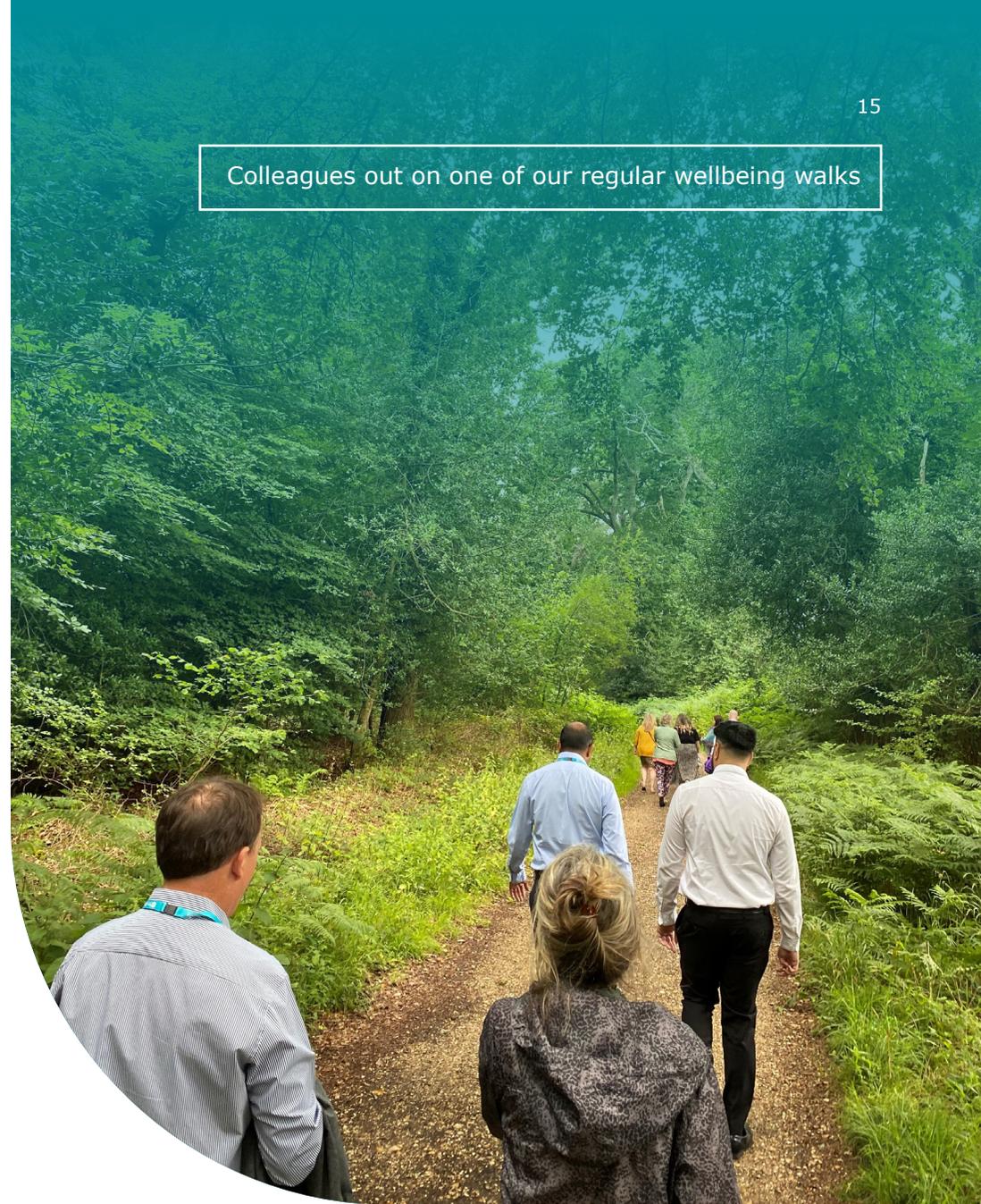
The 4 themes:

3. Connect

Connect

Whilst recognising individual, team and role differences, it's important that we are all connected. No matter where we work or our job role, we will feel part of a team, have opportunities to get involved, feedback our thoughts and ideas, find out about what's happening in the organisation and in the wider geography, and have access to the information and advice we need to do our jobs well.

We will enhance engagement across the organisation, promoting our successes, collaborating internally and externally with all stakeholders, increasing our staff networks and peer support, and generally find ways to better connect in an open and transparent way.





Spotlight: Connect

We celebrated with over 50 colleagues who have worked here for 20 years or more; our longest serving colleague having 44 years of service! We have a brilliant mix of long serving employees as well as those who have joined us more recently with their external experience to bring to the mix.

The 4 themes:

4. Empower

Empower

People will be supported to make decisions, test out new ideas, and find their own learning and solutions. We want people to feel empowered, have autonomy and enjoy their work, therefore bringing their best selves to work, unlocking individual potential and maximising performance.

With appropriate training we will make better use of digital technology to ensure we complete our work in the most effective and efficient ways. We will support and develop our various 'champions' networks as well as providing access to coaching, mentoring and peer learning.



Here's Sophie presenting at the Young Authority of the Year competition, an empowering opportunity to develop and showcase her skills, as well as network with others. Sophie has recently been promoted to a Service Manager role in our Housing service.

Spotlight: Empower



Amy joined us as our new fire safety manager in 2024, and has just started a level 4 Fire Safety two-year apprenticeship to help her develop further in this field and ensure we're on top of our game in terms of looking after our residents' safety. Amy says,

"Developing my skills means I am confident that I have the skills and knowledge to undertake my role effectively now, but also I feel empowered to lead my team effectively and be ahead of the curve with industry changes".



Julie, part of our homeless support team as an accommodation support worker, explains she feels supported by her colleagues and empowered in her role, which involves supporting our most complex and challenging tenants to maintain their tenancies, as well as encouraging them that their lives can change and that they can, at the end of their journey, secure permanent accommodation. Julie says,

"In our homelessness team, I work with a great bunch of people and we are all here at the end of the phone to listen to each other when needed. I have the opportunity to shape my role, supported by my managers when I have an idea and can see this through to implementation".



Stewart, our senior streetscene supervisor oversees a wide range of matters, from the operational leadership of the wide ranging seven-day streetscene service, to researching and project managing related building developments. Stewart is also an incident liaison officer in emergency planning and a mental health first aider.

Stewart feels empowered to use his extensive skills and knowledge as well strong stakeholder contacts built up over his career to confidently take on new and innovative projects that make a real difference to our community. Stewart says,

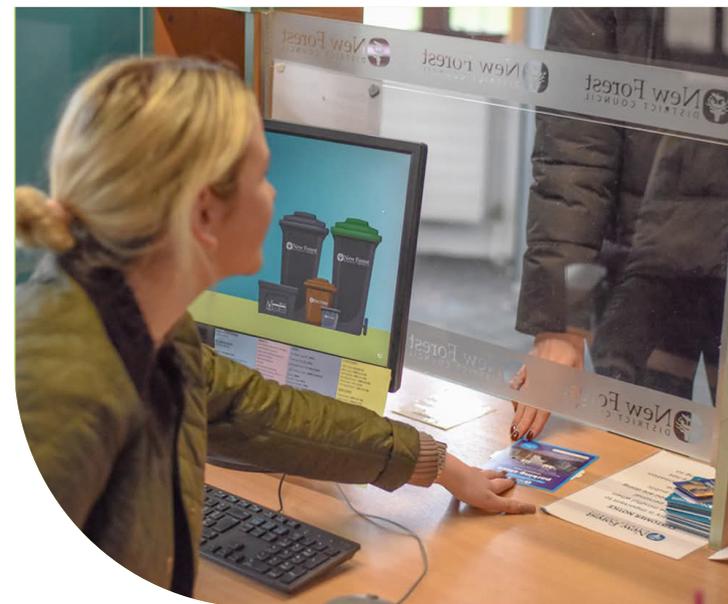
"As part of our building development activities I have worked with local charities to deliver 'changing places' (specialised toilet and changing facilities for people with severe disabilities) in key locations across the district. I feel proud that disabled individuals and their families now have access to the New Forest".

How will we deliver this strategy

Our delivery plan is focused on creating the most impact possible over two years, establishing foundations in year one and building on these in year two to increase our capabilities.

We are committed to delivering a far-reaching action plan over the two year period under the themes of strong roots, grow, connect, and empower, aligned to our purpose of engaging and investing in our people and creating the conditions for change.

Our delivery plan includes development of new ideas and review and improvement of existing activities, all of which will be embedded into our day-to-day work to ensure the benefits are sustained long term. We are committed to learning and remaining flexible, meaning we can adapt our plan as needed in this changing environment.



Our delivery plan

Strong roots

Improve recruitment and other HR processes.

Create a behaviours framework aligned to our LEAF values.

Develop a toolkit of resources to support change management.

Identify different audiences across our teams to enable tailored communications, training, and other opportunities.

Identify and develop core skills across the organisation.

Create a leadership and management competency framework and establish learning opportunities to support high performance.

Review and amend key people policies.

Improve quality and usability of our workforce data.

Grow

Review and clarify mandatory training requirements.

Enhance opportunities for career development including apprenticeships and other opportunities for new and existing staff.

Review and improve personal development processes.

Connect

Review and improve internal communications and enhance employee engagement.

Enhance our staff intranet.

Create new and support existing peer networks.

Empower

Implement a programme to develop 'digital skills for all'.

Create a learning hub.

Grow opportunities for coaching, mentoring, buddying and shadowing.

Develop targeted learning opportunities based on need of different staff audiences.

Cabinet – 2 April 2025

Digital Strategy 2025-2028

Purpose	For decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>This report provides the council’s proposed digital strategy for 2025-2028.</p> <p>The current digital strategy expires in 2025 therefore it has been updated in line with the corporate suite of documents to ensure alignment with the Corporate Plan, Transformation Strategy and Customer Strategy.</p>
Recommendation(s)	<p>It is recommended that Cabinet:</p> <p>1. Recommend to council the adoption of the Digital Strategy 2025-2028</p>
Reasons for recommendation(s)	<p>To support the delivery of the corporate plan, transformation strategy, customer strategy and people strategy.</p> <p>To support the strategic vision for digital at NFDC and best position it for local government reorganisation.</p>
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>Rich Bird Data, Development and Delivery Manager Rich.Bird@nfdc.gov.uk</p>

	<p>Kim Gray ICT Operations Manager Kim.Gray@nfdc.gov.uk</p> <p>Sponsored by:</p> <p>Alan Bethune Strategic Director Corporate Resources & Transformation Section 151 Officer alan.bethune@nfdc.gov.uk</p> <p>Rebecca Drummond Assistant Director - Transformation Rebecca.drummond@nfdc.gov.uk</p>
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Introduction and background

1. The Digital Strategy 2025 – 2028 has been developed following the adoption of and in support of the Corporate Plan, Transformation Strategy and Customer Strategy. This inward facing strategy enables the implementation of these outwardly focused strategies by setting out focused digital principles and to leverage new modern technologies to support our residents, staff and members in our digital journey.
2. The proposed strategy will run from 2025-2028 with a mindful focus on activities and priorities in line with local government reorganisation (LGR).
3. The digital strategy enables the delivery of the six digital principles:
 - a. Principle 1 - Customer first, digital by design**
Customer needs will be at the heart of the digital services that we deliver using full end to end digital process models.
 - b. Principle 2 - Data driven**
All services will proactively use data to inform decision making and report performance.
 - c. Principle 3 – Digital transformation**
Digital Transformation will deliver modern digital technologies, automate manual processes and enhance our digital culture

d. Principle 4 – Secure by design

Digital services will be secure by design to protect the council's data, systems, people and residents.

e. Principle 5 - Robust and resilient infrastructure

The core foundations of our digital services will be robust and resilient to ensure we are working, and our services can be accessed, in the right place, at the right time and with the right device.

f. Principle 6 – Digital skills for all

Digital skills for all will support our staff and members through learning and development to safely benefit, effectively contribute to and access the councils' digital services.

4. Our digital strategy is mindful that the technology landscape can change quickly in today's modern digital world and to support local government reorganisation (LGR), so it will remain agile in its activities through regular strategic review points and the supportive guidance of the council's governance groups.
5. The proposed approach to digital is consistent with many other organisations, public and private. The development of the strategy considered the best practices currently being adopted across public and private sectors as well as needs and ideas unique to NFDC.

Corporate plan priorities

6. The digital strategy supports delivery of the Future New Forest programme.
7. The digital strategy aligns with the 'Customer and digital services' theme within our Transformation strategy.
8. The digital strategy links closely to our customer strategy with alignment throughout.
9. The digital strategy supports the 'empower' theme within our people strategy including a 'Digital skills for all' programme.

Options appraisal

10. The current digital strategy expires in 2025 and therefore required a refreshed strategy.

Consultation undertaken

11. The digital strategy is a joint delivery by the ICT Leadership team sponsored by the Strategic Director Corporate Resources and Transformation (Section 151 Officer) and Assistant Director - Transformation.
12. Assessment against other public sector strategies was undertaken.
13. Internal consultation with our Senior Leadership Team (SLT) contributed to the strategy content.
14. Internal consultation with the Executive Management Team (EMT) contributed to the strategy content.
15. The strategy was considered and supported by the Resources and Transformation Overview and Scrutiny Panel in March 2025.

Financial and resource implications

16. The annual ICT budget and Transformation business case will be funding the activities of this strategy. Transformation for example refers to the digital transformation projects and associated resources.
17. No additional resources are being requested at this time beyond what was included in the original transformation business case. A point in time review of skills and resource needs was completed in February 2025 with confidence in the approach and roles to be recruited. Future resource needs will be agile and proportionate.
18. All proposed resources are still required. Operational and Delivery activities continue to progress with resources being diverted to the highest priorities and a realistic and proportionate approach to timelines, quality and task completion.

Legal implications

19. None arising directly from this report. Applicable digital strategy activities will be appropriately assessed and taken under advisement of the Council's Legal team.

Risk assessment

20. Recruitment of the right skills and in a timely manner remain a challenge across the public sector.

21. The ICT service maintains and regularly reviews its service risk register to feed into the corporate principal risk register. Individual ICT projects maintain a risk log detailing specific tactical risks.
22. The technology landscape often changes at an accelerated pace and our strategy will remain agile to evolving internal and external factors such as LGR. We will prioritise, be open to opportunities and strategically review our direction to realign if needed within the guidance of our governance processes.
23. We will need to prioritise delivery of new digital solutions, whether planned or unplanned. The ICT work programme highlights regular strategic review points to align on strategic priorities and the service follows a demand management process.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

24. Recycling of old ICT equipment is embedded within ICT Operational processes.
25. Digitising processes and reducing manual paper prints contribute to a positive climate and environment.
26. Adoption of cloud-based systems reduces the on premise footprint and usage of power and air conditioning as examples.
27. Through the provision of online self-service options, we facilitate reduced travel to our offices and therefore reduced emissions from vehicles.

Equalities implications

28. The digital strategy includes the 'digital skills for all' programme in partnership with the transformation strategy to promote a workplace where the digital training needs of all our staff and members are inclusive and considered.

Crime and disorder implications

29. None arising directly from this report.

Data protection / Information governance implications

30. None arising directly from this report. Changes impacting the collection and use of personal data will be appropriately assessed and taken under advisement of the Council's Information Governance team.

New Forest National Park / Cranborne Chase National Landscape implications

31. None identified

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Digital Strategy 2025-2028 v0.5

Background Papers:

None

Digital Strategy

2025-2028

ICT Services

Document publish date: 11/03/2025

Version number: 0.5

Version	Author	Date	Changes made
0.1	Data Development Delivery Manager ICT Operations Manager	23/10/24	Initial draft. Informal feedback.
0.2	Data Development Delivery Manager ICT Operations Manager	05/11/24	Senior Leadership Team (SLT) feedback.
0.3	Data Development Delivery Manager ICT Operations Manager	20/11/24	Consultation with SLT and ICT management team
0.4	Data Development Delivery Manager ICT Operations Manager	02/12/24	Incorporated feedback from SLT, Executive Management Team (EMT), Resources and Transformation Panel.
0.5	Data Development Delivery Manager ICT Operations Manager	11/03/25	Internal consultation. Approved by EMT.

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Where are we now	4
Strategic Planning and Alignment.....	5
Digital Vision and Principles.....	6
Principle 1 - Customer first, digital by design	7
Principle 2 - Data driven	8
Principle 3 - Digital transformation	9
Principle 4 – Secure by design	10
Principle 5 – Robust and resilient infrastructure.....	11
Principle 6 – Digital skills for all.....	12
Digital Pillars.....	13

Introduction

New Forest District Council (NFDC) has a Corporate Plan for 2024 to 2028 to meet our customer needs, protect finances and embed sustainability.

Our Digital Strategy covering 2025 to 2028 is an internal document intended to guide the organisation through digital decision making and best practice with commitments and actions that support delivery of the more outward facing customer and transformation strategies.

Our strategy will be delivered with 6 digital principles at its core:

- 1. Customer first, digital by design**
- 2. Data driven**
- 3. Digital transformation**
- 4. Secure by design**
- 5. Robust and resilient infrastructure**
- 6. Digital skills for all**

Previous digital strategies have delivered the foundations of our technology stack today including the use of a leading cloud server platform, reliable end user devices with remote access and the beginnings of cloud-based solutions supporting digital business processes.

Our updated strategy places our customers at the centre of the digital experience, and we are ambitious to embrace further the modern technologies of the future to offer a more immediate, personalised and convenient customer experience.

Customers who are unable to navigate our digital solutions will still be able to contact us in a range of different ways, according to their needs, including by phone and face to face.

Our strategy sets out plans to digitally transform, make better use of data and grow our digital skills together through a collaborative approach with staff, members, partners and other public sector organisations.

We will be realistic with our journey and visionary in our ambitions to meet the needs of a digital council.

Where are we now

The ICT service catalogue today has circa 200 digital services supporting the delivery of council services and providing digital tools to our staff.

The council's digital landscape is one where investment has allowed flexible working from any location through a resilient and accessible server infrastructure, staff have access to a variety of devices to best suit their needs and our software portfolio has seen a reduction in legacy applications with greater use of modern cloud platforms.

We continue to make use of platforms such as Microsoft 365 to support day to day working and reduce manual effort through automation. We are mindful there is more to do in this area alongside the introduction of new back-office systems.

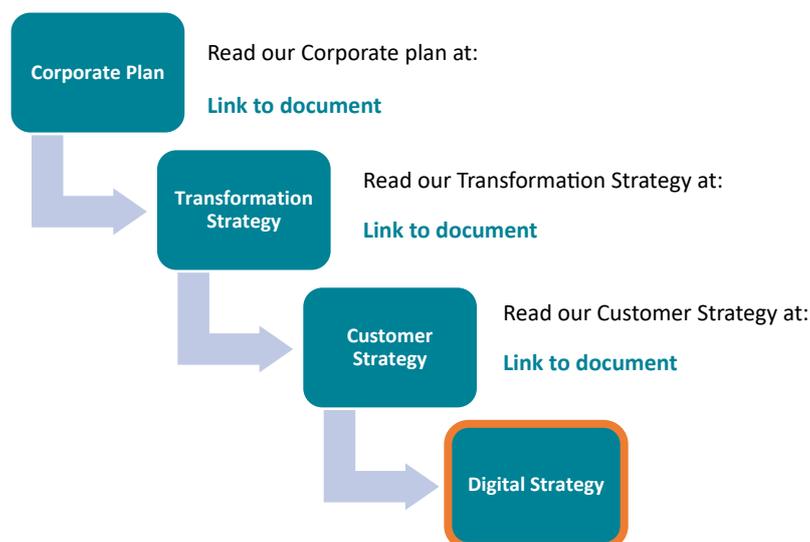
Our ICT Service team skillset has and continues to grow in all areas as we work to keep pace with an ever-changing digital world. This is equally true for our staff and members, where the adoption of digital systems has accelerated, and we must be mindful of this change impact and the need for further support to maximise the use of technology.

We have supportive ICT processes in place for, but not limited to, demand management, technical assurance, change management, project delivery, service delivery and cyber security which continues to be an ever-growing threat with increased and more sophisticated attacks on local government organisations a reality rather than a possibility.

We continue to balance our resources and plan appropriately to support and deliver growth in our digital maturity across the organisation.

With our new strategy in place, we are well placed to embark on a journey of digital transformation whilst fortifying the foundations put in place by previous strategies.

Strategic Planning and Alignment



Our digital strategy aligns with our overarching corporate plan and fits with the 'Customer and digital services' theme within our Transformation strategy.

Our digital strategy links closely to our customer strategy by supporting the growing demand from our customers for access to digital services by:

- Focusing on customer needs and outcomes when redesigning services.
- Supporting customers to self-help through online services.
- Updating systems and processes to keep pace with advancing digital technologies.
- Improving customer experience by integrating data and systems.
- Making it easier for customers to find services and connect at their convenience.

Our digital strategy supports the 'empower' theme within our people strategy including a 'Digital skills for all' programme that aims to support digital learning and development for all staff and members.

Collaboration and enablement are part of our digital strategy to support the delivery of departmental service plans so all our services can realise the benefits that modern technology can bring.

Digital Vision and Principles

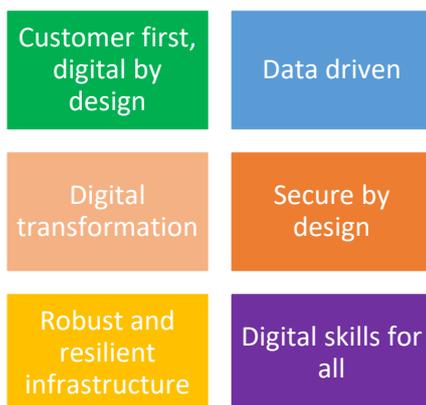
Our 6 digital principles are the foundation of our digital strategy, all contributing to the overall digital vision to be a digital council that embraces the opportunities of technology and modern digital service design to empower our staff with best-in-class digital tools to efficiently deliver an effective 'customer first' experience for its residents.

Our principles will drive how digital technology is adopted and used across the council with clear alignment to our corporate plan and transformation strategy.

Our Digital Vision:

“to be a digital council that embraces the opportunities of technology and modern digital service design to empower our staff with best in class digital tools to efficiently deliver an effective ‘customer first’ experience for its residents”

The 6 Digital Principles



Principle 1 - Customer first, digital by design



Customer needs will be at the heart of the digital services that we design and deliver.

Our digital services will be inclusive to the needs of all our customers including residents, staff, members, partners and local businesses.

Through a 'customer first, digital by design' approach the council can offer services that are accessible twenty-four hours a day, allowing our customers to apply for, pay for, view and report at times that are convenient to them.

By working in partnership with service areas, ICT can be an enabler of digital across the council, helping individual teams realise their digital benefits.

We will:

- design services to improve customer experiences, make better use of technology and reduce manual effort through automation
- enable customers to interact and access services digitally at a time that suits them
- implement a customer relationship management system that keeps customers informed on progress and instils confidence in service delivery
- increase the number of services available online

- ensure customers will still be able to contact us in a range of different ways alongside digital, according to their needs, including by phone and face to face.
- be a strategic enabler for services across the council to enable them to realise their digital goals through collaborative and two-way partnership working
- build a 'Customer First, Digital by Design' mindset and shared understanding in the council.



How will this be measured:

- Resident satisfaction with Council services
- effectiveness of collaboration between ICT and service areas identified through regular feedback and senior leadership participation
- reduction in use of paper to digital methods for high transactions
- increase in online payment options for high transactions
- increase online service and self-service options for high customer contact and key transactions

"Customer needs will be at the heart of the digital services that we deliver using full end to end digital process models."

Principle 2 - Data driven



All services will proactively use data to inform decision making and report performance.

The council securely stores various datasets to support the services it delivers. Typically, data is based on a person, a place or a thing.

Through a council wide Data Framework that incorporates the best practice of Master Data Management (MDM), data can be extracted, transformed, stored and made available to those who need it and are permitted to access it.

We will hold a central and accurate record relating to each of our customers and assets which can be relied on for informed decision making.

With accurate data, council staff will be able to see a '360 view' of our customers and assets providing an integrated and consolidated view of data from multiple systems.

The introduction of a Digital Data Platform will provide the technical foundations for storing data held by the council. The platform will store the council's data securely, will provide access to those who need it and facilitate visually rich reports and dashboards for analysis and business intelligence.

As the council's data maturity position evolves, it will describe 'What

happened', diagnose 'Why it happened' and in time predict 'How and When we can make it happen'.



We will:

- deliver a Data Framework to be adopted across the council that outlines our approach to data including policies, processes and systems
- deliver a Digital Data Platform based on modern technology for the secure storage of council data and to act as a data warehouse
- make use of digital tools such as Power BI to visualise, analyse and report on data
- develop the skills of our staff to use data in the most effective way

How will this be measured:

- adoption of a council wide Data Framework
- real world examples of where data analysis has helped inform and improve service delivery
- the number of datasets available online

“The Data Framework and Digital Data Platform will ensure our data is Manageable, Accurate, Searchable and Compliant”

Principle 3 - Digital transformation



Digital Transformation will introduce positive change through the design of modern and innovative digital services.

Digital Transformation (DT) will create new or modify existing business processes, culture, and deliver exceptional customer experiences.

The ICT work programme will deliver digital change through various projects that support our wider Transformation programme and put our customers at the forefront of service design.

Supportive governance and best practice project delivery including detailed planning, risk management, financial management and resource planning will look to mitigate risks of not delivering on time and on budget.

Our technical enterprise architecture will bring together different technologies such as cloud computing, artificial intelligence, data analytics, and automation to standardise and apply common design patterns to increase efficiency and release capacity across the council.

“Digital Transformation will deliver modern digital technologies, automate manual processes and enhance our digital culture”

We will:

- standardise and apply common design patterns and platforms across the council to release capacity and deliver efficiency benefits
- maximise the use of new technology and keep our software up to date
- maximise the use of M365 technology
- explore the safe, compliant and ethical use of AI
- explore the use of low code platforms and the benefits of developing in house solutions alongside ‘off the shelf’ products
- build services that are device agnostic, working on all laptop and mobile devices
- enable digital goals to be met through service led design whilst maximising the benefits and expertise of the central ICT team
- benchmark against industry best practice and other local government organisations

How will this be measured:

- percentage of annual ICT work programme delivered on time and on budget
- benefit realisation from ICT investment
- resident satisfaction score with the quality of NFDC digital services
- staff satisfaction score with NFDC ICT services

Principle 4 – Secure by design



Digital services will be secure by design to protect the council's data, systems, people and residents.

All digital services that we offer will be secure by design. This prioritises security from the outset of product design and throughout its lifecycle.

The council will need to take a holistic approach to cyber security prioritising it as a core business requirement rather than a technical feature.

The management of cyber security risk is an organisational wide responsibility, not limited to the ICT service. ICT will provide expert technical advice for the organisation to mitigate or accept.

Security for projects within the ICT work programme will be technically assured throughout its lifecycle and sustained through its transition into live service.

There are obligations that the council must meet in relation to cyber security and information security as well as standards that the council will commit to maintaining. These obligations and standards should be met with a minimal impact on delivering good quality services.

We will:

- design services in line with security best practice ensuring that the council maintains compliance to Public Services Network Code of Connection and DWP Memorandum of Understanding
- affirm the council meets industry standards for security through recognised accreditations like Cyber Essentials
- follow the corporate approach to risk management and align with its appetite to risk
- ensure the council has a robust and fit for purpose cyber security policy and staff awareness plan
- undertake a proactive approach to cyber security event prevention and response management

How will this be measured:

- minimised impact from security incidents
- accreditations and compliance gained year on year
- less vulnerabilities being captured within the internal and external scans
- 100% of staff undertaking the mandatory security and information governance policy training

“The council will need to take a holistic approach to cybersecurity prioritising it as a core business requirement”

Principle 5 – Robust and resilient infrastructure



Digital services will be underpinned by robust and resilient infrastructure.

Delivery of all services is increasingly reliant on ICT systems and connectivity therefore it is essential that the underpinning infrastructure is robust and resilient but also flexible and agile to meet changing business requirements, technology advancements and the ever-changing landscape of cyber security threats.

The technical (servers, networks, end-user devices) and non-technical (operating model, policies, licencing, training, roles & responsibilities) infrastructure must become flexible and responsive to meet the accelerating pace of technology changes being embraced by the council.

The council already makes use of Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) and Platform as a Service (PaaS) via the Microsoft Azure stack, reducing our on-premise server footprint and maximising the benefits of a globally recognised platform.

Service areas will maintain their own business continuity plans to invoke in the event of a disaster affecting digital services.

We will:

- provide secure, robust and reliable systems and support that underpin service delivery
- ensure there are robust ICT disaster recovery and ICT business continuity plans in place for ICT systems
- ensure staff and members have the right end user device for their role
- be a 'cloud first' council, making use of Software as a Service (SaaS), Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) and Platform as a Service (PaaS) platforms where appropriate

How will this be measured:

- the percentage of unscheduled downtime for critical systems will be less than 5%
- regular testing of the disaster recovery plan to ensure its fit for purpose
- reduction in hardware-based incident tickets

“The core foundations of our digital services will be robust and resilient to ensure we are working in the right place, at the right time and with the right device.”

Principle 6 – Digital skills for all



Staff will be supported through learning and development in digital skills to safely benefit from and contribute to the councils digital services.

Through our 'Customer First, Digital by Design' principle, we will be introducing new digital technology for staff, members and residents to make use of.

We know that our residents want to transact digitally with us and have access to services at a time that is convenient to them so the need to keep pace with the ever-changing technology landscape is important to maximise the use of technology and ensure we are realising the benefits that digital business processes can bring.

Cyber threats continue to evolve in the digital age so equipping our staff with the right skills to use technology safely and ensure our data is secure is fundamental.

We must be mindful that our staff have varying levels of digital skills so investment in skills development, training and career progression opportunities will help ensure an appropriately skilled, resilient and positive wellbeing workforce.

We will:

- ensure ICT staff have learning and development objectives that align to the current and future technology landscape
- explore Digital Skills training for all council staff and members
- embed training for staff as part of digital projects to ensure appropriate skill levels at the point of service transition

“Digital Skills for All will be inclusive and mindful of the specific digital learning needs of all staff”

“Digital Skills for All will support our staff through learning and development to safely benefit, effectively contribute to and access the councils’ digital services”

How will this be measured:

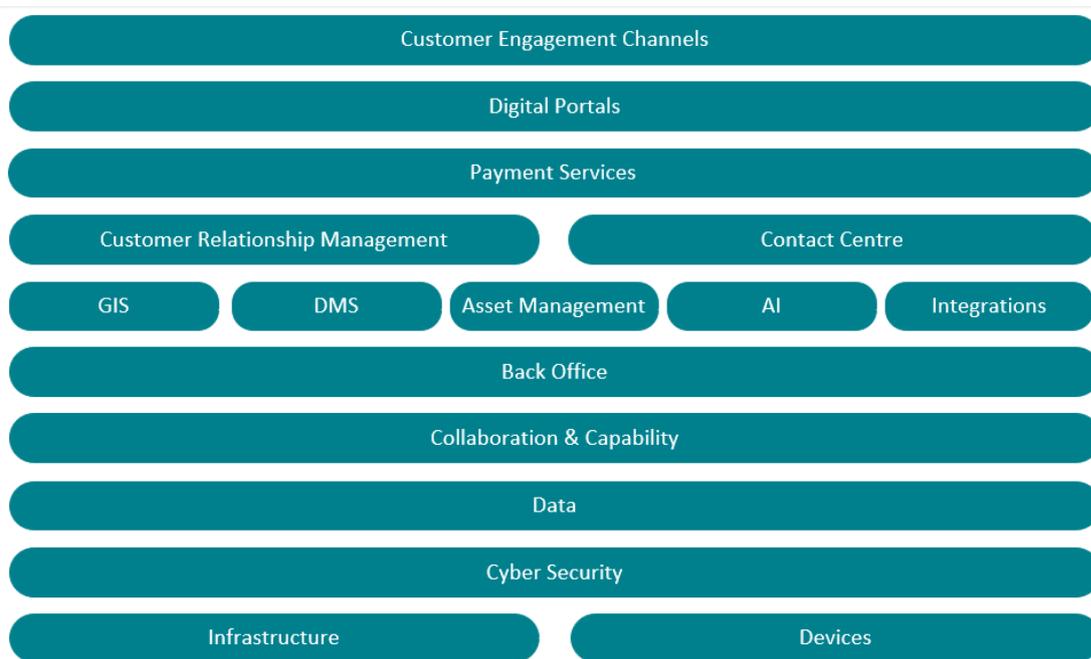
- digital skills maturity assessment of staff before and after the 'Digital Skills for All' programme
- increased efficiency in services through the more efficient use of technology demonstrated by real work examples
- Staff satisfaction score with NFDC ICT services

Digital Pillars

The development of customer first, digital by design services will be facilitated through the provision, operation and enhancement of our digital pillars.

These digital pillars will comprise of many technologies and systems brought together in a consistent and integrated suite of products and services.

The digital pillars will facilitate our enterprise architecture, where our approach is to reuse and maximise value of technology across all council services, providing a consistent customer experience with simplified and automated processes.



“The Digital Pillars will align to and support our organisational design principles with an holistic systems thinking approach and corporate enterprise architecture design”

“The Digital Pillars are a suite of integrated digital products and services providing the technical foundations for our council services.”

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Cabinet – 2 April 2025

Corporate Plan: Key Performance Data for Quarters 1,2 and 3 2024-25

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	Corporate Plan Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are presented for quarters 1,2 and 3 covering April 2024 to December 2024.
Recommendation(s)	To approve the Corporate Plan dashboards.
Reasons for recommendation(s)	These Key Performance Indicators are integral to our Corporate Plan 2024-2028. Reporting and accountability for the commitments set out in the plan are described in our Performance Management Framework.
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Jill Cleary, Leader
Strategic Director(s)	Alan Bethune, Strategic Director Corporate Resources S151 and Transformation
Officer Contact	Saqib Yasin Performance and Insight Manager 023 8028 5495 Email address: saqib.yasin@nfdc.gov.uk

Introduction

1. This report presents our corporate plan dashboards for the three quarters of 2024-25 for review and approval.

Background

2. Our Corporate Plan 2024-2028 was approved at Cabinet in April 2024. This was followed by the approval at Cabinet of our Performance Management Framework in August 2024. This laid out our reporting and monitoring arrangements for the corporate plan

and that each dashboard be presented to Cabinet for final sign-off and approval.

3. Our Executive Management Team (EMT) were asked to consider the list of Key Performance Indicators and associated targets. This work was concluded at EMT on the 10th October 2024. At that meeting, the quarterly dashboards of approved measures and targets could then be fed into the reporting cycle as laid out in our Performance Management Framework.
4. As part of this reporting cycle, our dashboards have previously been circulated to our Leadership team, EMT and all panels. Each panel has focussed attention to the measures under their remit.
5. The three dashboards containing KPI data where available is now presented to Cabinet for approval.
6. The following should be read in conjunction with the dashboards referenced in the appendices.

Layout of the dashboard.

7. There are 48 KPIs in total presented in the dashboard. Each is organised by the associated panel and Portfolio Holder. They are then organised by Corporate Plan theme and priority.

Data metadata is shown as follows:

- Desired direction of travel – indicates whether good performance is typified by an increasing or decreasing value
- Return format – shows the unit of the value being reported
- Frequency – shows how often the KPI is to be reported
- Target – shows the desired value
- This period – shows the value for the given reporting period
- RAG status is as per our Performance Management Framework
 - Green, on target or above target
 - Amber, up to 10% below target
 - Red, over 10% below target

Feedback from previous panels

8. The layout of the dashboards has been upgraded as per recommendations from panels. The dashboard is presented in colour and it is recommended that it is best viewed on an electronic device. The dashboard can then be viewed and zoomed in as appropriate.
9. Panels asked that it be clearer which panels the KPIs relate to. The dashboard now has a header for each panel with the KPIs listed below, further organised by Corporate Plan priority.
10. Changes have been applied to the layout for quarter 1 and quarter 2 with all 3 dashboards presented to Cabinet being in the same updated style.
11. The rearrangement of the dashboard has enabled the presentation to fit the page in a clearer format and make them easier to read.

Quarter 1

12. Data is presented for 36 of the KPIs, including some annual figures. Where possible, a baseline position is given. This provides a value as we step into the new reporting year (from April 2024) and gives numerical context to any KPIs reported at the start of the reporting year.

Q1 data covers April 2024 to the end of June 2024

Highlights

ID	Observation
Housing and Communities	
1	Homelessness duty cases successfully prevented continues good form from the baseline position.
2	This control is also reflected in the number of households in external emergency accommodation being low.
3	Number of families with children under 16 in external emergency shared accommodation over 6 weeks. Small numbers mean this is amber in numerical terms. Some staffing availability has impacted on this result.
8	Education and awareness sessions are underway in relation to serious crime, focussing on weapons control.

10	Thirteen cultural events were supported by NFDC against our target of six.
13	Our tenant satisfaction measure reports well with an 81% overall satisfaction level.
Place and Sustainability	
16-19	All our planning measures performed well. Although major and minor applications determined in time are amber, our local targets are set much higher than the government prescribed targets.
20	The total outstanding net dwelling supply is forecast to fall short of its target. Remedial actions are planned as per the Housing Delivery Action Plan.
24	It is thought at least in part, the significant increase in household waste sent for recycling is due to the move to wheeled bins for garden waste. Seasonal variations will likely impact this over the next two quarters.
27	Cooler weather over spring and summer meant lower visitor numbers utilising our water-filling stations.
28	The conversion from commercial to residential countered the development of industrial / employment land developed.
Resources and Transformation	
37	22 vacancies were filled first time. This is well above our target for this measure.
39	Where staff are unwell, appropriate notifications are sent to managers for action, in line with our agreed policy.
43 and 44	Council tax and non-domestic rate collection is on target.
46	99% of ICT incidents were resolved within the service level agreement.
47	The ICT annual work programme is delivering 100% on time and on budget
48	There was no downtime for our critical ICT systems.

Quarter 2

13. Data is presented for 27 of the KPIs. In quarter 2, we are able to reflect on the quarter 1 position.

Q2 data covers July 2024 to the end of September 2024

Highlights

ID	Observation
Housing and Communities	
1	Homelessness duty cases successfully prevented has dipped from a strong starting position in Q1. Advice and practical support continues to be offered while solutions are being sought by the team.
2	Households in external emergency accommodation has accordingly increased from 44 to 59 (with a target of below 50).
3	Number of families with children under 16 in external emergency shared accommodation over 6 weeks. This is now on target from an amber-rated position last quarter.
4	The number of Appletree Careline services did peak at just over 4000 services at the start of the period but fell later.
7	CCTV – a number of new cameras have been deployed and this is reflected in our spend.
10	Six further cultural events were supported by NFDC in the last quarter.
15	There are very high compliance rates for our five safety and compliance management, Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs).
Place and Sustainability	
16-19	Performance for our planning measures continue to perform well, however major applications determined in time is below target. Our locally set target of 85% is 25 percentage points above the government prescribed target of 60%.

	2 of our 15 appeals were allowed, 13 being dismissed. These small numbers give large variances (against target).
22	Households using our chargeable garden waste service performs well to our (cumulative) targets.
25	Fly-tipping remains green-rated.
27	Cooler weather over spring and summer meant lower visitor numbers utilising our water-filling stations. This remains amber in that it is lower than our target, albeit by 4.5%.
Resources and Transformation	
37	45 vacancies were filled first time, and this continues above target.
39	Employee absence remains a challenge, being reported red-rated over the first two quarters this year. There has been a drop in short term absences but an increase in long term absence. HR have capacity to support managers to resolve.
41 and 42	Our budget position remains strong.
43 and 44	Council tax and non-domestic rate collections are on target.
46	98% of ICT incidents were resolved within the service level agreement.

Quarter 3

14. Data is presented for 27 of the KPIs. In quarter 3, we are able to reflect on the quarter 2 position.

Q3 data covers October 2024 to the end of December 2024

Highlights

ID	Observation
Housing and Communities	
1	<p>Homelessness duty cases successfully prevented dipped from a strong starting position in Q1 to red in Q2. This is now amber although a much improving picture.</p> <p>The private rental offering presents challenges for the service however, we continue to work with landlords and agents to get the right outcomes for our residents in the district – preventing homelessness and reducing the number of families in emergency accommodation.</p>
2	<p>That improving picture has seen Households in external emergency accommodation shift from red last quarter to green in Q3.</p> <p>This is against the backdrop of families with complex needs and the affordability of private rented accommodation.</p>
3	<p>Number of families with children under 16 in external emergency shared accommodation over 6 weeks.</p> <p>This is the second quarter this measure has remained green which represents good ongoing performance when factoring in the family need to maintain proximity to school/education, doctor or health facilities, family support networks, employment factors or other complex needs.</p>
4	<p>The number of Appletree Careline services to customers. Although amber-rated, this represents a further 156 services. The reported 3 933 Appletree services is 3.8% below our targets which were revised in October 2024.</p>
7	<p>Investment in CCTV system. The cumulative spend commitment is above target. New locations across Holbury, Bransgore and Fordingbridge have been agreed. Additional locations have been secured in Fawley, Gangwarily and Ashley. 17 cameras have come online with 10 further planned in January 2025.</p>
8	<p>Number of education and awareness sessions in relation to serious crime.</p> <p>A further 47 sessions have been delivered to 289 attendees.</p>

9	<p>Number of positive interventions in response to Public Spaces Protection Orders (1 and 2).</p> <p>We continue to work with partners in relation to Public Spaces Protection Orders. A much-reduced number of interventions, as expected due to seasonal variances and no fixed penalty notices were issued.</p>
10	22 Cultural events and activities were supported by New Forest District Council thus far on this cumulative measure.
15	Our five safety and compliance management measures continue to perform very well.
Place and Sustainability	
16-19	<p>Performance for our planning measures continue to perform well. Major applications determined in time is ever so slightly below target. Our locally set target of 85% is 25 percentage points above the government prescribed target of 60%.</p> <p>3 of 5 planning appeals were allowed. Small numbers give large variances (against target). This is against the context of 195 planning decisions made over the same period.</p>
22	Households using our chargeable garden waste service performs well to our (cumulative) targets.
24	<p>Percentage of household waste sent for recycling.</p> <p>There is a data lag and so Q3 is not yet available. Q2 data has been received and is above target.</p>
25	Fly-tipping remains green-rated. This measure is presented as per 1000 of the population with the actual number of fly-tipping incidents also provided in the narrative (502).
Resources and Transformation	
37	<p>Percentage of vacancies filled first time.</p> <p>We have recalculated this measure in line with the definition and rationale that was set as part of the corporate plan.</p> <p>This was previously counting recruitment campaigns, many of which were still open at the time of reporting. This was negatively affecting results where a recruitment decision had</p>

	<p>not yet been made. The KPI has been revised and takes into account the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of appointments made in the reporting period. • Of those appointment made, the percentage that were appointed to in the first round of recruitment. <p>Performance is above target this quarter, as are revised figures for quarters 1 and 2.</p> <p>This revision was approved at the Executive Management Team meeting in February 2025.</p>
39	<p>Average number of days sickness absence per employee.</p> <p>Although still red-rated, this has improved from the position last quarter. Every step is taken to be satisfied that sickness absence is genuine, that sickness is reducing and that we are managing sickness effectively.</p> <p>HR colleagues work closely with managers to apply our policies effectively and seek resolution to any sickness absence.</p>
41 and 42	<p>Council budget and Housing Revenue account – although preliminary figures, our budget position remains strong.</p>
43	<p>Council tax collection. This is amber with some holiday lets being transferred from business rates to council tax following Valuation Office Agency determinations. These bills have only recently been set with some residents disputing the decision. In other cases, some collections have been spread to March and so we expect collection to be on target at year-end.</p>
44	<p>Non-domestic rates collection is above target.</p>
45	<p>Benefits realisation from ICT investment is performing well with residual work for the security module of the learning management system expected to be achieved in quarter 4.</p>
47	<p>93% of annual ICT work programme has been delivered on time and within budget. The direct debit delivery was re-profiled to enable further transition work with services.</p>

46 and 48	97% of ICT incidents were resolved within the SLA and there was only 0.16% of unscheduled down-time for critical systems.
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Corporate plan priorities

15. The dashboard presents the KPIs ordered by our new corporate plan priorities.

Options appraisal

16. The KPI list 2024-2028 has been developed following extensive work and consideration of alternative KPIs and targets. This work was completed in conjunction with the development of the Corporate Plan 2024-2028.

Consultation undertaken

17. The performance team have worked closely with data owners, responsible service managers and Strategic Directors to form the KPI list 2024 / 28. We have sought to identify KPIs which align with corporate plan objectives. Consideration was given to setting a baseline and reviewing benchmarking data (where applicable) for the setting of SMART targets.

Financial and resource implications

18. There are no financial or resource implications arising from this report.

Legal implications

19. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Risk assessment

20. There are no new risks arising from this report. The nature of KPI reporting means performance is scrutinised at a service level as data becomes available and any associated risks and mitigation are put in place and reported in the KPI narrative as appropriate.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

21. There are no environmental / climate and nature implications arising from this report.

Equalities implications

22. There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

Crime and disorder implications

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

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

24. There are no data protection / information governance / ICT implications arising from this report.

New Forest National Park implications

25. Visibility of our measures promotes good outcomes across the land within the National Park area. Measures within our direct control furthers the interests of the National Park/National Landscape. These include making appropriate planning decisions, dwelling supply, reducing homelessness, managing interventions where there are breaches of the Public Spaces Protection Orders, promoting recycling, garden waste removal, provision of water-filling stations and taking action on fly-tipping incidents.

Conclusion

26. Review of our key performance indicators ultimately provides Cabinet with a sense check of progress against our corporate plan commitments. Passing the scorecard through the levels of governance outlined in our Performance Management Framework promotes accountability. We look forward to bringing back quarter 4, leading to our end of year performance report.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Q1 Corporate Plan dashboard

Appendix 2 – Q2 Corporate Plan dashboard

Appendix 3 – Q3 Corporate Plan dashboard

Background Papers:

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Corporate performance dashboard Q1 - April to June 2024

Housing and Communities

Corporate plan priority: Helping those in our community with the greatest need

Corporate plan theme: People
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Steve Davies (KPI no.1-3), Cllr Dan Poole (KPI no.4)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Housing and communities

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Baseline	Q1 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
1	Percentage of homelessness duty cases successfully prevented	Up	%	Q	50%	>50%	52%	Green	-
2	Number of households in external emergency accommodation	Down	Num	Q	50	<50	44	Green	-
3	Number of families with children under 16 in external emergency shared accommodation over 6 weeks	Down	Num	Q	7	<7	12	Yellow	The main reason for this is finding suitable temporary accommodation (TA) in locations where families need to live. The team continue to work hard to find accommodation to move families to, searching our own TA stock initially. Performance has been impacted by staff availability due to the time of year and annual leave.
4	Number of Appletree careline services provided to customers	Up	Num	Q	3,942	3,991	3,974	Yellow	Seventeen more services would bring this measure to target. It should be noted this represents less than half a percentage point below target.

163

Corporate plan priority: Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives

Corporate plan theme: People
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Dan Poole (KPI no.5-10)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Housing and communities

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Baseline	Q1 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
5	Resident perception that their quality of life is affected by the fear of crime	Down	%	Every 2 years	24.50%	N/A	N/A		Data not available until completion of next resident survey.
6	Resident perception that they feel safe when outside in their local area	Up	%	Every 2 years	85%	N/A	N/A		Data not available until completion of next resident survey.
7	Investment in and rollout of public space CCTV system	Up	£	Q	£0	£10,000	£0		The CCTV expansion report was reviewed at the Housing and Community Scrutiny panel on July 17th, receiving full support prior to full cabinet in August. Once agreed at Cabinet the programme of installation can commence.
8	Number of education and awareness sessions in relation to serious crime	Neutral	Num	Q	0	Monitor	68		Sessions delivered on Weapons prevention between April 1st and June 30th. Preparation work has commenced on the roll out of a district wide, weapons intervention programme facilitated by the Community Safety Team. Following engagement with the Head Teachers network and youth engagement services, we are receiving nominations for training in the autumn of 2024.
9	Number of positive interventions in response to Public Spaces Protection Orders (1 and 2)	Neutral	Num	Q	953	Monitor	429		In the first quarter, there were 429 interventions with the public relating to PSPO 1 and 2. 313 engagements related to animals and 116 related to fire. One fixed penalty notice was issued.
10	Number of cultural events and activities supported by New Forest District Council	Up	Num	Q	0	6	13		8 projects funded by NFDC, 3 projects managed and lead by NFDC. Projects include managing Folio, and supporting Culture in Common, funding projects such as the BBC Gardeners World, Elevate creative work experience programme, Future First youth climate play production, creative drop-ins at the Totton creative hub and a new LGBTQ+ artist hub.

Corporate plan priority: Meeting housing needs

Corporate plan theme: People
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Steve Davies (KPI no.11-15)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Housing and communities

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Baseline	Q1 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
11	Number of affordable social housing homes delivered by NFDC and its partners	On forecast	Num	Annually	133	N/A	0	-	
12	Number of affordable council homes delivered against the 2026 target set	On forecast	Num	Annually	339	N/A	4	-	4 properties were acquired through NFDC's Buy Back programme in Q1.
13	Percentage score for overall tenant satisfaction with the Council as a landlord, as determined in the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)	Up	%	Annually	81.1%	N/A	81%	Green	This 81% is the final TSM 'overall satisfaction' for the 2023/24 reporting period. There are no new or updated figures to report on for Q1 2024/25.
14	Number of council homes achieving Energy Performance Certification band C	Up	Num	Annually	2,546	N/A	2,546	Green	Reported annually, figure unchanged for this period.
15	Percentage scores for the 5 safety and compliance management Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)	Up	%	Q	96.08%	96.80%	96.85%	Green	-

165

Place and Sustainability

Corporate plan priority: Shaping our place now and for future generations

Corporate plan theme: Place
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Derek Tipp (KPI no.16-20)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Place and sustainability

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Baseline	Q1 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
16	Percentage of major planning applications determined in time	Up	%	Q	86%	85%	80%	Amber	Although this is flagged as amber, it should be noted the local target is set at 25% above the Government prescribed target of 60%
17	Percentage of minor planning applications determined in time	Up	%	Q	94%	95%	90%	Amber	The local target is set at 25% above the Government prescribed target of 70%
18	Percentage of other planning applications determined in time	Up	%	Q	97%	95%	96%	Green	The local target is set at 15% above the Government prescribed target of 80%
19	Percentage of allowed planning appeals	Down	%	Q	25%	<10%	0%	Green	No planning appeals were allowed
20	The total outstanding net dwelling supply as set out in our development plan	Down	Num	Annually	8,443	N/A	6,285	Red	Total net completions 2016/17 to 2023/24: 2,179 dwellings which is shortfall of 521 against Local Plan Housing Delivery target to date (2,700). Total outstanding housing supply needed to meet Local Plan Housing Delivery target (10,420) by 2036 is 8,241. Currently the housing supply which is considered achievable by 2036 is 6,285 meaning a likely shortfall of 1,956. The 2024 Housing Delivery Action Plan explains in detail and sets out actions we intend to take to encourage housing delivery.

Corporate plan priority: Protecting our climate, coast, and natural world

Corporate plan theme: Place
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Geoffrey Blunden (KPI no.21-24)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Place and sustainability

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Baseline	Q1 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
21	Kilogrammes of non-recycled waste produced per household	Down	Kg	Q	475.18kg	114	109.2kg	Amber	-
22	Households using our chargeable garden waste service as a percentage of total properties in NFDC	Up	%	Q	26%	25%	27%	Green	-
23	Emissions from the council's vehicle fleet	Down	Tonnes of CO2e	Annually	1,696	Monitor	N/A	Grey	-
24	Percentage of household waste sent for recycling	Up	%	Q	33.90%	38.50%	40.64%	Green	The increase in recycling rate, is mostly due to The increased tonnages of garden waste collected with The move to wheeled bins. This will be influenced by seasonal garden growth so may not continue to remain This high.

Corporate plan priority: Caring for our facilities, neighbourhoods and open spaces in a modern and responsive way

Corporate plan theme: Place
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Geoffrey Blunden (KPI no.25-27)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Place and sustainability

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Baseline	Q1 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
25	Number of fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 people	Down	Num	Q	13.94	<13.94	4.4	Green	The reported figure is based on the total of 775 fly-tipping incidents occurring in Q1, (divided by 175,942 people (2022 media population estimate; source: Nomis) * 1,000 = number of incidents per 1,000 people).
26	Percentage customer satisfaction with the appearance of their local area	Up	%	Every 2 years	93%	N/A	N/A	Grey	-
27	Equivalent number of 0.5 litre bottles filled at water-filling stations – waste averted	Up	Num	Q	22,880	9,200	8,370	Amber	Cooler weather than usual throughout spring and early summer, visitor numbers lower than usual. 3 water meters not registering.

Corporate plan priority: Maximising the benefits of inclusive economic growth and investment

Corporate plan theme: Prosperity
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Derek Tipp (KPI no.28), Cllr Jeremy Heron (KPI no.29)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Place and sustainability

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Baseline	Q1 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
28	Squared metres of industrial/employment land developed.	Up	Sqm	Annually	21,209 sqm	N/A	-5sqm		Low levels of gross completions (only 678sqm) and former office changed to residential (losing 683sqm) resulting in a net loss in employment floorspace of -5sqm in 2023/24. Employment completions are difficult to predict as they can involve the building/demolition of large amounts of floorspace in a single building and can often rely on the release of single large employment sites which leads to a surge in development when they become available.
29	Level (£) of retained business rates (at source)	Up	£	Annually	£0	N/A	£0		-

Corporate plan priority: Supporting our high-quality business base and economic centres to thrive and grow

Corporate plan theme: Prosperity
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Geoffrey Blunden (KPI no. 30), Cllr Derek Tipp (KPI no.31)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Place and sustainability

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Baseline	Q1 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
30	Resident perception of our highstreets and town centres	Up	%	Every 2 years	-	N/A	N/A		-
31	Vacancies of retail premises within town/local centres	Down	%	Annually	10%	N/A	N/A		-

Corporate plan priority: Championing skills and access to job opportunities

Corporate plan theme: Prosperity
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Derek Tipp (KPI no.32-33)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Place and sustainability

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Baseline	Q1 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
32	Employment rate percentage of working age adults (aged 16-64)	Up	%	Annually	80%	N/A	82.30%		Last updated by ONS: 14 May 2024
33	Proportion (in percentage terms) of employee jobs with hourly pay below the living wage	Down	%	Annually	14.20%	N/A	N/A		2024 figures to be released early 2025

Resources and Transformation

Corporate plan priority: Putting customers at the heart

Corporate plan theme: Future New Forest
 Portfolio holder(s): Leader Cllr Jill Cleary (KPI no. 34), Cllr Jeremy Heron (KPI no.35-36)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Resources and transformation

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Baseline	Q1 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
34	Resident satisfaction with Council services	Up	%	Every 2 years	62%	N/A	N/A	-	
35	Staff satisfaction score with NFDC ICT services	Maintain	Num	Annually	-	N/A	N/A	-	
36	Resident satisfaction score with the quality of NFDC digital services	Maintain	Num	Annually	-	N/A	N/A	-	

Corporate plan priority: Being an employer of choice

Corporate plan theme: Future New Forest
 Portfolio holder(s): Leader Cllr Jill Cleary (KPI no. 37-40)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Resources and transformation

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Baseline	Q1 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
37	Percentage of vacancies filled first time	Up	%	Q	73.50%	80%	88.00%		22 vacancies were filled first time.
38	Percentage staff turnover	Down	%	Annually	13.48%	N/A	N/A	-	
39	Average number of days sickness absence per employee	Down	Num	Q	9.88	8	9.27		There are ongoing instances of sickness and our absence management policy requires these are followed up appropriately by managers. Automated notifications are sent to managers to support the application of the policy.
40	Number of council apprenticeships	Up	Num	Annually	12	N/A	N/A	-	

Corporate plan priority: Being financially responsible

Corporate plan theme: Future New Forest
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Jeremy Heron (KPI no. 41-44)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Resources and transformation

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Baseline	Q1 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
41	Percentage variance to Council budget +/- (General fund budget variations)	Up or Down	%	Q	-8.10%	+/- 3%	0%		No budget variation report until Q2
42	Percentage variance to Housing Revenue budget +/- (HRA budget variations)	Up or Down	%	Q	3.89%	+/- 3%	0%		No budget variation report until Q2
43	Percentage of Council Tax collected in year	Up	%	Q	98.65%	29.90%	29.68%		Collection is slightly down when compared to 23/24, this could be due to extending instalments (and last year there was the also the Council Tax Support Fund payments).
44	Percentage of Non-domestic Rates collected in year	Up	%	Q	98.96%	29.60%	29.64%		-

Corporate plan priority: Designing modern and innovative services

Corporate plan theme: Future New Forest
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Jeremy Heron (KPI no. 45-48)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Resources and transformation

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Baseline	Q1 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
45	Benefit realisation from ICT investment	Maintain	%	Every 6 Months	-	N/A	87.50%		-
46	Percentage of ICT incidents resolved within SLA	Up	%	Q	98.80%	95%	99%		-
47	Percentage of annual ICT work programme delivered on time and on budget	Maintain	%	Q	-	70%	100%		-
48	Percentage unscheduled downtime for critical systems	Down	%	Q	-	<5%	0%		-

Corporate performance dashboard Q2 - July to September 2024

Housing and Communities

Corporate plan priority: Helping those in our community with the greatest need

Corporate plan theme: People
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Steve Davies (KPI no.1-3), Cllr Dan Poole (KPI no.4)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Housing and communities

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Previous Period	Q2 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
1	Percentage of homelessness duty cases successfully prevented	Up	%	Q	52.40%	>50%	41%	Red	The Prevention Duty is where we try to prevent people from becoming homeless by either securing their current accommodation or seeking new accommodation for them. Despite the challenges in the private sector rented sector, the team work hard to support clients by providing advice or practical support.
2	Number of households in external emergency accommodation	Down	Num	Q	44	<50	59	Red	The number of people in Emergency Accommodation (EA) fluctuates throughout the year. The reason for the jump in EA usage is due to the number of people being asked to leave family accommodation or private landlords ending tenancies. In these scenarios we try to prevent homelessness by searching for new private accommodation or using our own TA which is an enormous challenge currently as there are not many available in the price range that our clients can afford and our own TA is at capacity.
3	Number of families with children under 16 in external emergency shared accommodation over 6 weeks	Down	Num	Q	12	<7	7	Green	We had a higher number of households with large numbers of children, often with complex needs, requiring accommodation.
4	Number of Appletree careline services provided to customers	Up	Num	Q	3,974	4,040	3,968	Red	Due to the fluctuation in client base and services being delivered changing daily, The highest service by volume was 4004 at the end of July with 3965 at the end of August. In addition to dispersed alarms and services delivered, the service also provides fixed careline monitoring alarms in Housing Extra Care stock to 112 flats which does not form part of this data.

171

Corporate plan priority: Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives

Corporate plan theme: People
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Dan Poole (KPI no.5-10)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Housing and communities

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Previous Period	Q2 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
5	Resident perception that their quality of life is affected by the fear of crime	Down	%	Every 2 years	N/A	N/A	N/A		Data not available until completion of next resident survey.
6	Resident perception that they feel safe when outside in their local area	Up	%	Every 2 years	N/A	N/A	N/A		Data not available until completion of next resident survey.
7	Investment in and rollout of public space CCTV system	Up	£	Q	£0	£20,000	£66,000		Target is cumulative. 66K has been spent on securing 10 x 4g PTZ cameras for rural locations which also includes transmission costs for 2 years. A camera has been installed in Calshot Play park as part of the upgrade to St. Georges Hall providing 24 hour monitoring, live linked to the control room.
8	Number of education and awareness sessions in relation to serious crime	Neutral	Num	Q	68	Monitor	47		Sessions delivered on weapons prevention between 1st July and 30th September 2024 included workshops and assemblies to 130 young people and 47 sessions delivered to 15 individual participants on a 1:1 basis. Lower figure of 47 sessions confirmed and awaiting final number of sessions delivered to 130 people. Final numbers delayed and will be updated at a later date once clarified with partners.
9	Number of positive interventions in response to Public Spaces Protection Orders (1 and 2)	Neutral	Num	Q	429	Monitor	522		Quarterly data is collated by Forestry England and includes data from the National Parks Authority and the Verderers.
10	Number of cultural events and activities supported by New Forest District Council	Up	Num	Q	13	12	19		Target is cumulative. This quarter we have funded the development of Suitcase Stories, a school based theatre project via SPF funding. Aswell as providing funding for improved music production at this years New Forest Pride in Lymington. We have also provided project support to Waterside Arts Festival, Artful Scribe's Play on Words festival in New Milton, and the NFDC Litter Nest project. We have also lead Folio in developing their new project ROAM, as well as continued funding, project support and leadership on multiple projects from Q1.

Corporate plan priority: Meeting housing needs

Corporate plan theme: People
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Steve Davies (KPI no.11-15)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Housing and communities

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Previous Period	Q2 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
11	Number of affordable social housing homes delivered by NFDC and its partners	On forecast	Num	Annually	0	N/A	N/A		Data last reported 2023/24 EOY position to determine a baseline figure.
12	Number of affordable council homes delivered against the 2026 target set	On forecast	Num	Annually	4	N/A	N/A		Data last reported 2024/25 Q1 Corporate Dashboard.
13	Percentage score for overall tenant satisfaction with the Council as a landlord, as determined in the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)	Up	%	Annually	81%	N/A	N/A		Data last reported 2024/25 Q1 Corporate Dashboard.
14	Number of council homes achieving Energy Performance Certification band C	Up	Num	Annually	2,546	N/A	N/A		Data last reported 2024/25 Q1 Corporate Dashboard.
15	Percentage scores for the 5 safety and compliance management Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)	Up	%	Q	96.85%	96.80%	99.27%		High compliance rates for the end of September for all 5 Safety Measures.

173

Place and Sustainability

Corporate plan priority: Shaping our place now and for future generations

Corporate plan theme: Place
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Derek Tipp (KPI no.16-20)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Place and sustainability

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Previous Period	Q2 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
16	Percentage of major planning applications determined in time	Up	%	Q	80%	85%	75%	Amber	Although this is flagged as amber, it should be noted the local target is set at 25% above the Government prescribed target of 60%.
17	Percentage of minor planning applications determined in time	Up	%	Q	90%	95%	95%	Green	The local target is set at 25% above the Government prescribed target of 70%
18	Percentage of other planning applications determined in time	Up	%	Q	96%	95%	97%	Green	The local target is set at 15% above the Government prescribed target of 80%
19	Percentage of allowed planning appeals	Down	%	Q	0%	<10%	13%	Red	2 appeals allowed; 13 appeals dismissed.
20	The total outstanding net dwelling supply as set out in our development plan	Down	Num	Annually	6,285	N/A	N/A	Grey	Data last reported 2024/25 Q1 Corporate Dashboard.

Corporate plan priority: Protecting our climate, coast, and natural world

Corporate plan theme: Place
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Geoffrey Blunden (KPI no.21-24)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Place and sustainability

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Previous Period	Q2 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
21	Kilogrammes of non-recycled waste produced per household	Down	Kg	Q	109.2kg	228kg	220.9kg		Target is cumulative.
22	Households using our chargeable garden waste service as a percentage of total properties in NFDC	Up	%	Q	27%	26%	28%		Target is cumulative.
23	Emissions from the council's vehicle fleet	Down	Tonnes of CO2e	Annually	N/A	Monitor	N/A		Data last reported 2023/24 EOY position to determine a baseline figure.
24	Percentage of household waste sent for recycling	Up	%	Q	40.64%	38.50%	39%		-

Corporate plan priority: Caring for our facilities, neighbourhoods and open spaces in a modern and responsive way

Corporate plan theme: Place
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Geoffrey Blunden (KPI no.25-27)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Place and sustainability

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Previous Period	Q2 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
25	Number of fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 people	Down	Num	Q	4.4	<13.94	3.8		The reported figure is based on the total of 670 fly-tipping incidents occurring in Q2.
26	Percentage customer satisfaction with the appearance of their local area	Up	%	Every 2 years	N/A	N/A	N/A		Data not available until completion of next resident survey.
27	Equivalent number of 0.5 litre bottles filled at water-filling stations – waste averted	Up	Num	Q	8,370	23,000	21,954		Target is cumulative. Cooler weather than usual throughout spring and early summer, visitor numbers lower than usual. 3 water meters not registering.

175

Corporate plan priority: Maximising the benefits of inclusive economic growth and investment

Corporate plan theme: Prosperity
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Derek Tipp (KPI no.28), Cllr Jeremy Heron (KPI no.29)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Place and sustainability

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Previous Period	Q2 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
28	Squared metres of industrial/employment land developed.	Up	Sqm	Annually	-5sqm	N/A	N/A		Data last reported 2024/25 Q1 Corporate Dashboard.
29	Level (£) of retained business rates (at source)	Up	£	Annually	£0	N/A	N/A		Data last reported 2023/24 EOY position to determine a baseline figure.

Corporate plan priority: Supporting our high-quality business base and economic centres to thrive and grow

Corporate plan theme: Prosperity
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Geoffrey Blunden (KPI no. 30), Cllr Derek Tipp (KPI no.31)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Place and sustainability

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Previous Period	Q2 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
30	Resident perception of our highstreets and town centres	Up	%	Every 2 years	N/A	N/A	N/A		Data not available until completion of next resident survey.
31	Vacancies of retail premises within town/local centres	Down	%	Annually	N/A	N/A	N/A		Data last reported 2023/24 EOY position to determine a baseline figure.

Corporate plan priority: Championing skills and access to job opportunities

Corporate plan theme: Prosperity
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Derek Tipp (KPI no.32-33)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Place and sustainability

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Previous Period	Q2 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
32	Employment rate percentage of working age adults (aged 16-64)	Up	%	Annually	82.30%	N/A	N/A		Annual data released November 2024.
33	Proportion (in percentage terms) of employee jobs with hourly pay below the living wage	Down	%	Annually	N/A	N/A	N/A		2024 figures to be released early 2025.

176

Resources and Transformation

Corporate plan priority: Putting customers at the heart

Corporate plan theme: Future New Forest
 Portfolio holder(s): Leader Cllr Jill Cleary (KPI no. 34), Cllr Jeremy Heron (KPI no.35-36)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Resources and transformation

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Previous Period	Q2 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
34	Resident satisfaction with Council services	Up	%	Every 2 years	N/A	N/A	N/A		Data not available until completion of next resident survey.
35	Staff satisfaction score with NFDC ICT services	Maintain	Num	Annually	N/A	N/A	N/A		Plan to work with colleagues to identify best way to capture this metric.
36	Resident satisfaction score with the quality of NFDC digital services	Maintain	Num	Annually	N/A	N/A	N/A		Plan to work with colleagues to identify best way to capture this metric.

Corporate plan priority: Being an employer of choice

Corporate plan theme: Future New Forest
 Portfolio holder(s): Leader Cllr Jill Cleary (KPI no. 37-40)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Resources and transformation

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Previous Period	Q2 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
37	Percentage of vacancies filled first time	Up	%	Q	88%	80%	88.20%		45 vacancies were filled first time.
38	Percentage staff turnover	Down	%	Annually	N/A	N/A	N/A		Data last reported 2023/24 EOY position to determine a baseline figure.
39	Average number of days sickness absence per employee	Down	Num	Q	9.27	8	9.78		Between Q1 and Q2, there has been a decrease in short term absence (4.22 to 4.17), but an increase in long term (5.06 to 5.61) which has subsequently increased total sickness days per FTE. As HR now have more capacity, we are able to work more closely with managers to support them in assisting their team back to work sooner following absences.
40	Number of council apprenticeships	Up	Num	Annually	N/A	N/A	N/A		Data last reported 2023/24 EOY position to determine a baseline figure.

177

Corporate plan priority: Being financially responsible

Corporate plan theme: Future New Forest
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Jeremy Heron (KPI no. 41-44)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Resources and transformation

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Previous Period	Q2 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
41	Percentage variance to Council budget +/- (General fund budget variations)	Up or Down	%	Q	0%	+/- 3%	0%		Indicative figures as at 16 October 2024, final figures will be confirmed as set out in the Financial Monitoring Report taken to Cabinet 6 November 2024.
42	Percentage variance to Housing Revenue budget +/- (HRA budget variations)	Up or Down	%	Q	0%	+/- 3%	0.55%		Indicative figures as at 16 October 2024, final figures will be confirmed as set out in the Financial Monitoring Report taken to Cabinet 6 November 2024.
43	Percentage of Council Tax collected in year	Up	%	Q	29.60%	57.60%	57.40%		Target is cumulative.
44	Percentage of Non-domestic Rates collected in year	Up	%	Q	29.60%	57.90%	57.50%		Target is cumulative.

Corporate plan priority: Designing modern and innovative services

Corporate plan theme: Future New Forest
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Jeremy Heron (KPI no. 45-48)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Resources and transformation

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Previous Period	Q2 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
45	Benefit realisation from ICT investment	Maintain	%	Every 6 Months	87.50%	70%	N/A		Data last reported 2024/25 Q1 Corporate Dashboard.
46	Percentage of ICT incidents resolved within SLA	Up	%	Q	99%	95%	98%		-
47	Percentage of annual ICT work programme delivered on time and on budget	Maintain	%	Q	100%	70%	93.33%		-
48	Percentage unscheduled downtime for critical systems	Down	%	Q	0%	<5%	2.89%		-

Corporate performance dashboard Q3 - October to December 2024

Housing and Communities

Corporate plan priority: Helping those in our community with the greatest need

Corporate plan theme: People
Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Steve Davies (KPI no.1-3), Cllr Dan Poole (KPI no.4)
Overview and scrutiny panel: Housing and communities

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desired DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Previous Period	Q3 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
1	Percentage of homelessness duty cases successfully prevented	Up	%	Q	41%	>50%	48%	Amber	Preventing homelessness remains a key priority. The current private rented sector remains challenging, with several factors affecting renters. Including the limited number of rental properties within the district, changes to landlord circumstances resulting in sale of the property, increasing demands from letting agents, including rent advanced payments and rent guarantors, all creating barriers and difficulties for potential tenants. Despite these challenges in the private sector, we work hard to support clients by providing advice, and practical support.
2	Number of households in external emergency accommodation	Down	Num	Q	59	<50	48	Green	Preventing the need to use emergency accommodation (EA) remains a significant challenge with increasingly larger families often with complex needs and affordability of private sector accommodation.
3	Number of families with children under 16 in external emergency shared accommodation over 6 weeks	Down	Num	Q	7	<7	5	Green	EA for families with children is only used when no other accommodation is available in the location that the family needs. Moving families in to accommodation with no shared facilities remains a priority. We must consider the needs of the family when seeking accommodation including school/education, doctor or health facilities, family support networks, employment factors or other complex needs.
4	Number of Appletree careline services provided to customers	Up	Num	Q	3,968	4,089	3,933	Amber	Although 52 new customers joined careline services in October and November, over the same period we experienced higher monthly averages in cancellations of 59 clients, with a reduction of 118 services. Of these 59 clients, 21 were deceased and 31 moved into full time residential or nursing care placements. This is in line with seasonal expectations i.e flu etc. December in comparison, between cancellations and installations saw a positive uplift of 8 services overall.

Corporate plan priority: Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives

Corporate plan theme: People
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Dan Poole (KPI no.5-10)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Housing and communities

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desire d DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Previo us Period	Q3 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
5	Resident perception that their quality of life is affected by the fear of crime	Down	%	Every 2 years	N/A	N/A	N/A		Data not available until completion of next resident survey.
6	Resident perception that they feel safe when outside in their local area	Up	%	Every 2 years	N/A	N/A	N/A		Data not available until completion of next resident survey.
7	Investment in and rollout of public space CCTV system	Up	£	Q	£66k	£30k	£66k		Target is cumulative. The installation plan over Q3 has enabled a partnership to be developed with a large retail store, allowing siting of cameras on their buildings, simplifying the installation process and reducing costs. This will cover locations including Holbury, Bransgore and Fordingbridge. Additional locations have been secured in Fawley, Gangwarily and Ashley. 17 cameras from the Hardley depot have interlinked with the CCTV control room and it is anticipated a further 10 live monitored cameras will be installed by end of January.
8	Number of education and awareness sessions in relation to serious crime	Neutral	Num	Q	47	Monitor	47		In quarter 3, 47 sessions were delivered to 289 attendees with participant breakdown being 55% male and 45% female.
9	Number of positive interventions in response to Public Spaces Protection Orders (1 and 2)	Neutral	Num	Q	522	Monitor	35		Quarter 3 showed a reduced number of interactions which is anticipated outside of the main holiday season. Of the 35 engagements, 2 related to fire with the remaining 33 relating to petting of animals. No interactions required escalation necessitating the issuing of any fixed penalty notices. Yearly fire data compiled for the Safer New Forest annual strategic assessment on crime and disorder, show incidents of fire have reduced over the past year since the order was approved. Further monitoring will continue to consider all aspects that have contributed to this reduction.
10	Number of cultural events and activities supported by New Forest District Council	Up	Num	Q	19	18	22		Target is cumulative. Grant for new project Suitcase Stories in partnership with Forest Forge. Resource and support shared in supporting HCT take over the Folio network and sector support function. Funding allocated to the development of ROAM arts festival, bid writer funded by NFDC at this stage.

Corporate plan priority: Meeting housing needs

Corporate plan theme: People
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Steve Davies (KPI no.11-15)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Housing and communities

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desire d DOT	Return Format	Freq.	Previo us Period	Q3 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
11	Number of affordable social housing homes delivered by NFDC and its partners	On forecast	Num	Annually	N/A	N/A	N/A		Data last reported 2023/24 EOY position to determine a baseline figure.
12	Number of affordable council homes delivered against the 2026 target set	On forecast	Num	Annually	N/A	N/A	N/A		Data last reported 2024/25 Q1 Corporate Dashboard.
13	Percentage score for overall tenant satisfaction with the Council as a landlord, as determined in the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)	Up	%	Annually	N/A	N/A	N/A		Data last reported 2024/25 Q1 Corporate Dashboard.
14	Number of council homes achieving Energy Performance Certification band C	Up	Num	Annually	N/A	N/A	N/A		Data last reported 2024/25 Q1 Corporate Dashboard.
15	Percentage scores for the 5 safety and compliance management Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)	Up	%	Q	99.27%	96.80%	97.67%		Our five safety and compliance management measures continue to perform very well.

181

Place and Sustainability

Corporate plan priority: Shaping our place now and for future generations

Corporate plan theme: Place
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Derek Tipp (KPI no.16-20)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Place and sustainability

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desire d DOT	Retur n Forma t	Freq.	Previo us Period	Q3 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
16	Percentage of major planning applications determined in time	Up	%	Q	75%	85.0%	83%	Amber	Although this is flagged as amber, it should be noted that local target is set at 25% above the Government prescribed target of 60% and Q3 performance shows an increase of 8% from Q2.
17	Percentage of minor planning applications determined in time	Up	%	Q	95%	95.0%	96%	Green	Improvement on last quarter and above target.
18	Percentage of other planning applications determined in time	Up	%	Q	97%	95.00%	95%	Green	Performance is on target.
19	Percentage of allowed planning appeals	Down	%	Q	13%	<10%	60%	Red	3 appeals allowed, 2 appeals dismissed. Between October and December 2024 there were 195 decisions made, 173 granted and 22 refused.
20	The total outstanding net dwelling supply as set out in our development plan	Down	Num	Annually	N/A	N/A	N/A	Grey	Data last reported 2024/25 Q1 Corporate Dashboard.

182

Corporate plan priority: Protecting our climate, coast, and natural world

Corporate plan theme: Place
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Geoffrey Blunden (KPI no.21-24)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Place and sustainability

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desire d DOT	Retur n Forma t	Freq.	Previo us Period	Q3 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
21	Kilogrammes of non-recycled waste produced per household	Down	Kg	Q	220.9kg	342	N/A		Quarter 3 data will not be available until approx. 2 months after quarter end when returned to us from HCC. Data will be updated at a later date. Quarter 2 data has since become available and is referenced in the 'previous period' column.
22	Households using our chargeable garden waste service as a percentage of total properties in NFDC	Up	%	Q	28%	27%	29%		Target is cumulative.
23	Emissions from the council's vehicle fleet	Down	Tonnes of CO2e	Annually	N/A	Monitor	N/A		Data last reported 2023/24 EOY position to determine a baseline figure.
24	Percentage of household waste sent for recycling	Up	%	Q	39%	38.5%	N/A		Target is cumulative. Quarter 3 data will not be available until approx. 2 months after quarter end when returned to us from HCC. Data will be updated at a later date. Quarter 2 data has since become available and is referenced in the 'previous period' column.

Corporate plan priority: Caring for our facilities, neighbourhoods and open spaces in a modern and responsive way

Corporate plan theme: Place
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Geoffrey Blunden (KPI no.25-27)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Place and sustainability

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desire d DOT	Retur n Forma t	Freq.	Previo us Period	Q3 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
25	Number of fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 people	Down	Num	Q	3.8	<13.94	2.85		The reported figure is based on the total of 502 fly-tipping incidents occurring in Q3. (502/175,942*1000).
26	Percentage customer satisfaction with the appearance of their local area	Up	%	Every 2 years	N/A	N/A	N/A		Data not available until completion of next resident survey.
27	Equivalent number of 0.5 litre bottles filled at water-filling stations – waste averted	Up	Num	Q	21,954	23,000	25,598		Target is cumulative. Q3 figure of 3644 is low due to the short period of operation during this period before units turned off for winter. Units are not operational during winter months and are expected to be switched back on early/mid march 2025.

Corporate plan priority: Maximising the benefits of inclusive economic growth and investment

Corporate plan theme: Prosperity
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Derek Tipp
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Place and sustainability

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desire d DOT	Retur n Forma t	Freq.	Previo us Period	Q3 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
28	Squared metres of industrial/employment land developed.	Up	Sqm	Annually	N/A	N/A	N/A		Data last reported 2024/25 Q1 Corporate Dashboard.
29	Level (£) of retained business rates (at source)	Up	£	Annually	N/A	N/A	N/A		Data last reported 2023/24 EOY position to determine a baseline figure.

Corporate plan priority: Supporting our high-quality business base and economic centres to thrive and grow

Corporate plan theme: Prosperity
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Geoffrey Blunden (KPI no. 30), Cllr Derek Tipp (KPI no.31)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Place and sustainability

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desire d DOT	Retur n Forma t	Freq.	Previo us Period	Q3 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
30	Resident perception of our highstreets and town centres	Up	%	Every 2 years	N/A	N/A	N/A		Data not available until completion of next resident survey.
31	Vacancies of retail premises within town/local centres	Down	%	Annually	N/A	N/A	N/A		Data last reported 2023/24 EOY position to determine a baseline figure.

Corporate plan priority: Championing skills and access to job opportunities

Corporate plan theme: Prosperity
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Derek Tipp (KPI no.32-33)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Place and sustainability

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desire d DOT	Retur n Forma t	Freq.	Previo us Period	Q3 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
32	Employment rate percentage of working age adults (aged 16-64)	Up	%	Annually	N/A	N/A	N/A		Figures for 2024 have not yet been released, and are not expected until May 2025. Latest data is 82.3% (2023 period) according to ONS.
33	Proportion (in percentage terms) of employee jobs with hourly pay below the living wage	Down	%	Annually	13.3% (2023)	Monitor	14.2% (2024)		Provisional 2024 data, according to ONS.

184

Resources and Transformation

Corporate plan priority: Putting customers at the heart

Corporate plan theme: Future New Forest
 Portfolio holder(s): Leader Cllr Jill Cleary (KPI no. 34), Cllr Jeremy Heron (KPI no.35-36)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Resources and transformation

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desire d DOT	Retur n Forma t	Freq.	Previo us Period	Q3 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
34	Resident satisfaction with Council services	Up	%	Every 2 years	N/A	N/A	N/A		Data not available until completion of next resident survey.
35	Staff satisfaction score with NFDC ICT services	Maintain	Num	Annually	N/A	N/A	N/A		-
36	Resident satisfaction score with the quality of NFDC digital services	Maintain	Num	Annually	N/A	N/A	N/A		Data not available until completion of next resident survey.

Corporate plan priority: Being an employer of choice

Corporate plan theme: Future New Forest
 Portfolio holder(s): Leader Cllr Jill Cleary (KPI no. 37-40)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Resources and transformation

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desire d DOT	Retur n Forma t	Freq.	Previo us Period	Q3 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
37	Percentage of vacancies filled first time	Up	%	Q	88%	80%	82.5%		33 appointments were filled in the first round of recruitment.
38	Percentage staff turnover	Down	%	Annually	N/A	N/A	N/A		Data last reported 2023/24 EOY position to determine a baseline figure.
39	Average number of days sickness absence per employee	Down	Num	Q	9.78	8	9.33		Whilst we are always finding ways to reduce sickness and absence levels to meet our targets, this is of largely out of our direct control. Every step is taken to be satisfied that sickness absence is genuine, that sickness is reducing and that we are managing sickness effectively to keep this figure reducing. HR work closely with managers to apply our policies effectively to manage sickness.
40	Number of council apprenticeships	Up	Num	Annually	N/A	N/A	N/A		Data last reported 2023/24 EOY position to determine a baseline figure.

Corporate plan priority: Being financially responsible Corporate plan theme: Future New Forest
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Jeremy Heron (KPI no. 41-44)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Resources and transformation

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desire d DOT	Retur n Forma t	Freq.	Previo us Period	Q3 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
41	Percentage variance to Council budget +/- (General fund budget variations)	Up or Down	%	Q	0%	+/- 3%	0%		Indicative figures as at 21 January 2025, final figures will be confirmed as set out in the Financial Monitoring Report taken to Cabinet 5 February 2025.
42	Percentage variance to Housing Revenue budget +/- (HRA budget variations)	Up or Down	%	Q	0.55%	+/- 3%	-0.50%		Indicative figures as at 21 January 2025, final figures will be confirmed as set out in the Financial Monitoring Report taken to Cabinet 5 February 2025.
43	Percentage of Council Tax collected in year	Up	%	Q	57.40%	85.3%	84.96%		Target is cumulative. Some instalments have been spread to March 2025 so collection rates should be maintained come year end. We have also had a number of properties transferring from business rates to council tax as the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) have determined the property is no longer a holiday let, with bills only recently being sent and some disputing the VOA decision.
44	Percentage of Non-domestic Rates collected in year	Up	%	Q	57.50%	84.3%	84.52%		Target is cumulative.

Corporate plan priority: Designing modern and innovative services Corporate plan theme: Future New Forest
 Portfolio holder(s): Cllr Jeremy Heron (KPI no. 45-48)
 Overview and scrutiny panel: Resources and transformation

NFDC ID	KPI Name	Desire d DOT	Retur n Forma t	Freq.	Previo us Period	Q3 Target	This period	RAG Status	Supporting Narrative
45	Benefit realisation from ICT investment	Maintain	%	Every 6 Months	N/A	N/A	95.0%		(Q2 - 87.5%) Narrative for April 24 - April 25: Azure Migration project = 100% (9/9) Learning Management System (LMS) project = 86% (6/7) (Security training module is targeting go live on LMS on the 17th Jan) Direct Debit = 100% (5/5)
46	Percentage of ICT incidents resolved within SLA	Up	%	Q	98%	95%	97%		-
47	Percentage of annual ICT work programme delivered on time and on budget	Maintain	%	Q	93.33%	70%	93.33%		Narrative for April 24 - April 25: Azure Migration project = delivered on time in line with board approved project plan. Learning Management System (LMS) project = delivered on time in line with board approved project plan. Direct Debit = delivery delayed by around 1.5 months whilst transition to BAU was better prepared for within business units.
48	Percentage unscheduled downtime for critical systems	Down	%	Q	2.89%	<5%	0.16%		-

Cabinet – 2 April 2025

Corporate peer challenge report and action plan

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>The report presents the Local Government Associations (LGA) feedback report from the December 2024 Corporate Peer Challenge and associated action plan.</p> <p>In consideration of capacity to deliver on the council’s ambitions and respond effectively to the Devolution White Paper, as recommended by the peer team, the report also presents a revised list of key deliverables in support of corporate priorities.</p> <p>The report also presents a motion referred to the Resources and Transformation Overview and Scrutiny Panel, regarding the Council’s process for selecting Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees and Panels, given that the Corporate Peer Challenge report makes specific commentary on the appointment of Overview and Scrutiny Panel chairs.</p>
Recommendation(s)	<p>Cabinet is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the LGA’s feedback report; 2. Approve the action plan at Appendix 2 in response to the recommendations and observations contained within the feedback report; 3. Approve the revised key deliverables at Appendix 3; and 4. Consider the views of the Resources and Transformation O&S Panel, with regard to the motion set out at paragraph 18 on the process for

	selecting Chairmen and Vice-Chairman of Committees and Panels, and make recommendations to Council.
Reasons for recommendation(s)	<p>Recommendations support the continuous improvement focus of the corporate peer challenge, including the council’s key strategic priorities within the Corporate Plan.</p> <p>The Corporate Peer Challenge process requires the council to publish the findings on the review and an associated action plan.</p>
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Jill Cleary – Leader of the Council
Strategic Director(s)	Kate Ryan – Chief Executive
Officer Contact	<p>Rebecca Drummond Assistant Director – Transformation 023 8028 5080 rebecca.drummond@nfdc.gov.uk</p>

Introduction and background

1. In December 2024 NFDC invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to carry out a corporate peer challenge (CPC). This process aims to provide robust, strategic and credible challenge to our activity designed to support our decisions, ambitions and appraise our current performance and improvement capabilities.
2. Over three days a team of five peers and two representatives from the LGA visited the council and gathered evidence, information, and views from more than 40 meetings and spoke to more than 130 people including a range of council staff together with members and external stakeholders.
3. The team was made up of both political and managerial peers from different authorities across the country.
4. Initial feedback was presented in person at the end of the onsite visit and is now further supported by the LGA feedback report (Appendix 1), detailing recommendations and observations based on their findings during the challenge.

5. The outcome of the peer challenge is extremely positive and worth celebrating in its own right. The peer team made some observations and recommendations to support our continued improvement, dealt with later in this report, but commended the council on its clear vision, how much it has already achieved, the visibility of the Leader and the Chief Executive, the passion and commitment of Members and its staff being the greatest asset. They thanked all staff for their openness and honesty throughout the process.
6. The peer team reflected that it was great to see the organisation on an improvement journey with some of the comments they received during the review including that the council has a heart and cares, has been proactive and shown great leadership, that it delivers for residents and staff saying that they are proud to say they work for New Forest District Council.
7. It is a requirement of the process that the Feedback report is published three months after the visit (by 12 March 2025), followed by an action plan five months after the visit (by 12 May 2025).

Recommendations and action plan

8. The peer team's key recommendations to the council are:
 - Clarify priorities and timelines for delivery
 - Create an overarching corporate narrative and communicate proactively with staff, members and local people
 - Design and deliver a robust member and senior officer development programme
 - Consider ways to strengthen the Overview and Scrutiny function
 - Ensure there is effective ownership of the transformation programme by the Executive Management Team
 - Apply internal policies and practices consistently across the Council
 - Develop an assets strategy and action plan
 - Demonstrate further commitment to carbon reduction with a clear action plan
 - Continue the good practice in housing and consider applying successful approaches to the wider organisation
 - Remember to celebrate your achievements no matter how small or big they are
9. The next stage of the peer challenge process commits us to publishing an action plan, outlining our intentions, activity and timelines towards addressing the recommendations within the LGA feedback report.

10. The report also makes a number of observations and suggestions and these have also been considered as opportunities for improvement in the action plan at Appendix 2.
11. The feedback report refers to the fact the Devolution White Paper was published after the CPC visit and its initial findings. It is appropriate that the action plan and consideration of priorities is now framed in this new context.
12. Progress against the action plan will be monitored and formally reported on six months from publication (October 2025).

Key deliverables

13. One of the key recommendations of the peer team is for the council to consider the capacity it needs to deliver on the corporate plan priorities over the short, medium and longer terms, accepting that not all of them can be delivered at the same time.
14. The corporate plan continues to set the strategic direction of the organisation but it's appropriate to consider the legacy priorities and start to refine what we must deliver against these priorities and where capacity would be better redirected considering the new and emerging context.
15. Consideration has been given to key deliverables, as linked to the corporate plan priorities, in response to the recommendation and to reflect the new local government reorganisation context and its demands. Appendix 3 sets out an initial view of the key deliverables although it is acknowledged that these will need to be flexible and kept under review as future demands arise.
16. It is proposed that the delivery plan is subject to regular review by EMT and formally reviewed annually as part of the annual performance report.

Follow up review

17. As part of the CPC, the council is required to have a progress review and publish findings of this within twelve months of the original CPC visit (by 12 December 2025). The follow up visit is anticipated to take place during October 2025 and will coincide with the update on the action plan progress.

Motion referred by Council

18. At the Full Council meeting of 24 February 2025, Cllr Rackham moved the following motion, which was seconded by Cllr J Davies:-

"This Council resolves that:-

- 1. Only those Members who do not belong to the ruling political group shall be eligible for nomination to the positions of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the ordinary committees and panels of the Council; and*
 - 2. The consequential amendment to the Council's Standing Orders for Meetings be made by the Monitoring Officer."*
19. In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders for Meetings, the Full Council resolved to refer the motion to the Resources and Transformation Overview and Scrutiny Panel, and specifically through the consideration of this report, given the Corporate Peer Challenge report commentary relating to the appointment of opposition Members as Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Panels.
 20. As this is ultimately a matter for the Council to determine, the Panel was asked to consider the motion as set out above, and make onward recommendations to Cabinet, and Council.
 21. At the Panel meeting, Members passed a resolution that the Council should not depart from its current procedures, whereby the selection of committee and panel chairs is undertaken at the Annual Council meeting by the voting Members of each committee or panel in question. It should be noted that where positions are contested, the Council's Constitution provides for a secret ballot to be undertaken. Cabinet is asked to consider the Panel's views, including the further commentary expressed at paragraph 24 below, and make a final recommendation to Council.

Corporate plan priorities

22. A core component of the CPC review is to assess the clarity of the council's priorities, how well informed they are by the local context and whether the council is delivering effectively on these priorities contained within the Corporate Plan.

Options appraisal

23. The council is required by the LGA to publish the findings of the CPC and an associated action plan. The council welcomed the review and is keen to act upon the observations made to ensure continuous improvement.

Consultation undertaken

24. The Panel considered and noted the Corporate Peer Challenge report and supported the action plan. The Panel resolved to recommend to the Cabinet that the motion regarding the process for selecting Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of committees and panels should remain unchanged. In respect of Appendix 3 and the list of delivery activities, a member highlighted the need to continue to make representations regarding the upgrading of the A326. Members highlighted the difficulties faced by town and parish councils in keeping abreast of developments regarding LGR and it was noted that a meeting involving NFALC was scheduled for 28 April, to which all parish and town councils were invited.
25. Internal consultation has been undertaken with the Executive Management Team and relevant members of the Senior Leadership Team to inform the action plan.
26. Key deliverables have been informed by the Senior Leadership Team, Executive Management Team and Cabinet members.
27. The feedback report has been shared with our stakeholders and partners that contributed to the peer challenge with their valuable insight.

Financial and resource implications

28. Actions identified are within existing resources. Key deliverables have been flagged as to whether resources are already identified and where not they will be resourced from diverting resources from activities that have been de-prioritised.

Legal implications

29. There are none arising directly from this report and the reprioritising of planned activities has had due regard to statutory requirements.

Risk assessment

30. A formal risk assessment is deemed not to be required. The CPC visit and subsequent recommendations was immediately prior to the publication of the Devolution White Paper and the emerging impact of local government reorganisation will be taken into account within the actions identified.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

31. The action plan directly responds to the CPC recommendation for the council to demonstrate further commitment to carbon reduction with a clear action plan.

Equalities implications

32. The CPC feedback report makes a few observations on how equality, diversity and inclusivity (EDI) can be improved, acknowledging that the council has already driven forward efforts in this regard. These observations have been included in the action plan to further enhance our commitments in this area.

Crime and disorder implications

33. There are none arising directly from this report.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

34. The CPC feedback report makes an observation on how the consistent use of technology can be improved. This observation has been included in the action plan.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – LGA Corporate Peer Challenge New Forest District Council (10th-12th December 2024) Feedback Report
Appendix 2 – CPC Action Plan
Appendix 3 – Corporate Priorities – key deliverables review

Background Papers:

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LGA Corporate Peer Challenge

New Forest District Council

10th to 12th December 2024

Feedback report



Corporate Peer Challenge



Contents

- 1. Introduction3
- 2. Executive summary3
- 3. Recommendations.....6
- 4. Summary of peer challenge approach.....8
- 5. Feedback.....10
- 6. Next steps.....24

1. Introduction

Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) is a highly valued improvement and assurance tool that is delivered by the sector for the sector. It involves a team of senior local government councillors and officers undertaking a comprehensive review of key finance, performance and governance information and then spending three days at New Forest District Council to provide robust, strategic, and credible challenge and support.

CPC forms a key part of the improvement and assurance framework for local government. It is underpinned by the principles of Sector-led Improvement (SLI) put in place by councils and the Local Government Association (LGA) to support continuous improvement and assurance across the sector. These state that local authorities are: Responsible for their own performance, Accountable locally not nationally and have a collective responsibility for the performance of the sector.

CPC assists councils in meeting part of their Best Value duty, with the UK Government expecting all local authorities to have a CPC at least every five years.

Peers remain at the heart of the peer challenge process and provide a 'practitioner perspective' and 'critical friend' challenge.

This report outlines the key findings of the peer team and the recommendations that the council are required to action.

2. Executive summary

New Forest District Council (the Council) is a well-performing council that clearly understands its unique local context which consists of the New Forest National Park, urban areas and 40 miles of coastline. The peer team enjoyed spending time in the New Forest.

There is widespread acceptance that changes in leadership of the Council since the last CPC in 2017, with both a new Leader and new chief executive, has been instrumental in creating a culture of change and improvement. Both the Leader and the chief executive were consistently described by officers, members and external stakeholders as highly visible, collaborative and engaging. Under their leadership the Council has embraced partnership working, become more outward facing, and maximised its role as an effective convener. As a result, the Council now plays a more credible role on the local and regional stage, both at the political and officer

4

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levels.

The Council is now more prominent in maximising exciting regeneration opportunities, such as the delivery of Solent Freeport and town centre regeneration. It works effectively in partnership with businesses, community groups, culture and health partners on a range of areas, as well as continuing to work closely with the New Forest National Park Authority.

Members and officer working relationships are effective, supportive and characterised by mutual respect. Whilst senior members are clearly passionate and committed, there are opportunities for them to have a greater role in setting the direction of the Council. The peer team also heard about the appetite to strengthen the Overview and Scrutiny function and providing more training and support to members on this topic.

The corporate plan clearly sets out an ambitious vision for New Forest, but the peer team consistently heard from staff, members and external partners that there were too many priorities, with a lack of clarity over what would be delivered and by when. Clearer delivery plans for the priorities would improve this. There are also opportunities to make the delivery of the priorities more visible, with the potential to make better use of external and internal communication channels.

The transformation programme, Future New Forest, is in place and has strong commitment from all political groups and staff at all levels. Leadership of the programme is effective, with robust commitment from the Executive Management Team and Senior Leadership Group to deliver it. To further enhance the likelihood of its success, the peer team encourages all members of the Executive Management Team to collectively own the programme, and for its scope to remain focused.

Meeting housing needs is one of the Council's key priorities and the peer team was asked to consider it as an additional area of focus. The Council's development and acquisition programme is centred on local needs; it has strong political support and with effective working relationships between the portfolio holder and the Housing department, the Council is well placed to achieve its ambitions. Nevertheless, challenges remain, and the Council will need to maximise partnership working, particularly emerging relationships with tenants, developers and private sector landlords, as well as with charities to tackle homelessness.

Overall, the organisation has strong foundations to deliver on its corporate plan

5

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ambitions. Delivery will ultimately rest on the capacity and capability of staff, who are New Forest District Council's strongest asset. The workforce is passionate, enthusiastic and proud to work at New Forest District Council. Crucially, staff are committed to delivering the transformation programme. However, the peer team heard that working practices, policies and the new values were being inconsistently applied across the organisation and that this could undermine staff morale. To sustain this, recognising the issue of capacity and maintaining staff motivation will be important.

The Council is in a solid financial position, because of a prudent approach over many years. Sound governance and audit processes supplement its culture of effective financial management and planning. Reserves have been maintained and officers and members have identified future financial pressures facing the Council. The Council has started to undertake work to be more commercially minded, for example developing proposals to release some of Appletree Court to generate income and pulling together an assets register. As the Council faces increasing financial pressures, further work in this area may strengthen its ability to be financially sustainable.

The Council should be rightly proud of what it has achieved to date, with many improvements taking place behind the scenes. Whilst the Council acknowledges that it remains on a journey with some way to go to further improve, the peer team encourages the Council to celebrate its achievements much more, no matter how big or small they are.

Following the corporate peer challenge, the [Devolution White Paper](#) announced the Government's desire for all of England to benefit from devolution. The White Paper also announced that the Government will facilitate a programme of local government reorganisation for all two tier areas. In light of this, the Council will now need to take stock of its priorities and refocus its plans.

3. Recommendations

There are a number of observations and suggestions within the main section of the report. The following are the peer team's key recommendations to the Council:

3.1 Clarify priorities and timelines for delivery

The corporate plan sets out lots of ambitious priorities and not all of them can be

6

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delivered at the same time. The Council will need to consider capacity in order to understand what can be delivered over the short, medium and longer terms, particularly in response to the publication of the Devolution White Paper.

3.2 Create an overarching corporate narrative and communicate proactively with staff, members and local people

Only 66 per cent of respondents to the resident's survey said that they feel the Council keeps residents well-informed about the services it provides. A compelling narrative will help staff, members, partners, and residents look towards the future and help them see how they can support the delivery of the corporate plan.

3.3 Design and deliver a robust member and senior officer development programme

Leadership of the Council, both at political and officer levels, is effective. Development days could further strengthen working relationships, particularly in supporting senior members to be more assertive in setting and steering the priorities of the Council.

3.4 Consider ways to strengthen your Overview and Scrutiny function

Members are keen to provide more effective scrutiny and the Council may wish to consider ways to strengthen and develop its Overview and Scrutiny function; one option could be to appoint opposition members as chairs of the Panels.

3.5 Ensure there is collective ownership of the transformation programme by the Executive Management Team

Collective ownership will ensure that all members of the Executive Management Team are all equally responsible for the delivery of the transformation programme, thereby contributing to the likelihood of its success.

3.6 Apply internal policies and practices consistently across the Council

To maintain staff morale and commitment to the transformation programme, internal policies and practices must be applied consistently across the Council.

3.7 Develop an Assets Strategy and Action Plan

The Council has already begun to understand its physical assets, their liabilities, and future commercial opportunities. The peer team encourages the Council to complete

7

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this work and develop a strategy to deal with the assets as part of a coherent corporate asset management appraisal system.

3.8 Demonstrate further commitment to carbon reduction with a clear action plan

The Council has bold ambitions to reduce carbon emissions of council owned homes to net zero by 2050 and to reduce carbon emissions of the housing operational services; the peer team encourages the Council to develop an action plan that will demonstrate how it will deliver these ambitions.

3.9 Continue the good practice in housing and consider applying successful approaches to the wider organisation

There are already examples of transformation and improvement achieved in the Council's Housing department. This presents a valuable opportunity to take the learning, for example the preparation for regulatory inspection, and apply it to other parts of the organisation.

3.10 Remember to celebrate your achievements no matter how small or big they are

The Council has achieved significant change and improvement over the last few years, and there is much to be proud of. Whilst there is more work to be done, do not forget to celebrate your achievements.

4. Summary of peer challenge approach

4.1 The peer team

Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected the focus of the peer challenge and peers were selected by the LGA on the basis of their relevant expertise. The peers were:

- Jonathan Stephenson, Chief Executive, Brentwood Borough Council and Rochford District Council
- Cllr William Nunn, Breckland Council and Norfolk County Council
- Cllr Sarah Osborne, East Sussex County Council
- Claire Astbury, Head of Housing Strategy and Development, Luton Borough Council

8

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- Jane Wilson, Chief Operating Officer, Cambridge City Council
- Eva Barnsley, LGA Policy Adviser
- Nick Searle, LGA Peer Challenge Manager

4.2 Scope and focus

The peer team considered the following five themes which form the core components of all Corporate Peer Challenges. These areas are critical to councils' performance and improvement.

1. **Local priorities and outcomes** - Are the council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the council delivering effectively on its priorities? Is there an organisational-wide approach to continuous improvement, with frequent monitoring, reporting on and updating of performance and improvement plans?
2. **Organisational and place leadership** - Does the council provide effective local leadership? Are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
3. **Governance and culture** - Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of challenge and scrutiny?
4. **Financial planning and management** - **Does the council have a grip on its current financial position?** Does the council have a strategy and a plan to address its financial challenges? What is the relative financial resilience of the council like?
5. **Capacity for improvement** - Is the organisation able to bring about the improvements it needs, including delivering on locally identified priorities? Does the council have the capacity to improve?

As part of the five core elements outlined above, every Corporate Peer Challenge includes a strong focus on financial sustainability, performance, governance, and assurance.

In addition to these themes, the Council asked the peer team to provide feedback on housing and its transformation programme.

4.3 The peer challenge process

Peer challenges are improvement focused; it is important to stress that this was not

9

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an inspection. The process is not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans and proposals. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

The peer team prepared by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the council and the challenges it is facing. This included a position statement prepared by the council in advance of the peer team's time on site. This provided a clear steer to the peer team on the local context at New Forest District Council and what the peer team should focus on. It also included a comprehensive LGA Finance briefing (prepared using public reports from the council's website) and a LGA performance report outlining benchmarking data for the council across a range of metrics. The latter was produced using the LGA's local area benchmarking tool called LG Inform.

The peer team then spent three days onsite at New Forest District Council, during which they:

- Gathered evidence, information, and views from more than 40 meetings, in addition to further research and reading.
- Spoke to more than 130 people including a range of council staff together with members and external stakeholders.

This report provides a summary of the peer team's findings. In presenting feedback, they have done so as fellow local government officers and members.

5. Feedback

5.1 Local priorities and outcomes

In 2024, the Council launched its new [Corporate Plan 2024 to 2028](#), setting out clear ambitions for the district, with strategic priorities focusing on People, Place and Prosperity. The peer team consistently heard that the development of the corporate plan involved comprehensive and meaningful engagement from staff, members and external partners.

The Council has made good progress on a number of its key priorities, including delivery of new affordable homes and implementation of its Waste Strategy 2022 – 2027. Whilst recognising that the Council has an ambitious de-carbonisation

10

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approach, aiming to reduce carbon emissions of council owned homes to net zero by 2050 and to reduce carbon emissions of the housing operational services, the peer team encourages the Council to develop an action plan with milestone targets demonstrating how it will deliver these ambitions.

Communication of the Council's priorities to staff, members and stakeholders is key to ensure that they understand their role in supporting its objectives. It is also important to be clear to residents about what the Council can and cannot deliver, and by when. Furthermore, the Council may wish to explore ways to make the delivery of its priorities more visible, such as through internal and external communication channels. A clearer narrative on priorities will better help staff, local people and partners understand what the priorities, why they are needed and when they will be delivered.

Although the corporate plan sets out ambitions, it was clear to the peer team that not all staff understood their role in delivering it, as well as feedback that there was a large number of priorities. The Council may therefore wish to explore ways to provide clarity on the priorities, outlining when priorities will be achieved over the short, medium and longer term, as well as ensuring there is a 'Golden Thread' from the corporate plan down to staff.

The corporate plan provided an opportunity for the Council to review its existing approach to performance management. It subsequently put in place arrangements to monitor performance against the strategic priorities outlined in the corporate plan. The Council's new performance management framework takes the commitments outlined in the corporate plan, works with the transformation programme, and builds continuous improvement opportunities and learning throughout. The corporate plan includes a list of 48 key performance indicators (KPIs). The development of corporate KPIs has been rigorous with detailed descriptions and data collection methodology assigned to each measure within a comprehensive definitions handbook. Performance against these KPIs is monitored and will be published via a corporate performance dashboard.

The peer team saw visible evidence of the Council engaging with its residents, demonstrating that it continues to incorporate community engagement into service development and service provision. For example, the Tenant Involvement Group meets regularly and is used as a forum to engage and discuss ideas for future service delivery initiatives, with tenants reporting that they felt more listened to and

respected. Community forums have been established covering cost of living, emergency planning and resilience. These forums invite town and parish councils, councillors, partners, emergency planning responders, local organisations, and representatives of the council to hear presentations from key speakers. These approaches demonstrate how the Council can continue to achieve community-driven solutions.

The peer team observed that community groups feel valued, with the annual community grants process seeing 17 awards totalling £135,000 in revenue support and £96,040 in 12 capital awards for 2024/25. The peer team welcomed that the grants in 2025/2026 will be closely aligned to the corporate plan objectives.

The Council has driven forward efforts to improve the equality, diversity and inclusivity (EDI). This includes establishing the EDI staff group in July 2023, the launch of the launch of the LGBT+ employee-led network in June 2024, and the chief executive's discussions with different faith groups within the Council's workforce. The peer team commends the efforts to date and encourages the Council to build on this progress. The Council may wish to ask itself whether EDI features adequately in terms of service planning and delivery; whether there is appetite from other protected groups to establish staff networks; and whether EDI is being considered early enough in the policy development cycle so changes can be made.

5.1.1 Performance

The Council's approach to business planning and performance management is relatively new, with a recently approved performance framework. The corporate plan includes a list of 48 key performance indicators (KPIs). Performance against these KPIs is monitored and is published via a corporate performance dashboard. As of August 2024, the 48 KPIs on or above target has been raised to 84%.

The Council uses a resident's survey to capture a range of data. The most recent [resident's survey](#) (September – November 2022) engaged 760 residents across the district. The results are used to inform decision-making and the development of priorities. The survey showed positive results, for example 93% of respondents feel satisfied with the area as a place to live, and 78% of respondents feel satisfied with the way the Council runs things.

The Council's [LG Inform Headline Report](#) compares council performance to its Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) nearest neighbours.

12

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These show how the Council performs strongly in some areas, for example housing. When compared to other councils in the CIPFA nearest neighbours group the Council has the shortest amount of time taken to process housing benefit new claims at four days (average is 10 days), and below average number of total households on the housing waiting list at 1,876 (against an average of 2,687). It does, however, have the most number of households living in temporary accommodation per 1,000 households at 4.08 (average is 1.25) The peer team found that in housing, the Council showed a willingness to review their processes and improve performance monitoring.

The number of affordable homes delivered (130) in 2023/24 is below the benchmarking group average of 228. Despite spending the least amount in the benchmarking group of total revenue on planning and development services per head of population at £27.13 (against an average of £54.60), the Council performs well with 100 per cent of major planning applications decided on time and 95 per cent of other planning applications decided on time. Minor applications are at 86 per cent, which is just below the average of 92 per cent. In relation to this, the peer team found that local developers did report that they would like to see improvements in the consistent application of planning policy, and standardisation of Section 106 planning agreements to facilitate faster conclusion of planning permissions.

On waste, LG Inform performance data suggests that there is room for improvement. When compared to the benchmarking group, the Council has the lowest percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting at 34 per cent (well below the average of 46.38 per cent); and its amount of residual household waste per household at 457.40kg is higher than the average of 396.2kg. The Council is confident that fundamental service changes in this area supported by a new depot will improve this performance over the coming years.

5.2 Organisational and place leadership

The peer team heard consistent and positive feedback on how the Leader and chief executive are highly respected, engaging and collaborative, both inside the Council and by external partners across the Hampshire region.

After a long period of continuity at the helm of the organisation, there were changes of leadership with the new chief executive joining in December 2021, and the Leader of the Council taking up their role in November 2022. Both were described as

instrumental in improving the visibility and credibility of the Council on the regional stage, both at the political and officer level. The peer team heard how the Leader is described as 'open and a key figure in the culture of change', and the chief executive as a 'breath of fresh air'.

Following the appointment of the chief executive, a new model of leadership was implemented, moving from a four executive head model to three new strategic director roles. Its senior officer leadership team, known as the Executive Management Team (EMT), consists of the chief executive and three strategic directors. EMT meets twice a month with the monitoring officer and democratic services manager also attending. The EMT works well together and brings together valuable experience from working in the Council as well as from other local authorities but could be more joined up on their approach to transformation. EMT may wish to build on the leadership development work it has already undertaken and consider development days to further strengthen working relationships.

Below the EMT, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) brings together senior managers and meets monthly. The peer team found that the SLT is highly engaged and proactively supportive of change. The Council may wish to consider clarifying the membership of the SLT and their corporate role; ensuring that SLT membership consistently cascade information to the wider staff community will be important.

Internally, both the Leader and the chief executive are accessible to staff. The employee forum meets approximately four times a year and is attended by both the chief executive and the Leader, with representatives from each service area who can raise issues and cascade information back to their teams. The chief executive holds regular staff briefings three or four times a year, both in person and virtually. At these briefings corporate updates are provided and staff are given a chance to ask questions. The staff networks also appreciate their good access to the chief executive. This accessibility reinforces the clear value-led commitment that staff at all levels have to the Council and residents.

Externally, the Council listens to local people, residents and businesses and engages in a meaningful way, for example through the Resident's Insight Survey as previously mentioned, the Tenants Involvement Group (see Housing section 5.6) and Town and Parish Councils. Whilst acknowledging the existing partnership with the Town Parish Councils is productive, the peer team heard of the Town and Parish Councils' enthusiasm to further collaborate as partners and to develop a more meaningful

14

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relationship regarding budget for them to deliver services. The Council may therefore wish to consider this in more detail. The Council works effectively in partnership with community groups who are seen as respected and their relationship with the Council is strong.

The peer team heard that the Council used to be very inward looking, but now embodies strong partnership working and has an effective convening role with a range of partners. There was wholeheartedly positive feedback from neighbouring authorities, business partners, public sector partners and other stakeholders. The peer team heard how the Council is now seen as open and willing to collaborate.

The partnership with the New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA) is particularly well-established and mature. The NFNPA is the planning authority for the specific area and there are several service level agreements in place, covering things such as HR, finance, IT and technical professional services. The Council is encouraged to maintain its positive relationship with the NFNPA and harness any further opportunities, such as future accommodation and joint working on climate action and tourism.

Partnerships with other public sectors partners are also strong. On facilitating greater local involvement in the development of cultural activities, the Council has worked effectively with Arts Council England. A strategy is currently being developed, and the Council has established a strategic working group, which includes the NFNPA, Arts Council England, the NHS, the Hampshire Cultural Trust as well as other partners.

The Council has proactively built effective relationships with business partners and is an active player in these networks. The Leader sits on the Hampshire Prosperity Partnership Leaders Board, and from this District representatives attend the Hampshire Prosperity Board, which replaced the previous Local Enterprise Partnerships covering Hampshire.

The Council is an active player in the development and delivery of the Solent Freeport, with the Leader on the Solent Freeport Board. The Council established the Waterside Steering Group and plays a crucial role in facilitating joint working across partners and delivering work on the Freeport priorities. The peer team encourages the Council to maintain its efforts to date and maximise the opportunities within the Freeport, such as wider NFDC representation in sub-regional groups.

15

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The Council also partners with the voluntary sector, particularly on supporting vulnerable households across New Forest, and chairs a New Forest Partnership Meeting which brings together multiple organisations to share information and work on specific projects, as well as signposting support. The Council works collaboratively with FareShare, local foodbanks, and partners to support the weekly food larders and community hubs as part of a cost-of-living steering group. The peer team encourages the Council to further harness the voluntary sector in New Forest to enhance and improve service delivery.

5.3 Governance and culture

The Council's governance and decision-making processes are strengthened by positive and respectful relationships between officers at all levels and the Cabinet, with the Leader's consensual style recognised and all political groups reporting good access to the chief executive.

The peer team consistently found that member and officer roles and responsibilities are well understood, with relationships described as trusting, constructive and collaborative. Collaborative working, particularly between senior officers and the Cabinet, has created a supportive culture.

The Council has improved its support to members, particularly via the revamped member induction programme in 2023, which included improved IT support, a new members' handbook, and a dedicated SharePoint site with resources uploaded. The peer team heard the induction programme has been well received and the regular all member briefings are welcomed.

Whilst the member induction programme is effective, the Council should ensure that the ongoing member development provision is robust. The peer team encourages senior members to be more assertive in setting and steering the priorities of the Council, for example in developing their own agendas and encouraging recommendations for Cabinet committee meetings.

To ensure that New Forest District Council is a diverse and representative local council, it is vital that councillors from all backgrounds and experiences reflect the New Forest communities they serve. The peer team encourages the Council to continue its efforts to recruit more diverse people to consider standing to be local councillors. The LGA can provide support and information on this.

The Council revised its Overview and Scrutiny arrangements in May 2023, to

16

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coincide with the implementation of an electoral review and the reduction in the number of district councillors from 60 to 48. There are now three Overview and Scrutiny panels: Housing and Communities; Place and Sustainability; and Resources and Transformation. There is a clear appetite from members and officers to learn from best practice to provide more effective scrutiny. The Council is therefore encouraged to consider ways to strengthen and develop its Overview and Scrutiny function. This could include opposition-led scrutiny, as well as utilising LGA resources to learn from best practice and apply it in the New Forest.

There is evidence of cross-party working, with support across all political groups on the Council's transformation ambitions. Furthermore, the Council set up several task and finish groups with wide political representation to undertake reviews on areas such as health and leisure and sustainable waste, amongst others. The Council may wish to explore further opportunities for cross-party working to deepen political commitment to achieving the Council's goals.

One of the key priorities for the Council is to be an employer of choice, with a well-supported and dedicated workforce. Staff are New Forest District Council's greatest asset. They are passionate, enthusiastic and committed to the direction the Council is heading in. It was very clear to the peer team that the culture of the Council has improved, with a notable shift away from being siloed and inwardly facing to more collaborative and supportive. The Monthly Meet, launched in 2023, has played a key role in this shift. It provides an opportunity for staff to better understand other services and learn more about the work the Council does. The peer team also observed the Council's improved relations with its Trade Unions.

The annual staff survey gives employees a voice to express their opinions and is a useful way to gather feedback to identify areas for improvement. Although only 57 per cent of staff responded to the 2024 staff survey, this was an increase of 16 per cent on the previous survey. Overall, 76 per cent of respondents would recommend the Council as a place to work. The Council's supportive culture was recognised, with 84 per cent of respondents agreeing that team members help and support each other. The peer team did hear about some scepticism on the anonymity of the staff survey so the Council may wish to reassure staff about this.

To shape the culture of the Council four values, known as LEAF, were established: Learning, Empathy, Ambition and Fairness. Whilst staff clearly accept the four LEAF values, many staff felt 'Learning' and 'Fairness' were not consistently applied across

the organisation. In particular, there appears to be inconsistency on communications, with staff at the depot not always receiving key messages at the same time when it is cascaded to all staff.

The Council has historically been a risk averse organisation, but with robust risk management arrangements in place it can become bolder and braver with its decisions. It was clear to the peer team that members and the Senior Leadership Group are committed to effective risk management as they have led from the front in driving forward improvements to the council's risk management processes. The Audit Committee considers risk management and operates effectively, and the Annual Governance Statement tracks actions to completion.

Strategic risk management is embedded into service plans, with the service plans informing the Strategic Risk Register. In a tangible sign of good practice, the Council's Strategic Risk Register is published on the website, updated regularly, and kept under review. The Council could use the audit planning cycle for 2025/26 to ensure there is a 'Golden Thread' from the Strategic Risk Register through to individual Service Risk Registers.

In their last formal report covering 2021/22, no issues in relation to value for money were raised by the Council's external auditors. Although issues were raised over the valuation of both investment and leisure properties, this was due to differences of view on the methodology.

Like many other local authorities, the Council received a disclaimed opinion on its 2022/23 accounts. Draft accounts for 2023/24 have been published with no significant risks identified. The Council is hopeful that its auditors will complete the audit of the 2023/24 accounts before the February 2025 deadline.

5.4 Financial planning and management

The Council is in a solid financial position because of a prudent approach to financial stability and proactive financial management over many years. Indeed, being financially responsible is one of the key strategic priorities of the Council's corporate plan.

The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) covers the period up to 2028/29. The overall forecast deficit taking into the account the various funding assumptions and budget movements totals £466,000 for 2025/26, increasing to a cumulative

£2.693m by 2028/29. With the General Fund budget set for 2024/25 at £24.536m, the deficit represents a gap equivalent to 10% by the end of the MTFP period.

The budget gap for 2025/2026 is primarily related to the additional costs of transitioning to the new waste service during 2025/2026, with an expectation of new burdens funding from April 2026. The larger gap from 2027/2028 is an assumption of a business rate reset, tied in with the Fair Funding Review.

To address the forecast deficit to 2028/29, the Council is undertaking an organisation wide transformation programme. The MTFP identified a targeted saving of £1.75m from the transformation programme.

There is a risk that the scope of the transformation programmes widens too far, and the Council wants to do too much at the same time; the peer team recommends that the scope of the transformation programme remains focused to ensure that officer capacity is not stretched and that the timetable and sequencing of the transformation programme is clear to all staff.

The Council's unearmarked reserves balance has remained constant at £3m since 2017. Whilst the level of the Council's reserves relative to spend is not as high as some of its neighbours, they are sufficient for the authority to smooth changes to income in the medium-term. The Council has been able to add to reserves largely as a result of additional interest income.

The Council has well-established and good financial monitoring systems in place. The financial position is reported on quarterly as part of the performance management framework and Cabinet members are confident in the monitoring process. To enhance reporting, the Council could consider formal corporate processes for monthly reporting.

The peer team recognises the work done to date to make the Council more commercially aware, with ownership of around £30m of commercial property that is all located in the district, and the plans to improve the utilisation of office accommodation at Appletree Court to generate income. However, the peer team felt that much more can be done to comprehensively understand the Council's physical assets, their liabilities, and future commercial opportunities. Assets across the New Forest could include things such as car parks, public toilets, Tide Mill, and the waste depot site. Once the mapping has been complete, a strategy could be developed to deal with the assets as part of a coherent corporate asset management appraisal

19

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system. This work would help the Council consider opportunities to maximise its income, thereby further supporting its ambitions to be financially responsible.

The Council's transformation savings targets and its position on assets will need to be revisited in light of the Government's announcements on local government reorganisation.

5.5 Capacity for improvement

The delivery of the Council's transformation programme, Future New Forest, is significant in helping the Council achieve financial sustainability, deliver services effectively, and to continually improve.

The peer team observed that the transformation programme is purpose led and has a solid evidence base. There is clear recognition of the Council's starting point and progress has already been achieved behind the scenes, but that the level of modernisation needed to deliver transformation is challenging.

Leadership of the transformation programme is strong, with commitment at all management levels to deliver it. The peer team observed that increased visibility of EMT's collective ownership of the transformation programme could strengthen the delivery of the programme.

Staff at all levels are passionate, committed, and believe in the need for change – they want to play their part in delivering the transformation programme. Despite this, adequate resourcing of the transformation programme is fundamental for its success. The peer team recommends that officer capacity is constantly reviewed to ensure that staff are not just delivering business as usual but can deliver transformation priorities too. Giving staff permission to say no may enable this. The peer team also recognises that progress has been made on reducing silo-working, which could further increase staff capacity. The Council may look to build on this and go further by combining specialisms, such as communications, consultation and business intelligence.

Keeping up the morale of staff is equally important, especially during periods of significant change. The peer team observed that several internal policies and practices are not being consistently applied across the organisation, including staff, induction, flexible working, Job Evaluation, Sickness Policy, job titles and job descriptions. This has led to staff dissatisfaction and frustration, particularly in the areas of the Council who have felt that they are being treated unfairly. Addressing

20

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these inconsistencies may ensure that support for the transformation programme is not diminished.

One of the four themes of the transformation programme is customer and digital services. Standardising customer focuses processes and technology across all services will rely heavily on digital platforms. It will therefore be essential that staff have the required skills and that customers are able to use it.

The peer team heard that the Council's IT officers are well thought of, and they provide helpful support. However, there is inconsistent use of IT across teams within the Council, for example how documents are stored, IT training and the use of SharePoint. There are therefore opportunities to create more effective and efficient working practices. There could be an opportunity to establish expectations for IT use across the authority.

The Council is currently considering ways to improve the underutilised office accommodation at Appletree Court. This presents an opportunity to reexamine the layout of its office space and could result in potentially releasing some office space for third party tenants, providing a commercial opportunity for generating income. The peer team encourages the Council to engage staff sufficiently in these plans to ensure that their needs are met.

A consistent approach to IT use and the adoption of shared practices would benefit the organisation and improve efficiency. The Council's move to hybrid working thereby demonstrates the importance of developing capabilities in Microsoft Teams to enable effective working.

As previously mentioned, the Council may wish to explore how internal and external communication channels can increase the visible delivery of its priorities. The Council will be building on solid foundations with communications colleagues already working effectively with teams to develop messaging on service delivery and key projects. A corporate-wide communications strategy could help prioritise key campaigns and messaging to drive behaviour change, such as implementation of the waste strategy. Furthermore, given communications is at the heart of all Council activity and success, the peer team encourages the Council to better celebrate its achievements, no matter how big or small they are. On the transformation programme, quick wins could be regularly highlighted to build momentum and communications to residents could explain how the transformation programme will benefit them.

21

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5.6 Housing

Given meeting housing needs is one of the Council's top priorities in its corporate plan, the peer team were asked to consider it as an additional area of focus. Overall, the peer team found that Council has an ambitious and creative development and acquisition programme focused on local needs.

There is strong political support for the Council's housing priorities. The Peer Team found that the Council's portfolio holder, who is also the Deputy Leader, is committed and has a strong working relationship with the Housing Team and the Tenants Group. The Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel operates collaboratively and provides effective oversight.

The Council's commitment to delivering 600 new affordable homes by 2026 is ambitious, but challenges remain. Given the Council's emphasis on housing delivery, housing developers were keen to see greater articulation of housing needs to overcome localised opposition to housebuilding. The Council may therefore wish to establish a narrative to better articulate local housing requirements to overcome public and political opposition.

The Council cannot achieve its housing ambitions on its own; it will need to work effectively with private and public sector partners. Peers were impressed by the approach taken to affordable housing delivery which has embraced multiple approaches to increasing availability, including partnerships with housing associations, acquisitions from the open market, S106 acquisitions and direct delivery.

The peer team also welcomed the Council's emerging relationships with developers and private sector landlords, and noted the Council's constructive relationship with Hampshire County Council on helping people live independently at home.

The Council owns around 5,000 homes and has undertaken sufficient preparation in advance of the new social housing regulatory requirements, including staff training and tenant engagement. The Tenant Involvement Group set out that attitudes to tenants had shifted recently to a more positive and equal relationship. The group meets regularly and is a forum to discuss ideas around priorities and service delivery. Further involvement of tenants in policy development, scrutiny and training could strengthen their voice within the organisation, putting the Council in a stronger position for regulatory inspection.

The Council is rightly proud that 81% of respondents are satisfied overall with their council managed property. However, only 29.1% of tenants are satisfied with the Council's approach to complaint management and the Council recognises this is an area to improve upon. The existing tenant engagement channels provides an opportunity to grow their involvement and influence, and work collaboratively to resolve issues.

In February 2024, Cabinet agreed to undertake a full review of the Local Plan. It is worth noting that any developments on local government reorganisation in Hampshire may impact Local Plan activity. The peer team observed that some aspects of the planning process are delaying development, although this is not a problem just for New Forest. The Council will therefore need to be mindful of future challenges and opportunities for its development programme.

On homelessness, the Council has an effective operational response to homelessness pressures and works collaboratively with local charities and groups to tackle rough sleeping, for example with The Crossings charity on housing register support in the Hythe area. Furthermore, there has been a reduction in rough sleeping over the past three years, which is a significant achievement.

The Council also partners with the New Forest Disability Information Service to provide support for vulnerable residents who have been discharged from hospital to help them live independent lives at home. It also works effectively with Hampshire County Council on adaptations and specialist accommodation needs.

6. Next steps

It is recognised that senior political and managerial leadership will want to consider, discuss and reflect on these findings. It has already been acknowledged in this report that the peer review took place before the announcements on devolution by the Government. It is important to recognise that while addressing key priorities, the Council will need to divert officer capacity to support potential local government reorganisation planning.

The LGA will continue to provide on-going support to the council. Following publication of CPC report you need to produce and publish an Action Plan within five months of the time on site. As part of the CPC, the council are also required to have a progress review and publish the findings from this within twelve months of the CPC. The LGA will also publish the progress review report on their website.

23

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The progress review will provide space for a council's senior leadership to report to peers on the progress made against each of the CPC's recommendations, discuss early impact or learning and receive feedback on the implementation of the CPC action plan. The progress review will usually be delivered on-site over one day.

The date for the progress review at New Forest District Council is October 2025.

In the meantime, Will Brooks, Principal Adviser for the South East, is the main contact between your authority and the Local Government Association. As outlined above, Will is available to discuss any further support the council requires.

Email: William.Brooks@local.gov.uk.

Tel: 07949054421



Action plan

Corporate peer challenge 2024

March 2025

219

Introduction

Recommendations from the CPC team

Following the completion of the corporate peer challenge in December 2024 a feedback report has been published by the LGA including a list of recommendations for consideration. The report also included key observations and comments from the peer team based upon their findings from the peer challenge.

We are required to publish an action plan within five months of the completion of the peer challenge. This document outlines associated actions, timelines, and tracks progress towards implementation of the recommendations. Included within this action plan are additional actions which arise from the peer teams observations and commentary.

It is acknowledged that the peer challenge took place prior to the announcements on devolution by the Government, which may impact the resources required to address key priorities, as officers' capacity will be diverted to support reorganisation planning.

A progress review by the LGA will be scheduled to allow feedback and report progress made against each of the recommendations and discuss impact and learning. A progress report will then be published by the LGA.

Recommendations

The following are the 10 recommendations from the corporate peer challenge feedback report.

No	Recommendation	Associated actions	Timescales	Owner	
1	Clarify priorities and timelines for delivery	1.1	Revisit priorities and categorise considering LGR (continue, review and pause)	Jan 2025 <i>Delivered</i>	Alan Bethune
		1.2	Seek formal approval for revised priority list, following informal consultation with the Leader and Cabinet members	March/April 2025 <i>Delivered</i>	Alan Bethune
		1.3	Reallocate resources based on revised priorities in the 2025/26 budget.	March 2025 <i>Delivered</i>	Alan Bethune
2	Create an overarching corporate narrative and communicate proactively with staff, members and local people	2.1	Develop concise view (graphic/one pager) of priorities to support internal & external comms	April 2025	Kate Ryan
		2.2	Develop narrative to support revised priorities (aligned to LGR report)	May 2025	Kate Ryan/Sara Hamilton
		2.3	Prioritise communications messaging and resource aligned to corporate plan, agreeing gold, silver and bronze focus	June 2025	Kate Ryan/Sara Hamilton
		2.4	Celebrate successes linked to revised priorities to ensure continuity and reinforcement of narrative (link to recommendation #10) Annual Report (July 2025)	Ongoing	Leadership team/Sara Hamilton

			End of year look back (December 2025)		
		2.5	Support staff understanding of their role in delivering priorities through clear links from corporate plan to individual performance through regular development conversations. Review of performance reviews and one to ones being undertaken within People Strategy Roll out	October 2025	Alan Bethune/Rebecca Drummond/ Leadership team
3	Design and deliver a robust member and senior officer development programme	3.1	Member training opportunities, including self-serve, Member briefings and LGA sessions will be themed to support Members' understanding of the different roles of an elected Member and how training can support their development. This will take account of Local Government Reorganisation implications. Training will be prioritised based on the feedback received from a recent Member Development survey, which includes strengthening Overview and Scrutiny (See 4 below).	May 2025	Tanya Coulter / Matt Wisdom
		3.2	Support members in their roles across key programme governance including waste, transformation and LGR	Ongoing	Tanya Coulter / Matt Wisdom
		3.3	Build on the informal EMT/Leader meetings to set up dedicated EMT/Cabinet development sessions	Ongoing	Kate Ryan

		3.4	Continue leadership and management development programmes with further opportunities linked to the behaviours framework and development of leadership skills to support LGR	Ongoing	Alan Bethune/ Rebecca Drummond
4	Consider ways to strengthen your Overview and Scrutiny function	4.1	Strategic Director linked to each O&S panel to provide direct support to panel members	January 2025 <i>Delivered</i>	Strategic Director Lead/Matt Wisdom
		4.2	Agenda planning and topic prioritisation meetings take place with the lead SD, Chairman and Vice-Chairman	January 2025 <i>Delivered</i>	Strategic Director Lead/Matt Wisdom
		4.3	Specific topic briefings to be held i.e. Housing Regulation, to develop member knowledge and support scrutiny role	Housing – March 2025 <i>Delivered</i>	Strategic Director Lead / Tanya Coulter/Matt Wisdom
		4.4	Develop an 'essential' training package for all councillors that serve on Overview and Scrutiny Panels, comprising delivered and self serve training, to include:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O&S Chairman training • Questioning skills training • Scrutiny essentials • LGA resources 	May 2025	Tanya Coulter / Matt Wisdom
5	Ensure there is collective ownership of the transformation programme by	5.1	Governance structure supports reporting and discussion at directorate level with escalation to Transformation Board	March 2025 <i>Delivered</i>	Alan Bethune/Rebecca Drummond

	the Executive Management Team	5.2	Further embed governance arrangements, including reporting of issues and decisions that conflict with agreed strategic direction	March 2025 <i>Delivered</i>	Alan Bethune/Rebecca Drummond
		5.3	Revise business case considering LGR and ensure new focus is well communicated and anchored in governance reporting	June 2025	Alan Bethune/Rebecca Drummond
		5.4	Consider and implement opportunities to improve EMT visible leadership of change initiatives	September 2025	Alan Bethune/Rebecca Drummond
6	Apply internal policies and practices consistently across the Council	6.1	Investment in additional OD and Employee Engagement resources agreed	Feb 2025 <i>Delivered</i>	Alan Bethune/Rebecca Drummond
		6.2	Induction framework being revisited to ensure consistency, including 'induction essentials' video for new starters and enhanced guidance for managers	May 2025	Alan Bethune/Rebecca Drummond
		6.3	Behaviours framework being developed to ensure consistency	July 2025	Alan Bethune/Rebecca Drummond
		6.4	Different ways to communicate key messages and cascade information to operational staff will be implemented including briefing notes and visual updates where appropriate	April 2025	Strategic Directors/Rebecca Drummond
		6.5	Review local arrangements to ensure policies and practices consistently applied and create baseline data to monitor	September 2025	Alan Bethune/Rebecca Drummond

			improvements. Linked to People Strategy delivery		
7	Develop an Assets Strategy and Action Plan	7.1	Initial engagement with Overview and Scrutiny panel to test direction of travel of emerging strategy	March 2025 <i>Delivered</i>	Alan Bethune
		7.2	Adoption of Asset Strategy and Action Plan	July 2025	Alan Bethune
		7.3	Commence discussions with Town and Parish Council and other partners	July 2025	Alan Bethune
8	Demonstrate further commitment to carbon reduction with a clear action plan	8.1	Continue to decarbonise the council's housing stock and housing of all tenures in line with the Greener Housing Strategy	Council housing stock EPC 'C' or higher by 2030	Richard Knott/Sophie Tuffin
		8.2	Ensure low carbon development through alignment with the Planning for Climate Change SPD and wider Local Plan Review	Ongoing	James Carpenter/Tim Guymer
		8.3	Refresh of the Climate Change and Nature Emergency Action Plan to ensure ambitious carbon reduction, climate adaptation and nature recovery outcomes	March 2026	James Carpenter/Roxanne King
9	Continue the good practice in housing and consider applying successful approaches to the wider organisation	9.1	Establish a list of key good practice items and outcomes	October 2025	Richard Knott/Paul Thomas
		9.2	Knowledge transfer opportunities with wider SLT	October 2025	Richard Knott/Paul Thomas
		9.3	Use the topic based 'Monthly Meet' staff engagement forum as a learning opportunity to share examples of Housing best practice and improvement initiatives	September 2025	Richard Knott/Paul Thomas

10	Remember to celebrate your achievements no matter how small or big they are	10.1	Prioritise and develop an approach and multi-level offer for all staff and implement focussed activity for operational services across Place and Housing	August 2025	Kate Ryan/EMT
		10.2	Build a values based, equitable recognition element into the implementation of the Behavioural framework	October 2025	EMT/Leadership Team
		10.3	Leadership team development session on rewards and recognition, to shape and embed this across the organisation.	August 2025	EMT/Leadership Team
		10.4	Build in time to celebrate success into all staff, directorate and team sessions.	Ongoing	EMT/Leadership Team

Additional actions

The following are additional actions and considerations which arose from the peer team's commentary and observations.

No.	Observation	Actions	Timescales	Owner
1	Service planning and delivery to proactively consider opportunities for enhancing inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include equality and inclusivity considerations into service planning template and associated guidance • Consider knowledge gaps and way to create greater understanding and awareness of equality and inclusion across all staff groups in support of improved diversity and inclusion in the services we provide • Link to People Strategy and the creation and development of staff forums 	August 2025	Alan Bethune / Rebecca Drummond
2	Policy development to include consideration of equality, diversity and inclusivity impacts at the outset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership team development session to explore the LG Equality Framework as it relates to service delivery • EMT to ensure that where relevant policy development includes an equality impact assessment 	October 2025 Ongoing	Kate Ryan Strategic Directors
3	Development Management – Standardisation of Section 106 planning agreements to facilitate faster conclusion of planning permission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a Developer Forum to explore the issues raised with the service leads with an initial meeting by the summer. 	July 2025	James Carpenter
4	SLT – Clarify corporate role of wider leadership team members and ensure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions to be summarised for each agenda item, including for 	May 2025	Kate Ryan

		of Disability awareness programmes.		
8	Continue efforts to recruit more diverse people to consider standing to be a local councillor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political group leaders to consider how their work recruiting, developing and selecting candidates to stand for future elections can improve wider representation of the local community. Review engagement opportunities ahead of future Town & parish and District elections 	April 2026 TBC	Kate Ryan/ Matt Wisdom
9	Establish expectations for consistent IT use across the authority, including how documents are stored, IT training and the use of SharePoint and M365 tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create plan to deliver 'Digital Skills for all' to facilitate learning, technology adoption and best practice usage. Continued training and knowledge sharing with the ICT service desk to then deliver consistent best practice and meaningful messaging to our staff. Creation of 3 new ICT best practice guides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Where to start a digital conversation" "Where to save my files" "Best practice guide to using my SharePoint Team Site" 	August 2025	Alan Bethune/ Rebecca Drummond
10	Housing – Further involve tenants in policy development, scrutiny and training to strengthen their voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver actions in the Tenant Engagement Strategy. 	April 2026	Richard Knott

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a menu of engagement options and learning opportunities for staff • Increase participation across demographics and localities. • Complete the Tenant data survey and analyse results to create targeted approach 		
11	Establish a narrative to better articulate local housing requirements to overcome public and political resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressing the Local Plan from current Reg 18 Issues and Options stage through to Reg 19 will allow wider views to be gathered • Undertaking a range of engagement activities both with the community/ Towns & Parishes and with elected members, through the Local Plan Member Working Group and more widely. • Undertake Green Belt review as part of the local plan evidence base to better understand capacity in the district, in line with the NPPF principles of “Grey Belt” • Partnership working across Hampshire, and with the National Park Authority on the special landscape constraints and designations that constrain growth in the district, to arrive at an appropriate housing number. • Specific work with officers planning committee members to 	April 2026	James Carpenter

		<p>understand and act upon the current and future implications of a lack of 5-year housing land supply, and the impacts of not meeting the NPPF Housing Delivery Test (application of a 20% buffer) on planning decision taking.</p>		
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Corporate plan priorities – key deliverables review

March 2025

Introduction

Local government reorganisation

The recent corporate peer challenge and the emerging local government reorganisation (LGR) discussions has prompted a review of the key deliverables in support of the Council's priorities to ensure our ambitions are balanced with our capacity and that our capacity is focussed on the right activities.

The Corporate Plan and Future New Forest remain the agreed policy frameworks and ongoing service delivery continues to be central to ensuring the needs of our residents are met.

This review enables a discussion to bring about more clarity on the delivery of priorities and associated timescales, to focus resources and consider the potential impacts of local government reorganisation.

Status

The delivery activities within each of the corporate plan themes have been initially assessed and categorised on the following basis:

-
- Continue  Rationale supports continuation based on impact and/or nearing completion

 - Consider  Proportionate response with limited resources

 - Stop  Timescales and capacity required suggest that activities should be paused

 - New/LGR  New activities arising from LGR

People

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

Helping those in our communities with the greatest need

Delivery activity	
	Community forum
	Universal credit rollout
	Careline digitalisation
	Careline growth

Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives

Delivery activity	
	Cultural strategy
	CCTV expansion
	Community grants (annual)
	Cultural strategy (implementation)
	Development of new Health and wellbeing strategy
	Community strategy

Meeting housing needs

Delivery activity	
	Homelessness strategy
	Social Housing Decarbonisation fund bid wave 3
	Tenant satisfaction survey part 2
	Social Housing Regulation Act (Implementation)
	Private Sector Housing strategy review
	Affordable Housing Delivery action plan
	Development of new Empty homes strategy
	Housing strategy consultation/publish (aligned with local plan timescales)

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.

Shaping our place now and for future generations

Delivery activity	
	Local Plan (issues and options)
	Dibden Bay planning response
	A326 upgrade
	Nationally significant infrastructure project - Fawley Pipeline

	Development Management Review
	NEW – Community infrastructure levy (CIL) Community
	NEW – CIL Strategic

*Planning performance agreement

Protecting our climate, coast and natural world

Delivery activity	
	Public space protection order (PSPO) Review
	Air quality strategy
	Emergency planning and business continuity review
	Christchurch Bay flood/coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) approval
	Hurst Spit to Lymington
	Climate and nature emergency strategy and action plan
	Air quality strategy (implementation)
	Fleet strategy
	Climate/Sustainability Impact Decision Tool Assessment
	Coastal destination strategy
	Coastal partnership model

Caring for our facilities, neighbourhoods and open spaces in a modern and responsive way

Delivery activity

	Waste Strategy mobilisation and rollout
	Bartec in cab technology rollout
	Hardley depot move
	Marsh Lane depot essential works
	Ringwood depot expansion
	Review of commercial waste
	Simpler recycling legislation
	Open Spaces review
	Parking strategy

Prosperity

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

Maximising the benefits of inclusive economic growth and investment

Delivery activity	
	Economic strategy / prospectus

Supporting our high-quality business base and economic centres to thrive and grow

Delivery activity	
	Totton Masterplan

Championing skills and access to job opportunities

Delivery activity	
	Employment and skills strategy

Future New Forest

Putting our customers at the heart

Delivery activity	
	Resident insight (2025 survey)

Being an employer of choice

Delivery activity	
	People strategy

Being financially responsible

Delivery activity	
	Financial regulations update
	Strategic Asset review (inc. Lymington Town Hall, community assets)
	Strategic Asset implementation
	Appletree court (ATC) essential works project
	NFEC Future arrangements
	Claymeadow depot Future agreed
	Eling Tide Mill (urgent works/repairs)

	Eling Tide Mill (long-term asset strategy)
	ATC South Wing business case works
	NEW - Transformation business case revisit

Designing modern and innovative services

Delivery activity	
	Digital strategy (delivery)
	Digital Transformation: Customer platform
	Digital Transformation: Data platform
	Digital Transformation: Housing Maintenance
	Digital Transformation: Asset Management software
	Digital Transformation: Regulatory Services software

Other corporate activity

Delivery activity	
	Elections
	Scheme of Delegations update
	Business Planning Framework
	Member development (proportionate to LGR context)
	Corporate Dashboards
	Communications strategy (delivery as per service plan)
	NEW - Devolution / Local Government Reorganisation

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Cabinet – 2 April 2025

Principal Risk and Risk Management Policy Update

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	The Risk Management Policy (Appendix 1), and Principal Risks (Appendix 2), now included within this report contains the significant risks, as identified by senior and executive council officers in consultation with the Portfolio Holders, in the Council achieving the priorities set out in the 'For people, place, prosperity Corporate Plan 2024-28'
Recommendation(s)	1) To consider the Principal Risk Register and revised Risk Management Policy and recommend adoption by Council.
Reasons for recommendation(s)	To assist the council in being aware of risks and making evidence-based decisions, thereby adding value to their processes and outcomes.
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Jill Cleary – Leader / All
Strategic Director(s)	Alan Bethune – Strategic Director Corporate Resources and Transformation (Section 151 Officer) and Paul Whittles Assistant Director - Finance
Officer Contact	James Clarke Insurance and Risk Officer 023 8028 5002 James.Clarke@nfdc.gov.uk

Introduction and background

1. The Risk Management Policy (Appendix 1) has been created to give clarity of approach to risk management at the Council, and to helpfully define process and roles and responsibilities. This gives a structured approach to ensure risks and opportunities are reviewed across all Services, Portfolio's and Corporately, in a consistent way.
2. The Council's Principal Risk (Appendix 2) has been reshaped to truly focus on the highest level of risk to the Council. The risks listed will assist further in the Council achieving the priorities set out in the 'Community Matters Corporate Plan 2020-24'.
3. Risk management aims to identify the risks that may impact on the Council achieving its objectives. Its purpose is to evaluate, design and implement effective measures to reduce both the likelihood and potential impact of these risks occurring.
4. The Council has a statutory responsibility to have in place arrangements for managing risks under the Accounts and Audit Regulations, which require a sound system of internal control, facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and includes arrangements for the management of risk. As such it features strongly in the Council's Local Code of Practice for Corporate Governance and is one of the primary assurance strands in the Annual Governance Statement, which places significant reliance on a robust risk management framework.
5. The Risk Management Policy and Principal Risk Register have been developed through collaboration among senior and executive council officers to ensure a cohesive approach to identifying and documenting these risks. A thorough review was conducted by The Audit Committee in January, their feedback has been considered.

Risk Management Policy

6. Developing and improving public services requires opportunities to be taken whilst managing the risks involved. In recent years all sectors of the economy have focused on management of risk as the key to making organisations successful. It enables organisations to deliver their objectives whilst protecting the interests of their stakeholders. New Forest District Council is dedicated to providing its stakeholders with the best possible service.
7. The effective management of risk is central to providing a safe and healthy environment in which to live and work and it allows the

Council to make the most of opportunities, whilst understanding and minimising the risks, where possible. This policy sets out how New Forest District Council manages its risks, and what we aim to do in the future to maintain our high standards in this area.

Principal Risk Register

8. Appendix 2 presents the Principal Risk Register, which identifies the most significant risks encountered by the council. This section evaluates and scores these risks while outlining proposed mitigation strategies. The recommended actions for risk mitigation are closely aligned with the available portfolio resources and, in some cases, depend on collaboration with partners to successfully achieve the council's objectives.
9. A live and relevant document focused on risk principal approach for our council provides crucial benefits. It maintains up-to-date information that accurately reflects the specific risks and challenges unique to the district. By presenting this information in a concise format, stakeholders can swiftly identify and understand the key risk factors and mitigation strategies. This clarity facilitates more effective decision-making and allows the council to respond proactively to emerging risks, ultimately strengthening the overall risk management framework and ensuring the district's resilience.

Corporate plan priorities

10. The recommendations aim to improve the effective execution of all corporate plan priorities by presenting risk mitigation strategies that tackle the overarching vulnerabilities faced by the Council.

Options appraisal

11. Principal risks are essential for the council's effective risk management. Without this register, we may face significant operational, financial, and reputational challenges, highlighting the need for proper prioritisation. The Risk Management policy update will further strengthen our framework by incorporating best practices and aligning with current regulations to address potential threats proactively.

Consultation undertaken

12. Internal consultation with Assistant and Strategic Directors and Chief Executive and The Audit Committee.

Financial and resource implications

13. There are none arising directly from this report, although strong risk management and a solid understanding of risk helps to support robust financial management.

Legal implications

14. If the legal principal risks are not managed this does bring risk to the council.

Risk assessment

15. The Principal Risk Register is evidence of the risk assessment for the highest level of risk.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

16. If the climate principal risks are not managed this does bring risk to the council.

Equalities implications

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

Crime and disorder implications

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

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

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

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Risk Management Policy

Appendix 2 – Principal Risk Register

Background Papers:

None

Risk Management Policy

2025

Contents

Page

3	1. Introduction
3	2. Risk Management Policy Statement
4	3. Risk Appetite
4	4. Roles and Responsibilities
6	5. Corporate Responsibility – The Three Lines of Defence
8	5. How Do We identify Risks?
9	6. How Do We Evaluate Risks?
11	7. How We Respond to Risks?
13	8. Risk Reporting
14	9. Document History
15	10. Definitions

1. Introduction

This policy outlines the approach the Council takes with regards to its responsibility to manage risks and opportunities using a structured, focused and proportional methodology. Risk management is integral to all policy and project planning and operational management throughout the Council and integrates with our corporate governance and performance management.

This approach to risk management actively supports the achievement of the agreed actions, projects and programmes included as set out in the Council's adopted Corporate Plan.

The Council believes that risk needs to be managed rather than avoided and that consideration of risk should not stifle innovation and creativity.

2. Risk Management Policy Statement

We consider risk management to be a fundamental function that supports and aligns with our vision, values, and strategic objectives. This encompasses our commitment to operating in an effective and efficient manner while fostering confidence within our community. Acknowledging that risk is inherent in all our activities, our policy mandates the proactive identification, assessment, and management of significant risks. We strive to embed risk management into all operations and initiatives at New Forest District Council. It is essential that risk management is integrated into every process, project, and strategic decision, including procurement and contracting. We will ensure that our partnerships and third-party relationships adhere fully to the Council's Risk Management Policy.

Our approach to risk management must be tailored to our organisation, reflecting our size and the diverse nature of our operations while leveraging our skills and capabilities to their fullest potential. Risk management is most effective when functioning as an enabling tool, necessitating a consistent, well communicated, and formalised process across New Forest District Council. Defining the acceptable level of risk exposure, will provide clarity regarding which risks may threaten New Forest District Council's ability to achieve its objectives.

The risk management policy statement, along with its supporting documentation, establishes an integrated framework that empowers New Forest District Council to manage risk effectively. By implementing our risk management policy, we assure all stakeholders that risk identification and management are pivotal in the execution of our Corporate Plan priorities and related objectives. We will engage, empower, and assign ownership to all staff members in the identification and management of risks. Risk management activities will receive ongoing support and oversight from senior management through regular discussions and appropriate actions.

This includes comprehensive and routine evaluations of significant risks, assessment of mitigation strategies, and the implementation of actions to reduce risks to an acceptable level where possible. Effective risk management will be an integral component of both strategic and operational planning, as well as the day-to-day operations.

3. Risk Appetite

The council's risk appetite is characterised as moderate, emphasising a cautious approach that limits exposure to certain levels of risk. This strategic stance is designed to ensure that the council can achieve satisfactory outcomes while maintaining stability and fostering long-term sustainability in its decision-making processes.

The council's current overall risk appetite is categorised as MODERATE (refer to the table below for definitions). This classification indicates that the council is receptive to innovative approaches and is willing to explore options that may present substantial rewards, even when accompanied by higher levels of risk. Nevertheless, the council prefers safer delivery methods that entail a lower risk, particularly for services mandated by statute.

Risk Appetite Definitions	
Avoid	No appetite. Not prepared to take risk.
Adverse	Prepared to accept only the very lowest levels of risk, with the preference being for ultra-safe delivery options, while recognising that these will have little or no potential for reward/return.
Cautious	Willing to accept some low risks, while maintaining an overall preference for safe delivery options despite the probability of these having mostly restricted potential for reward/return.
Moderate	Tending always towards exposure to only modest levels of risk in order to achieve acceptable outcomes.
Open	Prepared to consider all delivery options and select those with the highest probability of productive outcomes, even when there are elevated levels of associated risk.
Hungry	Eager to seek original/creative/pioneering delivery options and to accept the associated substantial risk levels in order to secure successful outcomes and meaningful reward/return.

4. Risk Management Roles and Responsibilities

The key roles and responsibilities are outlined below:

Council

Consider and adopt the Council's risk management strategy and framework and any amendments/updates as recommended from time to time by the Council's Audit Committee.

Cabinet

Oversee the Principal Risk Register and the proposed risk mitigation plans, ensuring effective implementation.

Stay informed about the risk management implications associated with decision-making.

Audit Committee

Advocate for the robust adherence to the Risk Management Policy and Principal Risk Register, emphasising the need for rigorous oversight and thorough evaluation.

Deliver independent assurance to the Council regarding the sufficiency and effectiveness of the risk management framework and the associated control environment, underscoring the challenges inherent in maintaining high standards of risk oversight.

Executive Management Team (EMT)

Provide corporate leadership of risk management throughout the Council.

Agree an effective Council-wide framework for the management of risks and opportunities.

Advise Members on effective risk management and ensure Members receive relevant risk information.

Ensure that the Council complies with the corporate governance requirements relating to risk management.

Own the Council's Principal Risk Register and ensure that risks are reviewed as part of the wider Council's performance arrangements.

Monitor the implementation of key mitigation plans and controls assurance programmes.

Ensure processes are in place to report any perceived new/emerging (key) risks or failures of existing control measures.

Service and Senior Managers

Ensure that risk management, within their areas of responsibility, is implemented in line with the Council's Risk Management Policy.

Own their Service Risk Registers and identify cross-cutting risks as well as risks arising from their areas of responsibility; prioritising and initiating mitigating actions.

Ensure regular review of the Risk Registers as part of wider Council performance, report risk to Management and EMT on any perceived new and emerging risks, or failures of existing control measures.

Promote and share good practice across service areas.

Challenge risk owners and actions to ensure that controls are operating as intended.

Insurance and Risk Officer

Lead on the development and manage the implementation of the Risk Management Policy behalf of the Council.

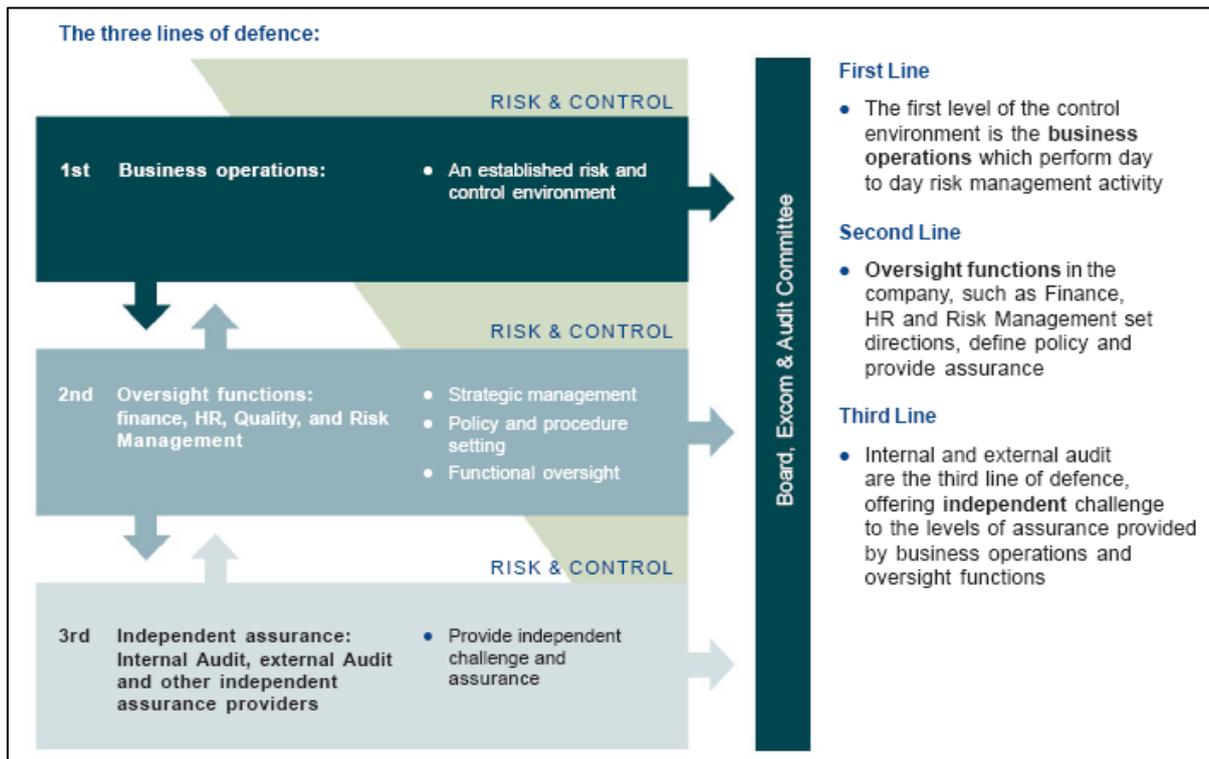
Undertake full reviews of the Council's Principal Risk Register and approach and update accordingly and present any revisions to EMT, Audit Committee, Cabinet and Council for endorsement.

Use a range of resources to analyse management information to support recommendations for improvements to risk management policies and procedures.

5. Corporate Responsibility – The Three Lines of Defence

The three lines of defence concept is widely known among the insurance, audit and banking sectors as a risk governance framework. The concept can be used as the primary means to demonstrate and structure roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for decision making, risk and control to achieve effective risk management, governance and assurance.

The following table is an example of the three lines of defence concept:



First line of defence

As the first line of defence, Service/Senior Managers own and manage risks within their service area. They are also responsible for implementing appropriate corrective action to address, process and control weaknesses. Policies and procedures support Service/Senior Managers in setting best practice in their areas of responsibility. In addition, they report any perceived new and/or emerging risks or, failure of control measures to their Strategic or Assistant Director.

Service/Senior Managers are also responsible for maintaining effective internal controls and managing risk on a day-to-day basis. They identify, assess, control and manage risks ensuring that their services are delivered in accordance with the Council's aims and objectives.

Second line of defence

The second line of defence relates to the strategic direction, policies and procedures provided by the Council's corporate functions (e.g. Finance, Legal Services, Procurement and HR). These teams are responsible for defining policies, setting direction, ensuring compliance and providing assurance.

Each department will have members of staff that belong to professional bodies, for example ACCA, which gives assurances that these corporate functions focus on delivering best practice for the council.

Third line of defence

Internal Audit is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve the Council's operations. It helps the Council accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.

The aim of the Internal Audit work programme is to provide assurance to management, in relation to the business activities, systems or processes under review that the framework of internal control, risk management and governance is appropriate and operating effectively; and risks to the achievement of the Council's objectives are identified, assessed and managed to a defined acceptable level.

Such risks are identified through senior management liaison and Internal Audit's own assessment of risk. Inspectors and regulators also provide assurance on the management of risk and delivery of objectives.

External Audit provide an independent review of the Council's Annual Financial Report, including the Annual Governance Statement. They provide overall assurance on the accuracy of the Council's financial reporting, and provide commentary on key areas, such as Value for Money.

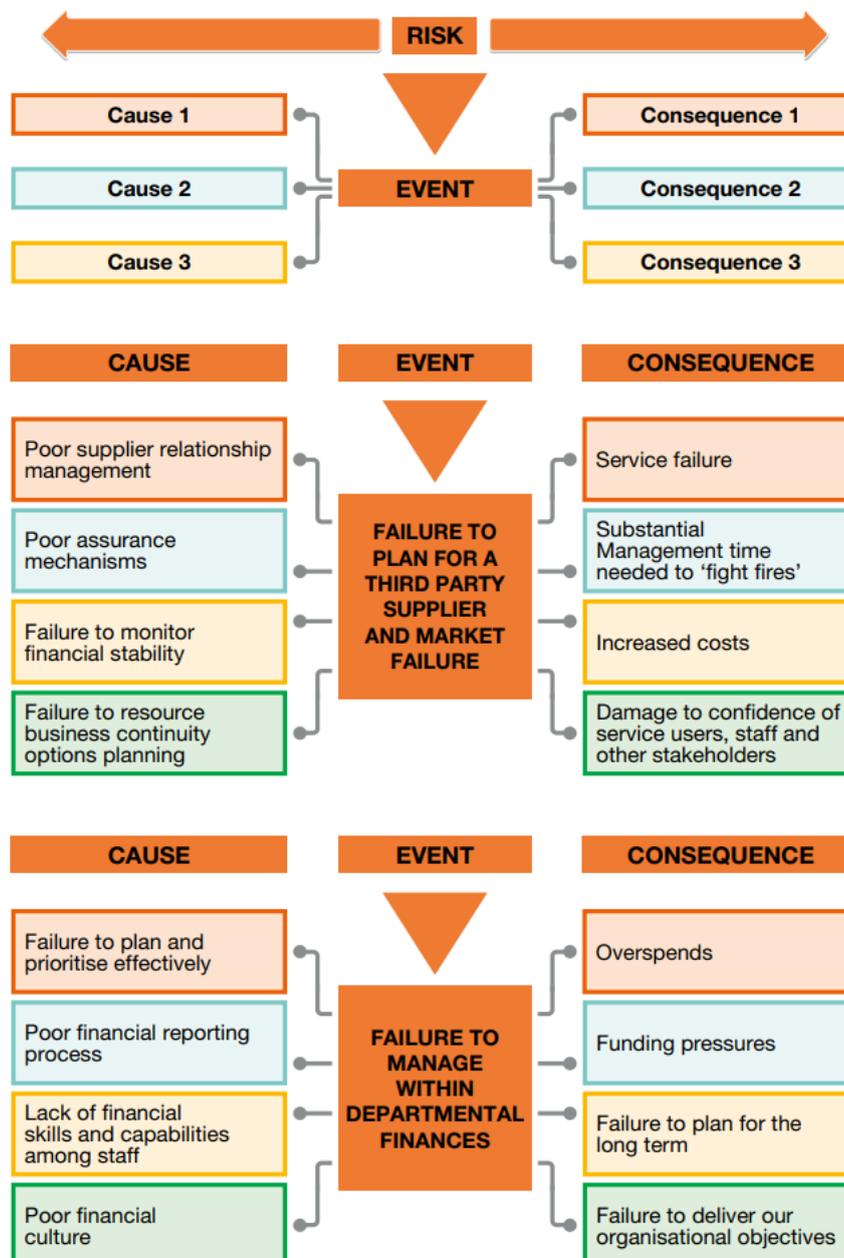
Audit Committee

The Committee is tasked with overseeing the financial affairs of the Council. Its responsibilities include reviewing the Council's accounts and overseeing both internal and external audit activities. Additionally, the Committee monitors the development and implementation of risk management and governance policies within the Council, as well as policies related to whistle-blowing, anti-fraud, corruption, and bribery. It also oversees Treasury Management activities, approves the Council's Annual Governance Statement, and ensures compliance with various published standards and controls.

5. How do we identify risks?

The Bow Tie Risk Analysis is a professional risk management tool designed to visualise and manage risks effectively. The diagram consists of a central risk event, with potential causes illustrated on the left and consequences on the right, resembling a bow tie. Preventive controls are identified alongside the causes, while mitigating controls accompany the consequences.

In risk management, "controls" are measures implemented to reduce the likelihood of a risk occurring or to minimise its impact when it does, and they can be classified as preventive, or corrective. Conversely, "mitigating controls" are specifically designed to address and reduce the severity of identified risks after they have been assessed. While all mitigating controls are a subset of controls, their primary focus is on reactive measures, such as insurance policies or emergency response plans, aimed at lessening the consequences of potential incidents.



6. How Do We Evaluate Risks?

The Council evaluates its identified risks on a four-point scale on the likelihood or probability of the risk occurring and the impact caused should the risk occur being rated between low and significant.

A risk matrix is a key tool used to analyse the likelihood and impact of a risk. The Council uses a 4X4 matrix, with the score determined by multiplying the 'likelihood' score with the 'impact' score.

Scoring risks allows them to be compared with other risks and enables risk owners to prioritise and allocate more resources to those risks posing the greatest threat to the Council's objectives.

The Council has chosen to divide the rating into RAG bands as shown on the example risk map below:

		I M P A C T			
		Low (1)	Moderate (2)	Major (3)	Significant (4)
Highly Likely (4)	4	8	12	16	
Likely (3)	3	6	9	12	
Unlikely (2)	2	4	6	8	
Highly Unlikely (1)	1	2	3	4	

Impact Rating

The following table provides the definitions which should be used when determining whether a risk would have a Low, Moderate, Major or Significant impact.

Impact is defined as the impact to the organisation should the risk materialise.

Each potential risk area should be considered and the highest impact scored should be the score (1-4) that is used to define the overall impact score.

	Low (1)	Moderate (2)	Major (3)	Significant (4)
Financial	Less than £20,000	£20,000 or over and less than £130,000	£130,000 or over and less than £500,000	£500,000 plus
Service Provision	Minor effect	Slightly reduced	Service suspended short term/reduced	Service suspended long term Statutory duties not delivered
Health and Safety	Minor Injury	Broken bones/illness Lost time, accident or occupational ill health	Loss of life/major illness – major injury incl broken limbs/hospital admittance. Major ill health	Major loss of life/large scale major illness
Morale	No effect	Some hostile relationship and minor non cooperation	Industrial action	Mass staff leaving/unable to attract staff
Reputation	No media attention / minor letters	Adverse local media	Adverse national publicity	Remembered for years
Government Relations	One off single complaint	Poor assessment(s)	Service taken over temporarily	Service taken over permanently

Likelihood Rating

Likelihood is the chance of a risk materialising.

It is unlikely that in many cases the probability of a risk occurring can be calculated in a statistically robust manner, the following table can however be used as a guide to inform the judgement made:

Likelihood	Probability
Highly Unlikely (1)	0% to 10% chance of occurring
Unlikely (2)	11% to 40% chance of occurring
Likely (3)	41% to 70% chance of occurring
Highly Likely (4)	71% to 100% chance of occurring

Principal risks are typically viewed from a broader perspective, providing an overview of the most significant risks that could impact the council's strategic objectives, while service risk registers focus on specific risks associated with individual services or functions. To ensure alignment between these two approaches, a reference to the Principal Risk Register will be included within each service risk register, fostering a comprehensive risk management framework that consistently monitors and addresses key risks at both the strategic and operational levels. In this context, the inherent risk score represents the level of risk in a situation before any controls are applied, whereas the residual risk score indicates the risk that remains after mitigation measures have been implemented.

7. How We Respond To Risks?

Once a risk has been identified, the Council need to decide and agree what it is going to do about it. The recognised approaches to controlling risks are described as the five key elements or 5 T's; Tolerate, Treat, Transfer, Terminate and Take the opportunity. These are described in more detail below. It is generally accepted that where a risk can be reduced through some form of treatment or mitigation in a cost-effective fashion then it is good to do so.

As a general principal once a risk has been identified, consideration needs to be given to the five T's and that the chosen approach is seen as being cost-effective so that the control of the risk is not disproportionate to the expected benefits.

The five T's are:

- Treatment** By far the greatest number of risks will be addressed in this way by using appropriate control counter measures to constrain the risk or reduce the impact or likelihood to acceptable levels. Examples include strategy, process, people or systems' improvement.
- Transfer** For some risks the best response may be to transfer them and this might be done by transferring the risk to another party to bear or share the risk: e.g. through insurance, contracting or entering into a partnership. Risk can never be fully transferred.
- Tolerate** Where it is not possible to transfer or treat the risk, consideration needs to be given to how the consequences are managed should they occur. This may require having contingency plans in place, for example, Business Continuity Plans which create capacity to tolerate risk to a certain degree.

Terminate Some risks will only be treatable, or containable to acceptable levels by terminating the activity that created them. It should be noted that the option of termination of activities may be severely limited in local government when compared to the private sector; a number of activities are conducted in the local government sector because the associated risks are so great that there is no other way in which the output or outcome, which is required for the public benefit, can be achieved. This option can be particularly important in project management if it becomes clear that the projected cost/benefit relationship is in jeopardy.

Take the Opportunity This option is not an alternative to those above; rather it is an option which should be considered whenever tolerating, transferring or treating a risk. There are two aspects to this. The first is whether or not at the same time as mitigating threats; an opportunity arises to exploit positive impact. For example, if a large sum of capital funding is to be put at risk in a major project, are the relevant controls judged to be good enough to justify increasing the sum of money at stake to gain even greater advantages? The second is whether or not circumstances arise which, whilst not generating threats, offer positive opportunities. For example, a drop in the cost of goods or services frees up resources which can be re-deployed.

The council would ideally prefer not to accept a level of risk that is considered excessively high, as it could jeopardise the safety and well-being of our community, as well as our financial stability and operational effectiveness. Consequently, we are committed to implementing measures to reduce or manage these risks effectively. However, we must acknowledge that there are certain circumstances or unique situations wherein our ability to mitigate risks may be limited, leaving us with few options to address the inherent challenges involved.

8. Risk Reporting

Risk management is a dynamic process, and it is vital that Dashboards are kept up to date.

New risks will be identified, and some will be managed and removed. Risks need to be reviewed and reported upon to identify if risks are changing and their impact on the Council's objectives and to gain assurance that risk management is effective. The assessment of likelihood and impact levels for existing risks/opportunities will need to be updated to take into account the management actions undertaken, and contingency arrangements will need to be reviewed in response to changing internal and/or external events.

Regular Review of Service Risk Registers and the Principal Risk Register are to be undertaken considering the following points:

- Does the current risk score reflect the risk's likelihood and impact at this point in time?
- Is the control environment still sufficient?
- Are the identified controls effective?
- Are there any assurances that can be provided to validate the controls effectiveness levels?
- Is the information shared with officers and are they amending and refining their actions in light of any changes?

Each service area is required to maintain a Service Risk Register, which serves as a comprehensive tool for documenting and managing risks from a service perspective, facilitating the effective delivery of their service plans. Every three months, the Insurance and Risk Officer will ask Service and Senior Managers to review their respective risks. It is the responsibility of these managers to ensure that any necessary updates are completed on their Service Risk Registers by the specified deadline. This review process will also identify any risks that need to be escalated to the Principal Risk Register for oversight by the Executive Management Team (EMT). Additionally, urgent issues identified outside of the regular reporting cycles must be reported immediately by the service areas to the EMT for prompt attention.

The Executive Management Team (EMT) will conduct a review of the Principal Risk Register, determining whether to add or remove risks as necessary. The Principal Risk Register will be formally updated every six months. Additionally, there will be a quarterly review every three months, and any material issues that arise will be reported to EMT. This process ensures that actions regarding the principal risks are thoroughly evaluated. Following their review every six months, EMT will recommend the findings (report produced by Insurance and Risk Officer) to Audit Committee and the Cabinet before submitting them to the Council for approval. This approach establishes a focused and strategic method for risk mitigation while effectively capitalising on opportunities as they arise.

Historic versions of Service Risk Registers and Principal Risk Registers will be archived with every revision. If there is a business need to review these documents, they will be maintained in accordance with the council's Corporate Retention and Destruction Policy.

9. Document history

Name of policy	Risk Management Policy
Purpose of policy	Key stakeholders must understand their role or responsibilities within the risk management process, and how risk should be managed across the Council.
Policy applies	Corporately
First issued	2022
Latest update	2025
Update overview	<p>Reworded risk management statement</p> <p>Section 3 added for Risk Appetite</p> <p>Updated the wording to section 4 which referenced dashboards and anything considered out of date.</p> <p>Three lines of defence diagram updated.</p> <p>Added a diagram for Stating risks: causes, events and consequences within section 5</p> <p>Added a paragraph to section 6, this is identical to the one used in the Risk Appetite Statement.</p> <p>Added two paragraphs explaining current arrangements for risk reporting.</p> <p>All text has been updated to Verdana Pro and Verdana in line with the agreed corporate format.</p>

10. Definitions

Term	Definition
RAG Bands	Red, Amber or Green – Categories of Risk Ratings
EMT	Executive Management Team
PR	Principle Risks

New Forest District
Council
Appletree Court, Beaulieu Road, Lyndhurst, Hampshire, SO43 7PA
 [newforestdc](#)  [newforestgov](#)  [newforestcouncil](#)
newforest.gov.uk

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Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Score	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation
Operations							
PR1	Cyber Security	Transformation Priority 4: Designing modern and innovative services	Strategic Director Corporate Resources & Transformation Section 151 Officer	High	12	Malicious attack results in significant loss of sensitive data and/or significant disruption to Council operations	The Council continues to respond to the increasing cyber threat by completing a programme of work coordinated by its consulting Chief Information Security Officer, with a view to achieving external accreditation in due course.
PR2 263	Emergency Planning	Transformation Priority 4: Designing modern and innovative services	Strategic Director – Housing & Communities	Medium	6	An inadequate emergency planning response violates the Council's obligations under the Civil Contingencies Act and undermines both responsibilities and effective results.	The Council is collaborating with the Hampshire Resilience Forum to ensure effective preparedness for response, along with other partners at both national and local levels. Starting in April, we will establish a new relationship with Southampton as we transition away from Hampshire County Council (HCC), which will lead to the introduction of a new role. Currently, the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) is not functioning as intended, and we are engaging with MP's and external parties.

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Current Risk Rating	Risk Score	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation
PR5	Business Continuity	All	Strategic Director – Housing & Communities		12	Ineffective business continuity response enables an event to seriously disrupt Council operations	The Council acknowledges a resource shortfall and will conduct a review of its business continuity arrangements in 2025. This review will focus on adapting to changes in working patterns and the digital environment, as well as emphasising operational resilience rather than responding to specific events. The Council is well positioned to respond effectively.
Legal & Regulatory							
PR6 266	Health and Safety	People Priority 2: Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives	Chief Executive	Medium	8	A serious health and safety incident occurs	Implementation of the Council's H&S management system, including proactive monitoring arrangements and competent external advice overseen by the Corporate Health and Safety function.
PR7	Information Governance	All	Assistant Director Governance & Monitoring Officer	Medium	8	A serious data breach occurs and/or other significant instance of non-compliance with data legislation	Implementation of the Council's GDPR action plan continues overseen by the Council's Data Protection Officer and supported by the Information Governance team.

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Current Risk Rating	Risk Score	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation
PR8	Safeguarding	People Priority 1: Helping those in our community with the greatest need	Strategic Director – Housing & Communities	Medium	6	A safeguarding incident occurs which, through action or omission by the Council, might otherwise have been prevented	Under the supervision of the Hampshire Safeguarding Boards, the Community Safety Team remains engaged in safeguarding issues, supported by Designated Safeguarding Reporting Officers (DSROs). They implement effective processes and training programs in housing, ensuring a comprehensive approach to safeguarding measures.
PR9 267	Legal & Governance	All	Assistant Director Governance & Monitoring Officer	Medium	6	Legal & governance activity takes place which is not in the best interests of the Council and its stakeholders and/or is in breach of legislation	Legal and governance processes are enhancing. However, some residual risks remain. We make it a priority to seek appropriate specialist legal advice when necessary, staying aware of when it's needed.
PR10	Local Government Reform / Devolution	All	Chief Executive	High	12	The publication of the 'white paper'. We will work closely with our local authority partners to carry out specific actions and make sure our internal communications remain clear and effective.	It is anticipated that extensive programme management will take place, and the Government have outlined that they will be undertaking consultation and NFDC will be invited to respond. There is financial provision being proposed to support the work that will follow.

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Current Risk Rating	Risk Score	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation
PR11	Social Housing Regulatory Compliance	People Priority 3 – meeting Housing Needs	Strategic Director – Housing & Communities	Medium	6	Self-referral to Regulator of Social Housing. Non-compliant Inspection grading Reputational damage. Fine. H&S incident. Complaints and Disrepair claims.	Consumer Standard Gap Analysis and Action plan, Performance monitoring, Policy and Strategy reviews, reporting to EMT, Scrutiny Panel, Cabinet and Council. Tenant Engagement and Scrutiny
Financial							
PR12 268	Income and Financial Position	Transformation Priority 3: Being financially responsible	Strategic Director Corporate Resources & Transformation Section 151 Officer	Medium	6	Income volatility / poor finance settlement / extreme event causing significant financial challenge	With the transformation program in progress and ongoing reviews of the MTFP, the council is fully committed to ensuring both immediate and future financial stability.

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Current Risk Rating	Risk Score	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation
PR14	Procurement	Transformation Priority 3: Being financially responsible	Strategic Director Corporate Resources & Transformation Section 151 Officer	Medium	6	Procurement activity takes place which is not in the best interests of the Council and its stakeholders and/or is in breach of legislation	Central procurement processes have become more agile and resilient, and contract oversight is enhancing. However, some residual risk remains with the Services. It is essential to initiate contract management and tender processes well in advance.
Major Projects							
PR15 270	Hardley Depot	Place Priority 1: Shaping our place now and for future generations	Strategic Director Corporate Resources & Transformation Section 151 Officer	Medium	6	The new depot has not been completed within the required timeframe and is not operationally available.	The short-term financial exposure is increasing as the programme progresses.

Note:

Categories

Must be assigned to either:

- Financial
- Legal & Regulatory
- Major Projects
- Operations
- People
- Reputation

Theme:

276

People Priorities	Code
Priority 1: Helping those in our community with the greatest need	PE1
Priority 2: Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives	PE2
Priority 3: Meeting housing needs	PE3
Place Priorities	
Priority 1: Shaping our place now and for future generation	PL1
Priority 2: Protecting our climate, coast, and natural world	PL2
Priority 3: Caring for our facilities, neighbourhoods, and open spaces in a modern & responsive way	PL3
Prosperity Priorities Code	
Priority 1: Maximising the benefits of inclusive economic growth and investment	PR1
Priority 2: Supporting our high-quality business base and	PR2

Principal Risk Register 2024 - 2028 • January 2025

economic centres to thrive and grow	
Priority 3: Championing skills and access to job opportunities	PR3
Transformation Priorities	
Putting our customers at the heart	PT1
Being an employer of choice	PT2
Being financially responsible	PT3
Designing modern and innovative services	PT4

Risk owner

Must be assigned to either:

- Chief Executive
- Strategic Director
- Statutory Officer

Current Risk Rating / Risk Score

Risk Score	Risk Level
9-16	High Risk
4-8	Medium Risk
1-4	Low Risk

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