

# NOTICE OF MEETING

**Meeting:** CABINET

**Date and Time:** WEDNESDAY, 6 AUGUST 2025, AT 10.00 AM

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

**Enquiries to:** Email: [democratic@nfdc.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@nfdc.gov.uk)  
Joe Tyler Tel: 023 8028 5982

## 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.

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

## 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, 1 August 2025.

**Kate Ryan**  
Chief Executive

Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, Hampshire. SO43 7PA  
[www.newforest.gov.uk](http://www.newforest.gov.uk)

---

# AGENDA

## Apologies

### 1. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

### 2. MINUTES

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2025 as a correct record.

### 3. 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.

### 4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

### 5. PROPOSED DRAFT HOUSING LANDLORD STRATEGY (2025 - 2030) WITH REFERENCE TO THE HRA BUSINESS PLAN (Pages 3 - 76)

### 6. HOUSING ANNUAL COMPLIANCE REPORT (Pages 77 - 104)

### 7. TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES 2024/25 (Pages 105 - 150)

### 8. REVISED TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY (Pages 151 - 174)

### 9. PRINCIPAL RISK REGISTER REVIEW (Pages 175 - 200)

### 10. UPDATE ON LOCAL PLAN REVIEW AND REVISED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (Pages 201 - 308)

To:

#### Councillors

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

#### Councillors

Jeremy Heron  
Dan Poole  
Derek Tipp

**Cabinet – 6 August 2025**

## **Proposed draft Housing Landlord Strategy (2025 – 2030) with Reference to the HRA Business Plan**

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>The Housing Landlord Strategy is a 'new' strategy to ensure Members, Officers, and Tenants agree and understand the vision for the service and that progress towards its achievement can be monitored by these groups, other stakeholders, and the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) as required.</p> <p>The Housing Landlord Strategy will be a public facing document for the Departments "service offer" including our investment plans for our housing stock and building new "affordable" homes. The strategy culminates in an action plan for improvement in all our landlord and associated housing functions.</p> <p>Whilst it is not a legal requirement to have a Housing Landlord Strategy, it captures the context and journey in NFDC becoming an "aspirational landlord" and sets out a road map to achieve operational excellence in meeting the needs and aspirations of tenants.</p>
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	<b>That Cabinet approve the draft Housing Landlord Strategy for public consultation</b>
Reasons for recommendation(s)	<p>The Housing Landlord Strategy identifies the direction and vision to ensure our tenants can understand the improvement journey proposed, and the ways the Council intends to meet the RSH's consumer standards and work with tenants, leaseholders, and relevant partner organisations to evolve and develop all our landlord services towards excellence.</p> <p>It is needed to take account of the regulatory changes, rising tenant expectations, and best</p>

	<p>practice that have evolved in the housing sector since the production of the existing Tenancy Policy in 2017, which is a closely related document but serves a different purpose.</p> <p>The period of the proposed Housing Landlord Strategy covers both those of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and the first four-year inspection timetable of the RSH which commenced in April 2024.</p> <p>The final version of the Housing Landlord Strategy post consultation will seek Cabinet approval with a revised Tenancy Policy coming to a later EMT and Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel.</p> <p>The draft Housing Landlord Strategy, once approved, will serve as a positive context statement and public reference document for a wide variety of audiences as outlined. It also makes transparent our investment plans for improving our existing homes and commitment to build new “affordable” homes to meet local housing needs.</p>
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Steve Davies – Housing and Homelessness.
Strategic Director(s)	Richard Knott – Housing and Communities
Officer Contact	Paul Thomas Assistant Director – Housing 02380 285 725 paul.thomas@nfdc.gov.uk

## Introduction and background

1. New Forest District Council is the largest social housing provider in the district currently managing over 5,200 properties. Nevertheless, social housing remains a scarce resource which must be allocated fairly to those in housing need and demand always far exceeds supply.



2. At any one time, we have around two thousand households on our housing register who qualify for social housing. The Council therefore remains committed to providing social housing as it plays an invaluable role in providing homes which are affordable for local people and enables them to establish and sustain roots within our local communities.
3. It is also evident that consumer expectations are changing and increasing. There is intense focus on property condition, tenant experience and landlord accountability across the housing landscape. This has increased oversight and scrutiny of the social housing sector from the media, the Housing Ombudsman and the RSH.
4. In effect, council stock holding landlords like NFDC and their housing association partners increasingly face the challenge of ensuring they get the basic functions of providing safe, warm, and secure homes right, whilst also contributing to the overall wellbeing of tenants, adapting services to their vulnerabilities and the wider community.
5. Whilst it is expected that NFDC will be dissolved into a wider unitary authority under the government's local government reorganisation (LGR) mandate at some point, the proposed Housing Landlord Strategy sets out a clear statement and approach we intend to take in delivering our Landlord Services over the next five years in accordance with our Corporate Plan, our ambitions and values.
6. It is now timely to present a draft Housing Landlord Strategy and update our current Tenancy Policy (2017) having analysed the defining issues shaping our current operating environment. That is alongside the structural changes that LGR will bring and the impactful regulatory changes as we go forward on our journey of learning and continuous improvement in our landlord services for the benefit of our tenants.

### **Corporate plan priorities**

7. This strategy establishes our vision for Council-owned social housing within the New Forest and the contribution it will make in achieving the ambitions of the Council's Corporate Plan 2024-28 including:-
  - *Priority 2: Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives. The Corporate Plan states that delivery of this priority will be supported by the increasing the supply and delivery of new "affordable homes" through the planning system and by the council landlord building them itself.*

- *Priority 3: Meeting Housing Needs – as above, but additionally in relation to the number of council homes achieving Energy Performance Certification Band C and percentage scores for the 5 safety and compliance Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs).*
8. The draft Housing Landlord Strategy sets out the Council’s ambition to be an aspirational landlord, going beyond the minimum statutory and regulatory requirements placed on local authority landlords, where the tenant’s voice is heard and acted upon. Changing legislation, tenant satisfaction, best practice and findings from self-assessments have supported the drafting of the attached document within the framework of the Corporate Plan.
  9. Our tenants, leaseholders and shared owners are “paying customers” buying a housing product, or buying housing services, with income and expenditure ring-fenced in the HRA. We believe our performance in safety compliance matters is robust and tenants are provided with safe and secure housing. We have a Greener Housing Strategy which supports our work to deliver all our homes to EPC C standards by 2030. This work is still in progress, but our increasing multi-million-pound investment budgets reflect the emphasis on the importance of this workstream. Our work to improve the service offering against consumer standards is covered by our individual reports to each panel meeting, highlighting our gap analysis and action plans.
  10. It is worth noting however that council landlord services have always had distinct characteristics compared with other major council functions. Fundamentally, the landlord service should be considered as a long-term capital business. Day to day income and spending must be managed alongside maintaining the asset base, on which both good tenant experience and financial viability of the Council’s HRA in the future depend, with its existing commitments and budgets summarised at Appendix 2.

### **Consultation undertaken.**

11. The draft Housing Landlord Strategy was presented to EMT on the 27 May 2025 where it was recommended that the draft document was split into a strategy document and context statement. The draft strategy document is now presented at Appendix 1, and the context document is presented at Appendix 3.
12. Informal consultation on draft Housing Landlord Strategy priorities and policies has taken place over the last 12 months with staff, partners, and the tenant involvement group (TIG). The latter providing statements of intent and the “tenant voice” as a group captured as a foreword to the document.

13. All informal consultation responses have supported the proposal to produce a Housing Landlord Strategy, the content of which has been an evolving and iterative process. The challenge has been timing as the Housing Department is driving hard the process of change through its structures, policy revisions such as the associated Tenancy Policy (2017).
14. A Tenancy Policy is a more legally based and technical document. The revision of ours is running on a different timeline, and it will sit alongside and be linked to the Housing Landlord Strategy once approved through the relevant governance arrangements and the draft is due for presentation at EMT on 12 August 2025.
15. Finding solutions to identified service gaps, ramping-up house building and improving our existing stock, whilst implementing new methods of “amplifying” the tenants voice in our landlord functions are all current workstreams.
16. Public consultation is proposed over the next two months and the Strategy will be reviewed and updated in light of any responses received before seeking adoption.

### **Financial and resource implications**

17. Any expenditure required by the proposed action plan contained within the draft Housing Landlord Strategy will be met from existing budgets within the HRA and have already been factored-in the 30 Year Business Plan.
18. New policies and systems of work required in the shorter-term at a service level to improve service delivery and outcomes are part of the regular financial monitoring arrangements to manage risk.

### **Legal implications**

19. The Regulator of Social Housing launched its current regulatory framework on 1 April 2024, and the “new” regulations for social housing providers are contained within its Consumer Standards. These relate to Compliance, Health and Safety, Property Condition, Neighbourhood and Communities, with a specific focus on Tenant Engagement and Influence, supported by the introduction of statutory reporting requirements of standard Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) as covered in a separate report to Cabinet .

20. The draft Housing Landlord Strategy and associated context statement summarise an array of existing housing policies and procedures that have a legal basis and require appropriate legal remedies. For example, our ASB and Domestic Violence policies as recently published.

### **Risk assessment**

21. Failure to raise standards, meet the regulatory requirements of the consumer standards and respond appropriately to complaints could lead to fines and compensation levied by the Regulator, Housing Ombudsman or the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
22. The successful delivery of the consumer standards mitigates longer term legal and financial risk to the Council. Our self-assessment and activities already undertaken to prepare for inspection mitigate against the possibility of the Council not achieving a compliant grade from the regulator and the consequences of financial and reputational, damage, including prosecution for breaches of health and safety rules.
23. Assurance can be given that NFDC currently provides a good overall service to its tenants as evidenced by the TSMs and the risk profile is acceptable and professionally managed.

### **Environmental / Climate and nature implications**

24. Whilst the report has no direct implications, the work of NFDC will include improving the energy efficiency of our local housing stock, providing better services on our estates, including open spaces, and the positive contribution to neighbourhoods. This may present further opportunities to contribute to the Council's neighbourhood and climate objectives.

### **Equalities implications**

25. A formal Equalities Impact Assessment is being undertaken, and this will be presented to Cabinet for consideration and strategy amendment before formal adoption following public consultation. This will take account of both positive and negative impacts identified with our tenants and stakeholders. The focus will remain on our customer services approach, and how we can adapt landlord services to meet individual household needs.
26. Overall, the Consumer Standards, particularly the Transparency, Influence and Accountability standard is likely to have a positive

impact on NFDC tenants as there is a requirement for landlords to “understand the diverse needs” of tenants, including those arising from protected characteristics, language barriers, and additional support needs’ and assess whether all tenants have fair access to, and equitable outcomes of, housing and landlord services.

### **Crime and disorder implications**

27. The interventions proposed through our improvement to tackling Anti-Social Behaviour as part of the consumer standards is likely to lead to an initial increase in the number of cases prosecuted in the courts, or by the Police, whilst long term interventions proposed should lead to a long-term reduction in crime and disorder, working in partnership with our Community Safety Partnership and Policing partners.

### **Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications**

28. The collection, retention and deletion of Tenant data is governed by GDPR and associated guidance. All data will be collected and maintained in line with the required legislation. These Policies are developing but already in place at a service level to improve service delivery and outcomes.
29. Once the Housing Landlord Strategy is fully adopted the linked policies will be updated in line with any changes required and will be continuously reviewed.
30. Many of our planned improvements rely on interdependencies with our Transformation Strategy and team delivering the self-serve and tenant portal, including insight data to enable us to get to know our tenants better and tailor services accordingly. This alongside introducing a scheduled project to deliver a new IT repairs system is a key priority for us and we are ambitious to achieve this objective within the 2025-26 financial year.
31. The successful delivery of these IT programmes will further mitigate legal and financial risk to the Council.

### **New Forest National Park / Cranborne Chase National Landscape implications**

32. The approach of ensuring the Housing Service is fully compliant with the consumer standards including for housing neighbourhoods as well as homes may involve increased and better partnership working with

the National Park Authority where some of the Council's housing stock is also located and managed by our landlord functions.

### **Overview and Scrutiny panel comments**

33. The draft Housing Landlord Strategy (2025 – 2030) was presented to Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 18/06/25.
34. The Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel supported the draft Housing Landlord Strategy 2025 – 2030 and offered feedback on the draft strategy as presented at Appendix 1.
35. The Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel formally noted the agreed investment plans inclusive of the existing Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget commitments as made public within this draft Housing Landlord Strategy and at Appendix 2.
36. It should be noted that the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel met before the Government announcement of the £39 billion Social and Affordable Homes Programme on 2 July 2025. As a result, there has been some adjustment to the Draft Landlord Strategy and HRA Business Plan. Overall, the outlook has improved further and there has been no material change to the council's ambitions as laid out in this report.

### **Conclusion**

37. The formal adoption of a Housing Landlord Strategy signals our ambition of becoming an "aspirational landlord" and sets out a road map to achieving operational excellence in meeting the needs and aspirations of our tenants and leaseholders in a transparent, accessible, public facing document.
38. The Council is delivering a good service to its tenants and leaseholders as evidenced by the TSM results over the last two years and has made significant progress toward meeting the requirements of the Social Regulation Act (2023) and the consumer standards.
39. There is a significant programme of work taking place in the landlord service and many system changes are planned to include CRM, policy and practice improvements that are to be implemented over the next twelve months.
40. The Housing Service is confident in its direction of travel and prioritisation of investment to maintain and improve its compliance

with the consumer standards and offer a better service to its tenants, leaseholders, and shared owners.

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Draft Housing  
Landlord Strategy 2025-2029

Appendix 2 – HRA Business Plan  
Investment Summary

Appendix 3 – Draft Housing  
Landlord Context Statement

**Background Papers:**

**Regulator of Social Housing  
Consumer Standards**

## Appendix 1



# Landlord Strategy 2025-2030

Housing Department

April 2025

Version	Author	Date	Changes made
01	Paul Thomas	01/06/2025	2 <sup>nd</sup> Draft EMT amended – split of document into strategy and context statement.



## Foreword

I am proud to introduce this new Housing Landlord Strategy on behalf of New Forest District Council (NFDC) and its tenant. This strategy builds on our achievements of investing and improving our council homes and services for tenants and leaseholders over many years and sets out our ambitions for the future.

We identify 2018 as the start of our real ambition to build more new council homes to better meet the “affordable” housing need in the district, and to transform the housing landlord service. The financial challenge is getting the right balance between providing new homes, improving our existing homes, and enhancing our landlord service offer to tenants and leaseholders.

I believe we have been very successful in achieving our ambitions given the significant rise in service expectations since the introduction of the Social Housing Regulation Act (2023) and the new Consumer Standards. We are rising to the challenge of meeting the standards using them as a guide to improve service outcomes for our tenants and leaseholders.

We are proud that almost all our homes now meet the decent homes standard, and for the homes where this standard cannot be reached, we know the reasons why. Less than 100 properties out of our stock of 5,200 remain in this category due to the non-traditional construction type of the homes. We are also alive to the prospect of a new enhanced decent homes standard which we will build into our future investment plans from early 2026.

Our overarching priority remains to increase financial investment in housing repairs, on-going maintenance, and the decarbonisation of our homes over the long term. This includes improving the energy efficiency rating of all our homes to minimum of EPC C standard by 2030. We understand that this is an ambitious target in addition to the large investments already made to make sure all our homes are decent, warm, and safe.

These priorities sit alongside our on-going plans to deliver and build better and more “affordable” homes to help meet the district’s housing needs including for our older tenants and particularly those with disabilities or vulnerabilities.

Our ambition combined with the council's tradition of strong financial management means that our Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is robust enough to fund the range of home improvements outlined over the longer term.

We have also made some excellent progress with a newly formed, and enhanced, Tenant Engagement team, delivering a new engagement strategy and involving our tenants more in council decision making structures. However, all this activity is taking place during a further period of uncertainty for our tenants and staff due to the government's recent Devolution White Paper and Local Government Reorganisation Plans (LGR), adding to the general uncertainty for our tenants, leaseholders, staff, and elected members alike.

Whilst we do not know yet what our new unitary council will look like or exact timescales, we will work pro-actively with all our neighbouring councils and the government to deliver the best possible longer-term outcomes for all our residents. Our aim is for our social housing ambitions, culture, and successful landlord operating model to be carried forward into the new unitary council.

I am pleased that this housing landlord strategy aims to keep our focus on continuing to provide secure, safe, warm, and affordable homes for our tenants, whilst delivering and building new affordable homes that will benefit our future communities, tenants, leaseholders, our economy, and environment.

Councillor Steve Davies

Portfolio Holder for Housing Services

## **Foreword by The Tenant Involvement Group (TIG)**

The TIG support the intentions of this Landlord Strategy and look forward to supporting all tenants to help deliver on the priorities and enable council action on improving our Housing Services.

We trust the Portfolio Holder and the staff at NFDC to help us make the promised housing landlord improvements happen, and hope that our co-operative way of working will continue with any new landlord under LGR when it happens.

We, as tenants, and the staff of the housing landlord service should in partnership be setting our own standards. We should set the highest standards to achieve and be raising the bar, aiming high, with a continued focus on tenant satisfaction.

We say: - “tenant voice” rightly underpins this strategy, alongside needed reflection of the regulatory landscape. Housing landlord priorities should be created in partnership with tenants and shaped by our “tenant voice” and our aspirations”

We know the staff and elected members listen to tenants, but this strategy must be more than a document that satisfies the regulator and the council’s corporate priorities – it must evolve into a plan and actions that mean something to us tenants and our communities.

We know that increasing our representation and engagement is key in this, and this strategy needs to be communicated to tenants at a level that we can all buy into, accounting for our diverse communities and tenant population.

## Introduction

The council is the largest provider of social housing within the district managing a stock of around 5,200 socially rented homes including a small but increasing number of shared-ownership properties. It has unique boundaries surrounding the New Forest National Park area. The New Forest District area including the National Park has high house price to income ratio of around 13 to 1 indicating significant disparities between the cost of housing and the financial means of many of its residents.

To help address the district's high level of housing need the council decided from 2018 to build and deliver new council homes of high quality itself, whilst enabling housing associations and private developers (through their Section 106 planning agreements) to deliver more "affordable" homes of all types in the district. This partnership approach to "affordable" housing supply has been successful with 794 new "affordable" homes built in the district since 2018.

To date, the council has directly delivered 375 new "affordable" homes and housing associations have delivered 353 homes. The remaining 68 have been delivered by the private sector via the planning system. In effect, NFDC has effectively delivered 47% of all "affordable homes" in the district since 2018 and has 174 new affordable" homes currently under construction or in contract for delivery over the next three years.

The high-cost of housing in the district has generated increased demand for shared-ownership properties to enable local working households and key workers get a foot on the property ladder. These have been delivered in the district in more recent years including some in the final stages of development in the National Park at Brockenhurst to address specific "affordable" housing needs and demand.

In short, we have a significant population who need subsidised housing in some form to live, work, and remain in the district and the council promotes "affordable housing delivery" in all forms. Providing the shared ownership housing option for local people supports our wider Place Making agenda whilst reducing pressure on the highly constrained private rented sector.

Our existing homes and those we develop ourselves are mostly provided at social rents with some newly built homes set at “affordable rent” levels. Social rents are restricted by policy and regulations to a government set rent formula for council owned homes.

“Affordable” rents are higher rents that can be set up to 80 per cent of the market rent to cover the costs of building new-high standard homes, including long-term borrowing by the council. Though these higher rents can be offset for tenants by the reduced running costs of our newly built warm and energy efficient homes.

At the same time, we consistently have over 2,000 households on our housing register, which demonstrates our urgent and on-going need for more “affordable” housing of all types in the district. Whilst our housing register looks static at around 2,000 households, the number does not take account of the circa 400 council homes our teams re-let each year across both our general needs and temporary accommodation properties.

This turnover demonstrates both a high turn-over in our housing stock and our business efficiency in managing our empty properties through our voids (empty homes) process and the high levels of performance by our repairs and maintenance teams.

Our social landlord responsibilities also include addressing the significant carbon emissions arising from social housing use and we have commissioned substantial capital programmes of works to meet our net-zero targets. These include retrofitting new products such as fabric insulation, triple-glazing, air source heat pumps, and solar panels to our existing homes.

Our aim is to bring all our homes up to a minimum standard (EPC C) that addresses both the energy efficiency targets and to help tenants with their energy bills and wider cost of living pressures. This approach is supported by our **Greener Housing Strategy 2022-2032** which runs over a longer period than our other strategies and is linked to our 30 Year HRA Business Plan investment priorities.

The training of our maintenance staff in the fitting and servicing of new technologies to ‘future-proof’ our housing stock and service delivery is also accounted for in our strategic long term investment plans.

We are also very aware the council's landlord function has significant responsibilities to ensure that our homes, estates, and surrounding areas including public open spaces are safe, well maintained, and contribute to better health and environmental outcomes including making biodiversity gains wherever possible.

Whilst we are rightly focussed on the safety and 'bricks and mortar' aspects of our service delivery, we intend to increasingly put our tenants at "the heart" of service delivery accepting that may mean a shift in approach and investment priorities for what matters most to them rather than the business in how we deliver our landlord services.

Overall, we are confident we can deliver on our tenant promises as our staff are mostly caring and committed to give the best service they can to our tenants, leaseholders, and customers giving us a positive and responsive service culture in our landlord service.

# Contents

Foreword .....	11
Foreword by The Tenant Involvement Group (TIG) .....	13
Introduction .....	14
Scope of Landlord Strategy .....	18
National Context .....	20
Increased Expectations of Social Housing Regulation .....	20
Additional Legislation and Policy Changes .....	21
Local Context .....	25
Customer Relationship Management (CRM) .....	25
Achievements to date .....	26
Our Vision for Council-Owned Housing .....	26
Corporate Priorities .....	30
Affordable Housing Investment .....	32
Monitoring and governance .....	33
Strategic Action Plan .....	34
Appendix 1 - Action Plan .....	35
Appendix 2 - HRA Business Plan .....	47
Introduction .....	47
Baseline projections .....	48
1.1 Baseline assumptions .....	48
1.2 Gaps in the data and potential risks .....	50
1.3 Baseline – revenue position .....	51
1.4 Baseline – capital programme .....	51
1.5 Baseline – debt .....	53
1.6 Baseline – affordability .....	54
Baseline – summary .....	55
Appendix 3 - NFDC Draft Context Document .....	56
Section 1- The Council’s provision of housing .....	56
Section 2- The operational management structure of the Council .....	60
Section 3 – The Council’s governance structure .....	63
Section 4 – The Council’s strategy and long-term plan for its housing stock. .	65
Section 5 – How tenants are involved in decision making about their homes.	69

## Scope of Landlord Strategy

The scope of this strategy is wide ranging and brings together and informs several housing related strategies and policies that focus on delivering services that meet tenants' needs and aspirations. It draws on our achievements to date and sets out the future aims of the service. The strategy aims to direct medium-term investment to provide secure, safe, warm, and affordable homes for our tenants, whilst delivering and building the new "affordable" homes that will benefit our communities, tenants, leaseholders, the economy, and our environment.

It also describes our approach to health and safety, governance, decarbonising our homes, and amplifying the "tenants voice" in our ambitions and promises for future action. This strategy is both a context statement and single reference document for our service promise and improvement journey as a social landlord.

The strategy also outlines how we plan to deliver best outcomes for our tenants and leaseholders at a time of fundamental political and structural change within local government and the increased demands of legislation and regulation of our landlord service throughout the lifetime of this strategy. It also provides an analysis of the external drivers and risks that the social housing sector is currently facing. This includes the potential local impacts that will influence its delivery now and in the future, including the investment in new affordable housing.

The strategy will be structured around four strategic priorities, underscoring the Council's commitment to:

- **Quality Homes and Neighbourhoods:** Focusing on delivering well-maintained, safe, affordable homes and neighbourhoods that support resident health and wellbeing.
- **Tenant Voice and Opportunity:** Centring decisions and actions around tenant perspectives and involvement in every aspect of service provision
- **Accountability and Transparency:** Striving for good governance, financial resilience, operational efficiency, responsible investment, and social purpose.
- **Culture and Operational Excellence:** Placing emphasis on delivering services that meet tenant needs and aspirations, prioritising safety, and compliance.



An updated [Tenancy Policy](#) will capture this change of approach and sits alongside this strategy as a companion document. The Tenancy Policy sets out the council's legal and operational approach to applications and tenancy related matters and is probably of more immediate interest to applicants, tenants, and leaseholders.

The Tenancy Policy offers detailed guidance regarding: -

- Obtaining a Council home and referencing our allocations policies
- Our approach to tenure including issuing Secure Tenancies, Licenses and Occupation Agreements etc.
- Reviews and appeals of landlord tenancy decisions.
- Tenancy Sustainment Support
- Advice and information
- Processes for Ending Tenancies including Succession.
- Repairs and Adaptations to properties referencing DFG policies
- Careline services
- Right to Buy (RTB) and home ownership opportunities
- Tenancy Fraud
- Performance Monitoring
- Review of policies

This is not an exhaustive list, and the detail of such policy matters is being updated in a revised Tenancy Policy at the time of writing.

The Council does also have wider housing duties including meeting the needs of homeless households and maintaining a housing register. These functions and activities are contained within NFDC's wider housing strategies and policies and are outside the scope of this strategy, though again there are cross-over and links that this strategy refers to accordingly as our landlord functions are set in the context of the wider Housing Department's overall objectives and accountabilities as a council stock owning landlord and provider of general housing services including homelessness provisions.

In presenting this strategy, we have analysed the defining issues shaping our current operating environment and the structural changes that LGR will bring, alongside social housing regulation. We also acknowledge the increased influence the Housing Ombudsman service has on improving service outcomes for tenants as we go forward on our journey of learning and continuous improvement.

## National Context

The Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 (The Act) was introduced by government following high profile failures in the social housing sector, namely the Grenfell Tower Fire in June 2017. This led to fundamental changes in housing regulation to improve the condition of social housing and increase tenant safety.

The Act also places greater emphasis on the rights of tenants, and for their voices to be heard. The absence of which was seen as a major failing in the build-up to Grenfell and in other previous cases of fire, deaths, and serious incidents in social housing.

## Increased Expectations of Social Housing Regulation

The service expectations placed upon the council as a Registered Provider of Housing and social landlord have also changed significantly since the introduction of the Act in 2023, which brought about inspection of council landlords for the first time in over 20 yrs.

The Consumer Standards form the basis of the RSH's new Inspection regime, which commenced in April 2024 on a four-year rolling cycle of inspections. The RSH has not published an inspection timetable as it works primarily on a risk-based approach with landlords known to be failing, those who have self-referred, and others that have had reports of serious failings in handling complaints from tenants and leaseholders published by the Housing Ombudsman Service.

The RSH also has the stated intention to balance out the inspection timetable more pro-actively with other landlords who are not seen as requiring immediate intervention. Whilst NFDC has not been inspected to date, an inspection could happen any time before April 2028 at six weeks-notice.

Whilst housing associations have been regulated for many years by the RSH in its various forms. It is acknowledged that after the first year of published inspection results that most councils inspected, including our prospective LGR partner councils, have some way to go in achieving compliant consumer gradings compared to our housing association partners.

The RSH's stated aim is to drive long term improvements in the social housing sector, and judgements are made on the landlords' abilities to demonstrate compliance with the four consumer standards:

- **Safety & Quality**
- **Neighbourhood & Community standard**
- **Tenancy (plus Rent Standard)**
- **Transparency, Influence & Accountability**

There is a fifth standard of **Competence and Conduct** that relates to the qualifications and behaviours of senior staff. This standard has only recently been confirmed into policy. However, unlike many social landlords we did not wait for this confirmation from Government as we believe in having the best trained staff we can secure. We have already entered a contract with the Chartered Institute of Housing to ensure that all our senior staff are qualified to CIH Levels 4 and 5 as per the required standards for each level of seniority, which will trickle down to relevant front-facing staff over the lifetime of this strategy.

## **Additional Legislation and Policy Changes**

### **Fire Safety Act 2021**

This Act is very significant for housing services as it clarifies that the landlord's fire safety duty extends to the building's structure, external walls (including cladding, balconies, and flat entrance doors) and particularly relates to multi-occupied residential building such as our extra-care schemes.

### **Building Safety Act 2022**

This Act was also enacted in response to the Grenfell Tower fire with key reforms including a new building safety regulator and a focus on construction product safety. Landlords now have a responsibility to advise and report on compliance particularly on their high-rise and/or high-risk buildings.

At present there are no buildings in our council stock that are 18 metres (7 storey) or 11 metres (5 Storey) or above which are classified as high-risk.

### **People at the Heart of Care white paper 2021 and the Health and Social Care Act 2022**

Both set out the Government proposals for health and reform of Adult Social Care, highlighting prevention and positioned digital connectivity as vital to better care. The government's key policy priority remains to support people to remain at home, rather than in care homes or hospital settings, for as long as possible and enhance partnership working across the health and social care economy.

Overall, there is broad agreement across housing, health, and social care providers that holistic people agendas that keep people well and able to live at home for as long as possible only happen with the support of the social housing sector.

### **Our Future Homes: Housing that promotes wellbeing and community for an ageing population (2024)**

The government's vision for spreading opportunity more equally across the UK, announcing the conclusions of an Older People's Housing Taskforce to better understand the housing market for our ageing population. T

The importance of housing was set out in the publication which promotes four key messages which have resonance with all social landlords:

- Think Housing
- Address ageing
- Promote wellbeing
- Create inclusive communities

These messages flow through NFDC as most of our residents and tenants are older people with increasing care needs, highlighting the priority of focussing on health and wellbeing alongside the built environment and adapted housing for the future.

### **Domestic Abuse Act 2021**

Transforming the response to domestic abuse, helping to prevent offending, protect victims and ensure they have the support they need including housing solutions.

The Council has recently produced a **Domestic Abuse Strategy** as part of its overall approach to tackling Domestic Abuse, and a specific **Policy** outlining our approach to supporting tenants suffering domestic violence.

In summary, our landlord services are now subject to increased oversight and scrutiny from the Regulator of Social Housing, the Housing Ombudsman, and the Local Government Ombudsman. All which have been given powers to issue unlimited fines and intervene in the business of social landlords where serious failures of compliance or service are identified.

### **Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024**

This Code sets out good practice that will allow landlords to respond to complaints raised by their residents quickly and to use the data and learn from complaints to drive service improvements. NFDC has adopted this code in setting-up both its corporate and landlord complaints procedure and processes, including adopting the recommended governance structure.

Therefore, overall responsibility and scrutiny for complaints handling and outcomes is held at Portfolio Holder level by two Members Responsible for Complaints (MRCs) for both the Housing Ombudsman (HO), and the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSO) for all customers who are not tenants including applicants, those on the housing register, or receiving homeless support etc.

The Housing Portfolio Holder (PH) is also Deputy Leader of the Council and outcomes and learning from housing complaints are regularly reported at monthly PH Briefings, our Housing Panel and Cabinet.

We promote a positive complaint handling culture amongst our staff and tenants. The housing service is committed to working with complainants to resolve their issues and recognise where we got things wrong, plus responding to complaints on time which is a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for us.

### **Social Housing Decent Homes Standard Review 2024**

A review of the standards for condition of social homes – national consultation is underway which is widely expected to result in higher standards to be introduced as a new 'Decent Homes' Standard.

We expect this will include:

- Changes to what repairs are needed for a home to be considered 'decent'
- An updated list of what facilities all homes need to have
- Updates to how the condition of a property is assessed and measured
- A new minimum energy efficiency standard for social housing
- Changes to the way landlords need to assess potential hazards in homes

### **Proposed Future Homes Standard 2025**

Once implemented changes to Building Regulations will ensure that newly built homes result in significantly less carbon emissions compared with recent construction standards. NFDC is already building new homes to the anticipated standard which will result in more affordable heating costs as well as about reducing the carbon-emissions in the construction and long-term running cost by up to 80% of traditionally built homes. The consultation on the exact standards has not concluded at the time of writing but expected to do so by the end of 2025.

Whilst there is increasing legislation, regulation and prescribed practices already in place or developing, it should be recognised that the council still has some freedoms in determining how it prioritises and delivers its landlord services within the constitution of the council, having democratically elected members, and the aspirations of our tenants taking account of our financial resources and financial rules of managing the HRA.

## Local Context

We are currently measuring ourselves against all the consumer standards and making any identified improvements and tenant outcomes prior to inspection by the RSH. Striving for excellence in our service offer to our tenants is a key objective for us.

### **HRA Investment Summary**

For the 2025 -26 financial year our proposed budget includes a total of £22.11m to be spent on maintaining tenants' properties including fire safety, statutory compliance, and our accelerated decarbonisation programme, respectively.

During the preceding three financial year period 2022 -25 we invested £52.13m on maintaining tenants' properties including £6.2m on identified fire safety improvements, £2.7m on major refurbishment to bring empty properties suffering structural disrepair back into use, £21.07m on capital planned maintenance programmes, £3.16m on decarbonisation and £18.98m on statutory compliance and general repairs and maintenance.

The scale of this investment shows our commitment to make sure our homes are well-maintained, energy efficient, and affordable and will make a real difference to our tenants, not just by improving their homes but also helping with energy costs and ensuring they feel secure where they live.

NFDC has a proven track record in prudently and effectively using the HRA to fund our landlord priorities, activities, and meeting the district's housing need, whilst listening to and supporting the interests of our tenants and leaseholders across the range of council services that impact their lives more broadly.

## Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

The council recognises that it needs new IT systems to help provide better service outcomes for all our residents, tenants, and leaseholders. Our existing CRM system and repairs system portfolio need urgent replacement to allow our tenants and leaseholders to digitally self-serve across a range of council services if they chose to do so.

These new IT systems are being implemented under our Transformation Strategy.

## Achievements to date

All Registered Providers of landlord services like NFDC face the on-going challenges of ensuring they get the basics right whilst contributing to the wellbeing of their tenants and communities.

The Council has made significant strides forward over the last few years and has taken further proactive steps to prepare for the new regulatory regime. It has approved a Corporate Plan 2024 to 2028 with People Priorities that have been informed by housing need and has specific expected outcomes for council homes and tenants 'baked in' and has a clear commitment to continuous improvement and enhancing partnership working.

As part of their evidence base, landlords have also been required to submit Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) to the regulator annually. These provide a focus for identifying gaps in compliance and/or underperformance which should help inform our action plan.

NFDC is scored in the upper quartile (top 25% of all landlords and top 10% of local authority landlords) with tenants rating our services highly. Our current satisfaction score is 84% as reported to the RSH in June 2025.

## Our Vision for Council-Owned Housing

Our vision for council-owned social housing is laid-out in various sections of our **Corporate Plan 2024–2028**, though fundamentally;

*"We believe that no-one should live in a poor quality or damp home or be disadvantaged by poor quality neighbourhoods with unmaintained homes or have to live with anti-social behaviour on their estates or their streets"*

This Landlord Strategy establishes our vision for Council-owned social housing within the district and acknowledges the contribution that it will make towards the ambitions of our Corporate Plan 2024-2028 and our other linked strategies and policies.

The **Corporate Plan 2024–2028** has two significant People priorities that relate directly to the Landlord service: -

- Priority 1: Helping those in our community with the greatest need.



- Priority 3: Meeting housing needs.

It further states as one of its aims is to:

*“Work with our housing tenants to understand their needs and provide high quality service standards in line with the government's new Social Housing Charter and regulatory regime.”*

This statement effectively commits the whole council, not just the housing department, to deliver our landlord priorities and comply with all regulatory standards in partnership with our tenants and listen to the tenant voice in how we provide increasingly better landlord services for all our tenants and leaseholders throughout the lifetime of this strategy.

The Council has made substantial progress on several of its Corporate Plan priorities, including the housing ones through ensuring that our homes are safe, secure, and are at least maintained to the current decent home standard. For example, whilst ninety-eight per cent of our homes already meet the current decent homes standard, we are not complacent and continue to make long-term investment plans to further modernise and future-proof all our council homes.

We believe our estates and areas are generally secure, well maintained, healthy and safe for our tenants and leaseholders assisted by excellent in-house CCTV coverage of the district and a community safety service based at our headquarters in Lyndhurst.

At the same time, the aim of our Transformation Strategy is to modernise and innovative services by proactively using data and insight to inform our decision-making and report performance through a robust performance management framework and culture. The Transformation piece advocates maximising the use of new technology, automating manual processes and keep our software up to date with new technology releases, and should put us in an advantageous position for LGR and the future transfer of our housing functions to a new council.

The Housing Department is in the process of commissioning a new repairs and maintenance IT system to better interface with our bespoke designed housing management system and replace three other obsolete or outdated IT asset data bases, which will then support a wider Asset Management Database for the council, including for our estates team.

Overall, we are preparing well to meet the regulator's new consumer standards through self-assessment, restructuring our teams to improve capacity where needed, and by introducing an enhanced performance management framework linked to both our Corporate Plan and Housing KPIs.

The aim is to improve and monitor our landlord service offer to tenants and leaseholders, especially around better meeting the needs of our older and vulnerable tenants.

### **Customer Strategy 2024-2028**

The aim of this strategy is to raise the profile of the customer throughout the organisation and ensure that our plans, decisions, actions, and culture, are customer focused' which again points to our need and ambition to modernise our communication channels for all tenants and leaseholders, but particularly those with additional vulnerabilities and support needs.

This is where a new corporate CRM system will allow our applicants, tenants, and leaseholders to self-serve in important services to them including reporting repairs, rent accounts, and general enquiries for adaptations, estate management, grounds maintenance, and all other housing enquiries rather than emailing or calling our housing hub contact centre as they must do currently. Thus, allowing our call-centre staff to spend more time with more complex case-handling needs and requests for services.

In short, the provision of a self-serve system is seen as essential to allowing our tenants, leaseholders, and residents to choose how they engage with us to receive services either through a digital platform, by telephone, or by face-to-face meetings.

The council aims to go beyond the minimum statutory and regulatory requirements placed on all local authority landlords, where the tenant's voice is heard and acted upon.

### **Tenant Engagement**

Our **Tenant Engagement Strategy (2024-2028)** best captures our overall vision for providing homes and landlord services to our tenants and has four strategic priorities: -

Strategy priority 1 - Listening to our tenants.

Strategy priority 2 – Putting tenants first.

Strategy priority 3 – Knowing our tenants and supporting engagement.

Strategy priority 4 – How we communicate with tenants.

## **Our Tenants**

We recognise that knowing our tenants and leaseholders is a critical part of delivering our housing landlord services. A Housing Performance and Tenant Engagement Team has been established to ensure the Strategy is delivered measured by Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

NFDC has done some innovative and creative work in this space already such as creating a Mental Health Practitioner role to work with vulnerable residents and employing a qualified mental health nurse in partnership with the NHS to support our tenants and staff to prevent hospital admissions and promote wellbeing.

However, we also recognise that we need to know more to truly tailor our services to meet our tenants needs and, where appropriate, provide a personalised service to those with specific complex needs (such as long term physical or mental health condition).

## **Tenant Profile**

Our current tenant profile tells us that 67% of our tenants are aged 50 or over, whilst 45% of our tenants are aged 60 plus, with the majority living in our four most densely populated areas of the district: New Milton; Totton; Hythe; Pennington & Lymington.

Our joint tenancies have an even mix of male and female tenants and 71% of our sole tenancies are held by female tenants. We are doing more to identify and recognise the protected characteristics of our tenants and residents and recently have published a **Reasonable adjustments policy**. This approach linked to the 'new tools' provided by our planned replacement IT system with enhanced staff training should help us improve the personalisation of our services wherever possible.

We know that we need to do more to know our tenants, their needs, and the needs of their household. To this end, NFDC are currently undertaking a commissioned tenant data survey asking all tenants to help us understand how we can shape our services to better meet their needs. This will be complemented with on-going efforts to improve our data integrity and collection by all our housing resident service teams.

## **Supporting our Tenants**

We have created a new Tenancy Sustainment Team and a separate ASB and Neighbourhood Team to continue to provide support for our tenant population, and we are proud to work in partnership with tenants and their communities to ensure the needs of our tenants are met.

We also provide a Careline service (lifeline pendant service) for which uses a two-way speech system linked to our team in the emergency control room based in Lyndhurst, where trained staff answer calls quickly, professionally and efficiently, to ensure that any help needed by our older and more tenants and residents is provided.

The Council currently supports five community hubs, geographically dispersed around our district, providing advice and support for our communities, including access to Housing Services, Citizens Advice Bureaux, alongside FoodShare larders and fund other community projects with Town and Parish Councils and the voluntary sector.

We continue to involve and consult tenants on housing services that mean a lot to them, and we provide a wide and accessible range of methods for tenants to be involved, through digital, face to face and personal contact at times and methods convenient to our tenants.

We recognise the need to strengthen our governance arrangements between our tenants and elected members on an on-going basis developing broader representation opportunities to attract better representation and numbers of engaged tenants even if this is based on time-limited topics and issues to be discussed on a digital platform in the future.

## **Corporate Priorities**

The overall strategic vision for the Council in the Corporate Plan 2024-28 is delivered by a caring and ambitious partnership of departments working together:

“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.”

To deliver this vision we have 3 key priorities.

- Helping people in the greatest need and creating balanced, resilient, and healthy communities who feel safe and supported with easy access to services
- 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.
- Promoting a strong local economy that delivers its inclusive aspirations through effective partnerships, attracting investment, and increasing skills and employment opportunities.

There are a range of other strategic related housing objectives included in the Corporate Plan including ambitious targets for affordable housing delivery including developing new council homes. However, as the regulatory focus is on existing council homes and tenants, there remains is an identified need to accelerate the replacement of our customer service platform to realise the opportunities of enhanced customer interaction.

It is well recognised that this currently limits our ambition to improve customer interactions and business efficiencies in many areas of the council, and not just in landlord services. We know our tenants and leaseholders will be receiving several other council services at the same time including council tax, benefits, bin collections, and often a wider range of council services in many cases.

How we inform, engage, and interact with our residents is fundamental to how we design and deliver services that are responsive to their needs. We are committed to building a positive culture built around transparency, influence and accountability that puts resident engagement at the heart of the organisation.

## **Housing Landlord Priorities**

The landlord priorities highlighted in this strategy are further summarised below into seven key themes:

### **1. Regulation, compliance, and standards**

- Standards: Ensuring we meet all necessary standards and tenants have a home which is safe, warm, and dry.

### **2. Tenant Experience**

- Tenant voice. Extending open communication, complaint handling, and tenant involvement.

### **3. Culture and Performance**

- Transparent performance monitoring and reporting. Positive organisational culture that drives high performance and continuous improvement.

### **4. Scrutiny Governance and Controls**

- Accountability and Governance. Transparent decision-making and responsible leadership through robust governance structures.

### **5. Strategy and development**

- Improve the quality and safety of council housing. Long-term growth and innovation through strategic planning and purposeful new development.

### **6. Carbon reduction**

- Sustainability. Reducing carbon emissions and improving energy efficiency.

### **7. Share learning and best practice**

- Promoting continuous improvement. Share knowledge, insights, and proven approaches across teams.

## **Affordable Housing Investment**

The HRA Business Plan supports the continuation of affordable housing delivery, in a rolling 10 year projection. The delivery of new Council owned social housing will follow the following principles:

- Where strategic need is identified.
- Represents value for money in terms of investment, pay back, and the % of price to market value.
- Distributes stock around the Council's area, and takes in to account the investment of other social housing landlords in areas of new and forthcoming development.
- Is incorporated into the HRA Business Plan and the plan remains viable over 30 years.

- Prioritises s106 sites, but takes into account the Council's strategic responsibilities as a housing enabler and supporting other social landlords secure stock in our area
- Prioritises social and affordable rented properties over shared ownership, whilst seeking to increase the investment in shared ownership within manageable levels.
- Incorporates Temporary Accommodation stock wherever possible.

The Landlord Strategy establishes our vision for Council-owned social housing within the district and acknowledges the contribution that it will make towards the ambitions of our Corporate Plan 2024-2028 and our other linked strategies and policies.

## Monitoring and governance

### Monitoring

The measurement of success for all aspects of this strategy will be open to scrutiny. This will take place by different stakeholders.

- Tenants – Tenant Involvement Group (TIG), Tenant Approved Panel, online surveys, and community days.
- Monthly Portfolio Holder Briefings.
- Quarterly Housing & Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panels.
- Cabinet and Council meetings as matters arise.

Oversight of the delivery of the Strategy will sit with the Portfolio Holder for Housing. This ensures our landlord services performance is reported and scrutinised at all governance levels through Portfolio Holder Briefings, Executive Management Team, the Housing & Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel, Cabinet, Full Council, and the RSH through periodic submission of the TSMs as required. An annual report is published each year to tenants with open and honest reporting of performance results.

We can therefore be assured that the percentage score for overall tenant satisfaction with the Council as a landlord determined in the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) is a key performance measure as stated and endorsed in the corporate plan.

The Strategic Director is the designated lead for Health and Safety under the Social Housing Regulation Act (2023) and monitors safety compliance for tenants and staff via a robust reporting regime whereby compliance and performance is monitored and addressed at or by:

- Regulator of Social Housing and Regulatory Standards – TSMs Annually
- Corporate Complaints and Housing Ombudsman outcomes – 6 months and Annually
- Housing Landlord Compliance report to EMT, Panel and Cabinet every 6 months
- Housing Statutory Compliance Board – every quarter
- Housing Consumer Standard Board – every month
- Building Safety Regulation – Annual Audits
- Housing Health & Safety Panel – every quarter
- Sector benchmarking - TSMs
- Annual Review of strategy - Annually
- Management meetings and one to ones – regularly

The Strategy will be revised to reflect any financial and operational impacts arising from any material changes to the assumptions made at the time of drafting this Strategy including government policy changes.

## Strategic Action Plan

The actions that will deliver our housing landlord priorities are detailed in our strategic action plan at Appendix 1.



# Action Plan

## Theme: Regulation, compliance, and standards

**Standards:** Ensuring we meet all necessary standards and tenants have a home which is safe, warm, and dry.

Priority	Action	Risk mitigated	Owner	Timescale
Achieve a compliant grading of C2 (min) from the Regulator of Social Housing	<b>Conduct a comprehensive gap analysis</b> to assess compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing’s (RSH) Consumer Standards. <b>Progress:</b> Consumer Standards Board meets monthly to govern our compliance journey. Gap analysis conducted with the Housing Management Team.	Non-compliance	AD - Housing	June 2025-2028
	<b>Develop and implement detailed action plans</b> for each service area, addressing identified gaps and ensuring timely delivery of required improvements. <b>Progress:</b> Action plan developed to address identified gaps and includes action owners and priorities. Dashboard created to present summaries of assigned corrective action.	Lack of priority focus	AD- Housing	September 2025
	<b>Create evidence bank</b> to serve as a robust evidence base for regulatory review and ongoing compliance monitoring. <b>Progress:</b> Our evidence bank has been established and is actively being populated, with identified gaps addressed and necessary actions	Lack of evidence base and data sets for accurate grading by RSH.	PM - Housing	September 2025

Priority	Action	Risk mitigated	Owner	Timescale
	being completed to prepare a comprehensive submission for upcoming inspections.			
Produce a Landlord Strategy to give NFDC context and clarify priorities for the Housing Landlord Service	<b>Develop a Landlord Strategy</b> that outlines NFDC's vision for council-owned housing across the district for the Housing Landlord Service. <b>Progress:</b> First draft due to EMT 27 May 2025.	Services are disjointed and do not form a cohesive voice.	AD- Housing	May 2025
Established a corporate landlord asset-data inclusive of all our HRA and community-owned assets including office buildings, community centres, public open-spaces, toilets, and other amenities.	<b>Conduct a full audit of all HRA and community-owned assets</b> and integrate the data into a central data store. This will enable us to better manage and maintain HRA assets. <b>Progress:</b> Current arrangements are in place and effective although these form part of our new asset and maintenance system which will centralise our assets and introduce efficiencies.	No clear view of our assets which results in unclear strategic management and compliance across our portfolio.	SD - Housing	September 2025
Ensure we meet our obligations as laid out in legislation.	<b>Compliance to legislative commitments</b> as laid out in the Landlord Strategy. <b>Progress:</b> Corresponding action plans in place with the service designed to deliver.	We fail to meet statutory obligations.	SD – Housing	Ongoing
Updated data across 100% of	<b>Complete a rolling programme of stock condition surveys</b> that will ensure all data is	We have stock where the condition status is	AD – Housing	Ongoing

Priority	Action	Risk mitigated	Owner	Timescale
our housing stock which can continue to drive investment in our homes past the LGR April 2027 deadline and into any new Local Authority arrangements past that date.	validated and aligned with future investment planning beyond April 2027. <b>Progress:</b> We are making substantial progress in achieving 100% stock condition surveys across our estate. Opportunities such as voids are taken to undergo stock condition surveys as part of our rolling programme of work where surveys have not been completed for some time.	unknown and causes issues in managing and directing investment works.		

## Theme: Culture and performance

**Transparent performance monitoring and reporting.** Positive organisational culture that drives high performance and continuous improvement.

Priority	Action	Risk mitigated	Owner	Timescale
Staff have a clear understanding of their roles, how they contribute to the organisation, and how their work supports the delivery of our vision.	<b>Strengthen staff understanding of their role</b> in delivering organisational priorities by clearly linking the Corporate Plan to individual objectives. This will be achieved through regular development conversations and a refreshed approach to performance reviews and one-to-ones, aligned with the rollout of the new People Strategy. <b>Progress:</b> A service re-organisation has resulted in clarity of roles, supported by the Management Team.	Staff feel disjointed from the wider service and organisation. Silo-working which results in inconsistent performance and tenant experience.	Transformation SD – Housing	October 2025

Priority	Action	Risk mitigated	Owner	Timescale
	Staff have been actively engaged in shaping the Corporate Plan objectives, with follow-up dissemination activities ensuring these objectives are clearly understood across the organisation			
Tenant experience and perceptions continue to be prioritised, ensuring we deliver the highest possible standards.	<p><b>A focus on knowledge, skills, and behaviours</b>, leveraged by the new Consumer standards to strengthen our commitment to excellence.</p> <p><b>Progress:</b> The service has been actively involved in developing the new People Strategy. This includes the standards set out in the Competency and Conduct element of the Consumer Standards.</p>	Inconsistent practice resulting in tenants receiving differing levels of service.	Transformation SD – Housing	October 2025
Services are on a journey of continuous improvement, using data and insight to quickly learn and make refinements to practice.	<p><b>Service dashboards</b> provide a clear overview of current performance levels and identify areas requiring improvement. These dashboards are subject to regular scrutiny by the Management Team and service delivery teams to drive continuous improvement.</p> <p><b>Progress:</b> Dashboards are in place across many service areas and are integral to our routine service reviews. As services evolve, these dashboards will be enhanced with improved visualisations to better support analysis and decision-making.</p>	A lack of clarity around performance status and required improvements hinders effective progress	AD – Housing	Ongoing
Ensure there are links and transparency between service metrics and the Corporate Plan.	<p><b>Regular Performance monitoring</b> at a service and corporate level.</p> <p><b>Progress:</b> Housing service metrics are contained within the Corporate Plan set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).</p>	There is no visibility of Housing Performance at a corporate level. Housing is siloed from the wider organisation.	SD – Housing	Ongoing

Priority	Action	Risk mitigated	Owner	Timescale
	The KPIs are a standing agenda item at Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel.			

## Theme: Tenant experience

**Tenant voice.** Extending open communication, complaint handling, and tenant involvement.

Priority	Action	Risk mitigated	Owner	Timescale
Co-Produce a new Tenancy Policy to capture the relevant changes in our housing policies and procedure with tenants	<p><b>Work jointly with Tenants through the Tenant Involvement Group.</b> Complete a review of the existing policy, gather feedback through workshops and surveys, and draft a revised policy reflecting changes to housing practices and tenant/joint priorities.</p> <p><b>Progress:</b> The tenant involvement group has been in place for some time with changes planned to make this as inclusive as possible. The group will be given opportunities to help us shape the new Tenant Policy, so it reflects a jointly agreed, co-produced set of priorities.</p>	The tenancy policy lacks alignment with tenant perspectives and fails to address key concerns raised by them. Services are not built around the tenant.	SM - Housing	August 25
Establish a multi-channel engagement structure including digital and social media.	<p><b>Establish a multi-channel Communications Strategy</b> that includes a tenant portal, regular email newsletters, interactive social media campaigns, and virtual Q&amp;A sessions to increase accessibility and engagement.</p> <p><b>Progress:</b> We have good tenant sign-up to our Go Vocal online platform. This is used for digital participation. Service developments are raised via</p>	Low levels of tenant involvement limit our ability to capture a broad range of perspectives and insights.	Transformation AD – Housing	Ongoing

Priority	Action	Risk mitigated	Owner	Timescale
	Go Vocal to enable tenants to contribute and provide direction and feedback. We are working closely with our Transformation team to define and submit the requirements for a tenant portal that will enhance digital engagement and service accessibility.			
Increase tenant involvement in their topics of interest offering more opportunities to take part in scrutinising and improving our service.	<b>Tenant-led thematic exploration of the service</b> to encourage greater participation, honest learning, and service improvements. <b>Progress:</b> Regular participation to consider future developments is encouraged via our Go Vocal online platform and tenant involvement group. The tenant involvement group is offered genuine opportunities to raise concerns to be explored on the forward plan agenda.	Tenants can only comment on issues raised by NFDC and not take account of the issues they feel are important.	SM - Housing	Ongoing
Develop positive relationships with most of our tenants and leaseholders enabling us to better know our tenants and to plan services more effectively to meet their needs.	<b>Widen scope of Tenant Involvement</b> , harnessing the power of our existing networks and online tools to enable engagement that places services around our tenants. <b>Progress:</b> We are exploring engagement platforms to ensure tenants can work with us in a way that suits them. A member of the tenant involvement group now meets with our Portfolio Holder and attends the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel to represent the voice of tenants.	Tenant involvement does not effect change.	SM - Housing	Ongoing

Priority	Action	Risk mitigated	Owner	Timescale
Ensure better representation of the diversity of our tenants and scrutiny of our housing landlord activities through offering broader engagement opportunities and an enhanced visits approach.	<p><b>Expand the tenant engagement strategy</b> to include access channels for underrepresented groups.</p> <p>Explore options to offer translation and accessibility support.</p> <p>Conduct regular estate visits and listening sessions.</p> <p><b>Progress:</b> Regular estate visits are made by our tenant engagement officer.</p>	Tenant involvement is not reflective of the tenants we serve	SM - Housing	Ongoing
Make performance data easy to access so that more tenants and leaseholders can take part in scrutinising and improving our services.	<p><b>Publish a public-facing dashboard on the housing website</b> that displays key performance indicators (KPIs), service standards, and tenant satisfaction measures.</p> <p><b>Progress:</b> We have a dedicated tenant engagement page that invites tenants to get involved and includes minutes of tenant involvement group meetings.</p> <p>Annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey results are published.</p> <p><a href="#">Tenant engagement and participation - New Forest District Council</a></p>	Tenants are not given clear indication of our performance. There is limited accountability to our tenants.	SM - Housing	Ongoing
Learning from complaints to ensure the	<b>Complaints lessons learned</b> so that we can implement the necessary service improvements highlighted through complaints.	We do not take effective actions arising from complaints.	SD – Housing	Ongoing

Priority	Action	Risk mitigated	Owner	Timescale
service can grow and that we do not repeat mistakes	<b>Progress:</b> all complaints are reviewed and associated actions are added to a lessons learned log.			

### Theme: Scrutiny, governance, and controls

**Accountability and Governance.** Transparent decision-making and responsible leadership through robust governance structures.

Priority	Action	Risk mitigated	Owner	Timescale
Design and deliver a robust member and senior officer development programme	<b>Form a development programme for elected members and senior officers</b> , including tailored training modules, leadership workshops, and mentoring opportunities. <b>Progress:</b> Approach to training as identified will be implemented.	Elected members and senior officers are not suitably positioned to hold services to account.	Democratic Services SD – Housing	Ongoing
	<b>Dedicated Executive Management Team (EMT) and Cabinet development sessions</b> building on existing coaching and training. <b>Progress:</b> Approach to training as identified will be implemented.	EMT and Cabinet have learning needs that are not addressed.	Kate Ryan	Ongoing
Consider ways to strengthen your Overview and Scrutiny function	<b>Review the Overview and Scrutiny function</b> , engaging members and working with Democratic services. <b>Progress:</b> Approach to training as identified will be implemented.	Scrutiny function lacks the power to effect change.	Democratic Services SD – Housing	January 2025
	<b>Identify strengths and gaps.</b> Use the findings to design and implement improvements. <b>Progress:</b> Underway	Scrutiny function lacks the power to effect change.	Service	March 2025



Priority	Action	Risk mitigated	Owner	Timescale
	<b>Specific topic briefings</b> to be held i.e. Housing Regulation, to develop member knowledge and support scrutiny role <b>Progress:</b> Delivered	Scrutiny function lacks the power to effect change.	AD – Housing	Ongoing
Governance structure supports reporting and discussion at directorate level with escalation to Transformation Board	<b>Governance, terms of reference and culture</b> at every level engenders a culture of open and honest exchange. This will support reporting, facilitate discussion, and allow issues to be addressed. <b>Progress:</b>	Lack of honest discussion inhibits a free and open exchange.	AD – Housing	March 2025

### Theme: Strategy and development

**Improve the quality and safety of council housing.** Long-term growth and innovation through strategic planning and purposeful development.

Priority	Action	Risk mitigated	Owner	Timescale
Deliver six hundred new social and affordable homes through the HRA and the council's development	<b>Programme of work to extend our stock</b> of social and affordable housing. <b>Progress:</b> Underway and reported back regularly.	Our housing stock cannot meet increasing demand.	SM - Housing	March 2026

Priority	Action	Risk mitigated	Owner	Timescale
and acquisitions programme.				
Revise business case considering LGR and ensure new focus is well communicated and anchored in governance reporting.	<b>Undertake preparedness activities for Local Government Reorganisation</b> to ensure the organisation is fully equipped to respond effectively to any resulting changes. <b>Progress:</b> A clear action plan is in place.	We are ill-prepared for necessary changes and cannot present a compelling case for the district.	SD – Housing	June 2025
Consider and implement opportunities to improve EMT visible leadership of change initiatives	<b>Identify opportunities</b> to enhance visibility for EMT to lead change initiatives. Evaluate areas for increasing EMT presence and awareness of change initiatives so they can direct programmes of work <b>Progress:</b> A Transformation and Change Board is established for organisational transformation work. Service improvements will be integrated into the established Housing governance cycle for structured planning and oversight.	Our EMT is not able to effectively drive change	Transformation AD – Housing	September 2025

### Theme: Carbon reduction

**Sustainability.** Reducing carbon emissions and improving energy efficiency.

Priority	Action	Risk mitigated	Owner	Timescale
Demonstrate further commitment to carbon reduction with a clear action plan	<p><b>Decarbonise the council's housing stock</b> and housing of all tenures in line with the Greener Housing Strategy.</p> <p><b>Progress:</b> Secured Grant funding of £1492,595.56m to support overall annual budget of circa £2m for the next 3 years. Procurement tender will be launched to secure a long-term contractor partner to deliver work by Qtr. 2 25/26. 202 homes will be upgraded to EPC level 'C' in 2025/2026</p>	Council housing stock does not meet the EPC 'C' or higher standard by 2030	SM – Housing	May 2025
Form a better understanding of the scale and costs to decarbonise our homes after agreement with our tenants on how we prioritise our investment plans after this current round of accelerated investment up until April 2028.	<p><b>Ensure low carbon development</b> through alignment with the Planning for Climate Change SPD and wider Local Plan Review.</p> <p><b>Progress:</b> Underway.</p>	We are ill-prepared to meet our carbon reduction obligations	SM – Housing	Ongoing

## Theme: Share learning and best practice

**Promoting continuous improvement.** Share knowledge, insights, and proven approaches across teams.

Priority	Action	Risk mitigated	Owner	Timescale
Continue the good practice in housing and consider applying successful approaches to the wider organisation.	<b>Take case studies from Housing</b> , such as tenant engagement, performance monitoring, or service delivery models—and pilot their application in other council departments <b>Progress:</b> Commenced	Learning from within the Housing service is not applied across the organisation.	SD – Housing AD – Housing	October 2025
	<b>Knowledge transfer</b> opportunities with wider SLT <b>Progress:</b> Commenced	Inconsistent skills baseline across the organisation.	SD – Housing AD – Housing	October 2025
	<b>'Monthly Meet' staff engagement forum</b> as a learning opportunity to share examples of Housing best practice and improvement initiatives <b>Progress:</b> In process of being booked in for early September 2025.		AD - Housing	September 2025

## Appendix 2

# HRA Business Plan

## Introduction

This Plan presents an updated baseline position, which has been prepared using working papers and assumptions agreed with the authority following its budget-setting process.

The projections summarise expenditure, investment, capital financing and borrowing in respect of council housing over a 30-year period, starting in 2024/25 and the authority's best available data and assumptions. They allow for inflationary pressures to impact on budgets and programmes from 2026/27 onwards. The projections also assume that National rent policy will permit maximum rent increases of CPI +1% until 2035/36, which is in line with a recent announcement by government.

The government has recently consulted on reintroducing rent convergence for existing social rent tenancies. Alongside the baseline we have included an indication of the potential effects of two scenarios for reintroducing rent convergence from 2026/27.

It is recommended that the risks facing its HRA are reviewed regularly, with a view to identify the effects of emerging situations at an early stage, testing its response and taking appropriate action to eliminate or mitigate the risk.

# Baseline projections

## 1.1 Baseline assumptions

The baseline assumptions reflect the projected 2024/25 revenue outturn, 2025/26 budget and medium-term projections for capital and revenue prepared by the authority's finance team. These update the draft budgets that were reported to Cabinet in the annual budget-setting report from February 2025. Other information and assumptions we have used in preparing this baseline projection include:

Updated information on the authority's programme for developing and acquiring new dwellings over the medium term.

An expectation that growth in General Management budgets in 2025/26 to support the authority's transformation programme will be removed from 2027/28 onwards.

Data from the right to buy pooling returns that the authority submits to MHCLG. It is assumed that the authority sold 25 homes under the right to buy in 2024/25 and sells 40 homes in 2025/26, while it processes an influx of applications that followed publication in October 2024 of the government's plans to reform the Right to Buy and reduce discount levels. From 2026/27 onwards we have allowed for 10 to 11 sales per annum as the impacts of the discount reductions take effect.

The authority aims to maintain a minimum HRA balance of £1.000m, adjusted for inflation. Any sums generated by the HRA that exceed the minimum balance are made available to finance the capital programme or to repay debt

Actual rents increase at the maximum rate currently permitted by the rent standard. The maximum rent increase for existing tenants in 2025/26 has been set at 2.7%. Under a recent announcement by government, increases of CPI +1% are expected to apply until 2035/36. We have made the prudent assumption that rent increases will be limited to a CPI uplift from April 2036.

Formula rents increase at CPI +1% until 2035/36, in line with the government's announcement. From 2036/37 onwards we have assumed that formula rents increase in line with CPI.

In 2024/25 the authority re-let 5.5% of its social rent stock (282 units) at formula rent, with future relets in the same proportion. A small number of these dwellings (6 pa) are also re-let with an additional 5% rent flexibility charge, which is permitted under the rent standard.

Depreciation costs have been estimated in line with the authority's budget, uplifted for inflation at CPI.

Inflation assumptions have been updated to reflect the May 2025 Monetary Policy report from the Bank of England and applied as follows:

- o CPI at 3.25% in the final quarter of 2025 and 2.0% in the final quarters of 2026 and 2027. These rates have been used to reflect underlying inflation for 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29, respectively.
- o From 2028/29 onwards we have assumed CPI runs at 2% pa.
- o RPI tracks at CPI +1%
- o General management and special management costs increase by underlying CPI.
- o Building costs increase at RPI. This affects spending projections for day-to-day repairs and maintenance, major works to existing homes and the provision or acquisition of new homes.
- o Other costs in the capital programme have been inflated by CPI.
- o Major works and component replacements are treated as 100% variable from 2027/28.
- o These costs have an element that flexes to reflect increases and reductions in the housing stock.
- o At the start of the planning period HRA debt includes internal borrowing from the Council of £9.812m.
- o The projections assume a pooled interest rate of 4.8% would apply to new loans in 2024/25 and 2025/25, reducing to 4.2% for 2026+/27 and 2027/28, then a rate of 3.8% from 2028/29 onwards.

In preparing this projection we have assumed that the HRA would attempt to repay any additional external borrowing that it undertakes as quickly as possible. Our reason for making this assumption is that it gives a clearer indication of how well the HRA can service and repay any borrowing that is required to deliver its long-term capital programme. Any actual borrowing undertaken by the authority would be subject to the prevailing market conditions and guidance received from the authority's treasury advisors.

## 1.2 Gaps in the data and potential risks

There are gaps in the data available to the authority, which have required us to make assumptions about future expenditure in key areas. The two principal gaps we have identified relate to:

- o The cost of unforeseen works that may be required when investing in the authority's existing housing stock. We have included a contingency to allow for such works
- o Lack of certainty around future National policies impacting on the Right to Buy, decarbonisation of the housing stock and associated funding. We have made prudent assumptions to accommodate these risks.

The profile of component replacements required for the existing stock also presents a risk as generated from the authority's stock condition data. It is recommended that modelling assumptions continuing to update the modelling assumptions continue to be updated to accommodate new information from the stock condition data as soon as it becomes available.

Other key risks include:

- fluctuations in the underlying rate of inflation, which can impact on both costs and income
- further constraint imposed on rent increases, whether by government or the authority itself
- increases in the costs of works and services that are not matched by increases in income
- changes to underlying interest rates

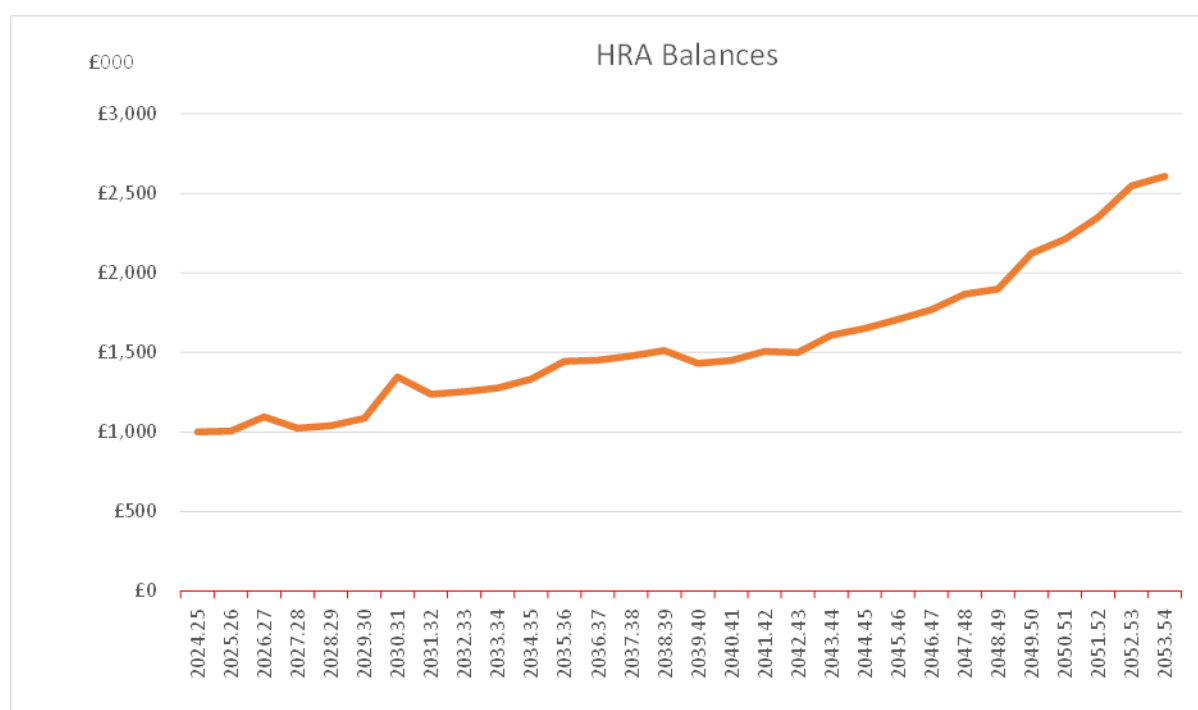


It is recommend that the authority reviews the potential HRA impact of these risks regularly, as part of its early warning system. This will enable it to identify the effects of emerging situations at an early stage, test its response, and take appropriate action to eliminate or mitigate the risk.

The effects of the baseline assumptions are shown in the following sections.

### 1.3 Baseline – revenue position

The chart below shows the authority’s ability to maintain a minimum level of balances during the 30-year period covered by the baseline projection:

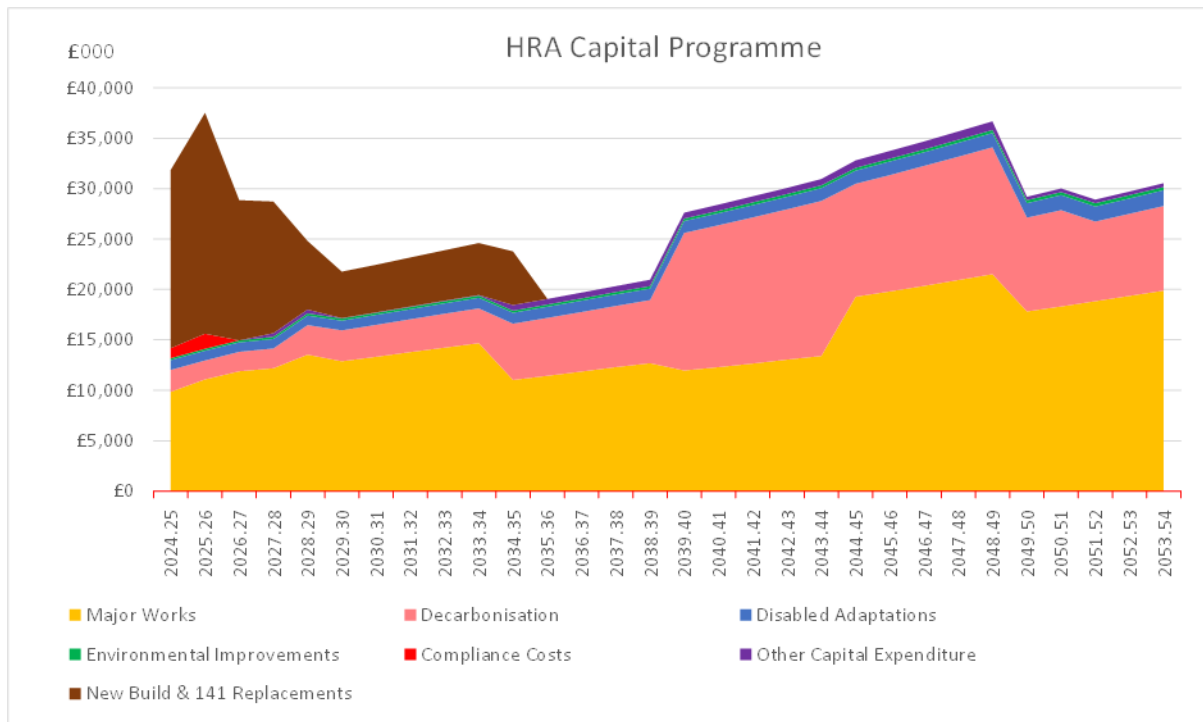


In this chart the orange line projects the cumulative HRA balance at the end of each year.

The authority maintains its minimum HRA balance of £1.000m (plus inflation) throughout the projections. During this period, any “spare” rents generated are used to pay for capital projects or to repay debt.

### 1.4 Baseline – capital programme

The next chart shows the scale and composition of the authority’s projected capital programme:



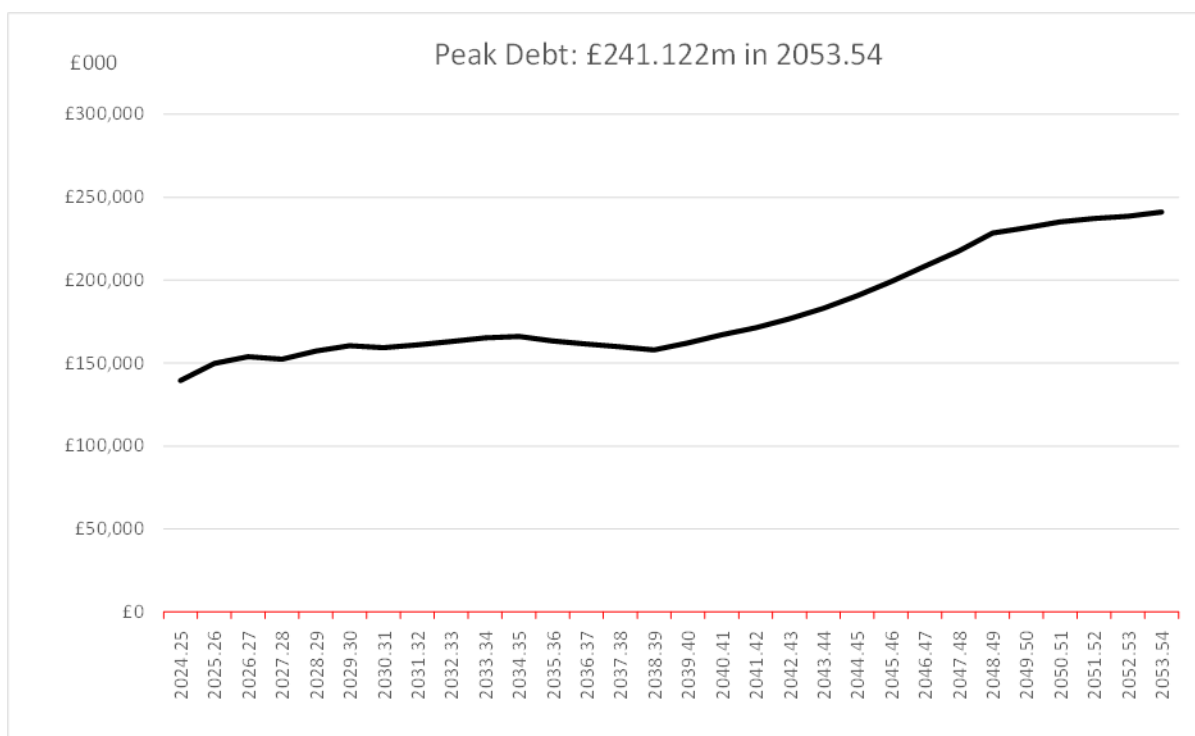
This projection includes a cautious 10-year programme for new build and stock purchase that produces 445 new properties between 2024/25 and 2034/35 (brown area). This represents the authority’s commitment to increasing its housing stock, over the medium term.

The amber area allows for investment required on stock condition, based on the existing capital programme and stock condition data, with a contingency for (as yet) unidentified additional stock investment. The pink area shows an allowance for improving energy efficiency of existing homes to EPC level C standard by 2030, plus wider decarbonisation works. This allowance is based on the existing capital programme and stock condition data, with a contingency for additional decarbonisation works. The total amount of decarbonisation investment in the above chart is consistent with representative levels assumed by other local authorities.

The average cost of major works at current prices, £51,316 per dwelling (excluding decarbonisation works). The allowance for decarbonisation comes to £24,859 per dwelling at current prices over the same period. These allowances remain consistent with representative levels of investment in other authorities.

## 1.5 Baseline – debt

The next chart projects movements in the level of HRA debt during the planning period:



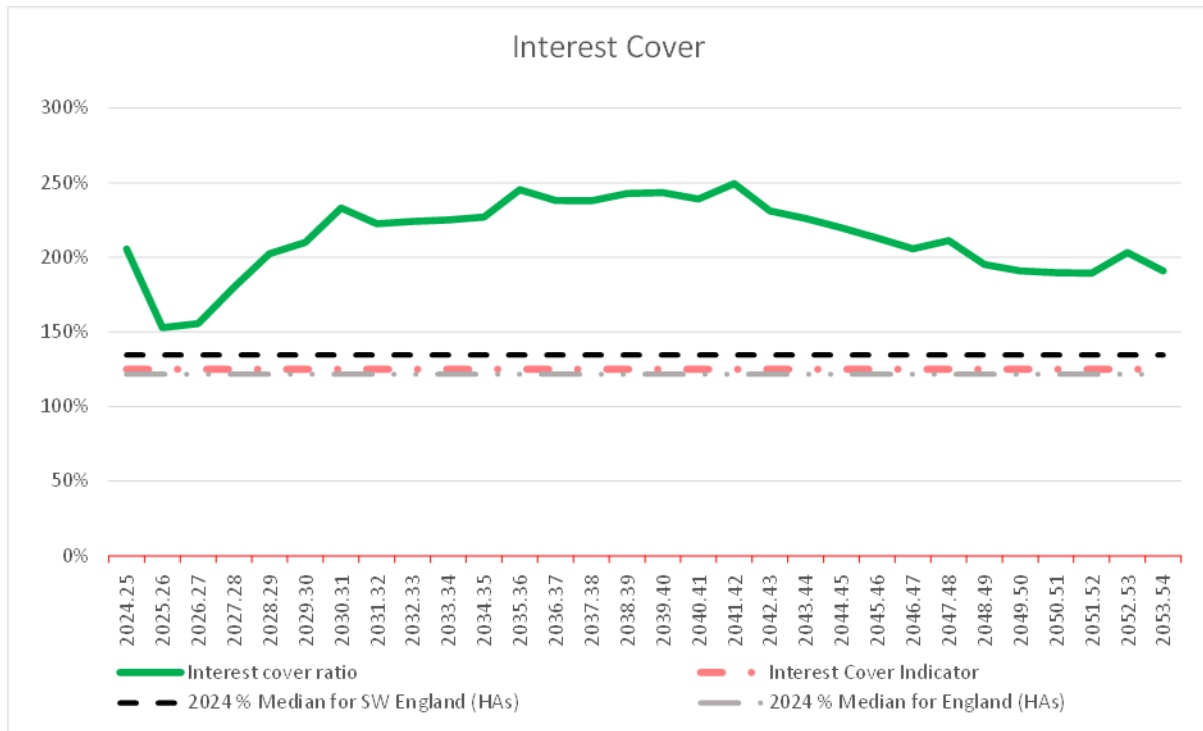
On these assumptions, the authority is unable to finance its capital programme entirely from its Major Repairs Reserve, revenue surpluses generated by the HRA and projected right to buy receipts. This causes the HRA to rely on borrowing to part-finance its HRA capital programme throughout the thirty-year period.

HRA-related debt is projected to rise in most years, reaching a peak of £241.122m in 2053/54 – the final year of the projections. It is noticeable that the authority can repay some debt between 2035/36 and 2038/39, which follows the end of the medium-term development programme and precedes an expected increase in decarbonisation investment. From 2039/40 onwards the HRA needs to borrow more to finance its capital programme than it can afford to repay from the available resources, causing debt to rise for the remainder of the period.

Debt is at its peak level in 2053/54 and continuing to rise. This means that the authority would be exposed to potential fluctuations in interest rates over the long term. It will therefore be important to continue reviewing the authority's options as the underlying economic circumstances evolve.

## 1.6 Baseline – affordability

Alongside our projection of the ability of the HRA to repay the debt required to finance the assumed capital programme, the chart below compares the level of operational surplus it generates with a standard indicator used by other landlords:



The green line in this chart shows the number of times the revenue HRA surplus can cover the assumed interest charges. When the green line goes down the authority's HRA is either making smaller surpluses or paying more in interest charges, and the reverse is true when the green line goes up. The static dashed pink line suggests a minimum level of 125%, below which the authority would be at risk of being unable to cover its interest costs from its operating surplus.

This chart shows reasonable levels of interest cover throughout the projections, which implies that the authority would be able to afford the level of borrowing required under the baseline assumptions. It is noticeable that performance against this metric deteriorates in the latter half of the planning period. This reflects an expectation that some costs will rise at a faster rate than income over the long term, as well as increases in borrowing to deliver the 30-year capital investment requirement. If debt continues to rise at the projected rate, it will eventually reach a level that is unaffordable to the HRA.

Any further increase in costs or loss of income would cause the drop in performance under this metric to accelerate unless the authority is able to make cost savings or generate additional income to compensate. The types of additional cost that the authority could encounter might result from higher inflation, increases in interest charges, commitments to spend more on providing additional or improved services, or additional costs to secure compliance with regulatory requirements. Any constraint on rent levels (whether imposed by government, or by a local decision to set rents at a lower level) would have a similar negative impact on interest cover performance.

Note that the requirement for borrowing is sensitive to assumptions relating to cost levels, income from rents and other sources, plus interest rates. Initial sensitivity testing of these assumptions indicates that the authority should continuously seek to minimise costs and maximise income as a way of keeping debt levels down and minimising the associated risks.

## Baseline – summary

The baseline assumptions produce a position that looks affordable but starts to weaken over the long term. The HRA can use borrowing to increase the number of council homes over the medium term, but to protect the long-term financial health of the HRA the authority needs to be cautious about future commitments. It will be important to continue to minimise costs, while maximising income and resources. Where possible, spending pressures should be contained within the levels of income growth the authority can achieve from rents and other charges.

The Authority will prioritise the investment in its stock to maintain the Decent Homes Standard, tenant satisfaction and health and well-being, social housing regulations and decarbonisation commitments. Where financial headroom allows delivery of new Council owned social housing will follow the following principles:

- Where strategic need is identified.
- Represents value for money in terms of investment, pay back, and the % of price to market value.
- Distributes stock around the Council's area, and takes in to account the investment of other social housing landlords in areas of new and forthcoming development.

- Is incorporated into the HRA Business Plan and the plan remains viable over 30 years.
- Prioritises s106 sites, but takes into account the Council's strategic responsibilities as a housing enabler and supporting other social landlords secure stock in our area
- Prioritises social and affordable rented properties over shared ownership, whilst seeking to increase the investment in shared ownership within manageable levels.
- Incorporates Temporary Accommodation stock wherever possible.

The Landlord Strategy establishes our vision for Council-owned social housing within the district and acknowledges the contribution that it will make towards the ambitions of our Corporate Plan 2024-2028 and our other linked strategies and policies.

# NFDC Draft Context Document

The content of this draft Context Document has been compiled using information gathered from what we are aware the regulator has previously requested from Council landlords. Until we get the request from the regulator, we are working incrementally to be “inspection ready.”

This is not a finalised document, some of the information is currently in a copy and pasted format from other strategic documents and audit reports. We may not be inspected for another 2 years, and this document will be professionally published and updated once the Landlord Strategy is adopted.

## Section 1- The Council’s provision of housing

The council is the largest provider of housing within the district, managing a stock of 5,200 socially rented homes including a small but increasing number of shared-ownership properties.

Specifically, our homes are broken down as follows:

<b>Property Type:</b>	<b>Tenancy Type:</b>	<b>Number of Bedrooms:</b>
Houses: 2,840	General Needs: 5,048	1 bed: 1,370
Bungalows: 876	Extra Care: 117 (made up of 3 schemes)	2 bed: 1,686
Flats: 1,402	Shared Ownership: 14	3 bed: 1,968
Maisonettes: 61		4 bed: 139
		5 bed: 13
		6 bed: 3

We also own and manage 196 temporary accommodation homes, consisting of 78 owned homes and 118 homes managed through our Private Sector Leasing scheme.

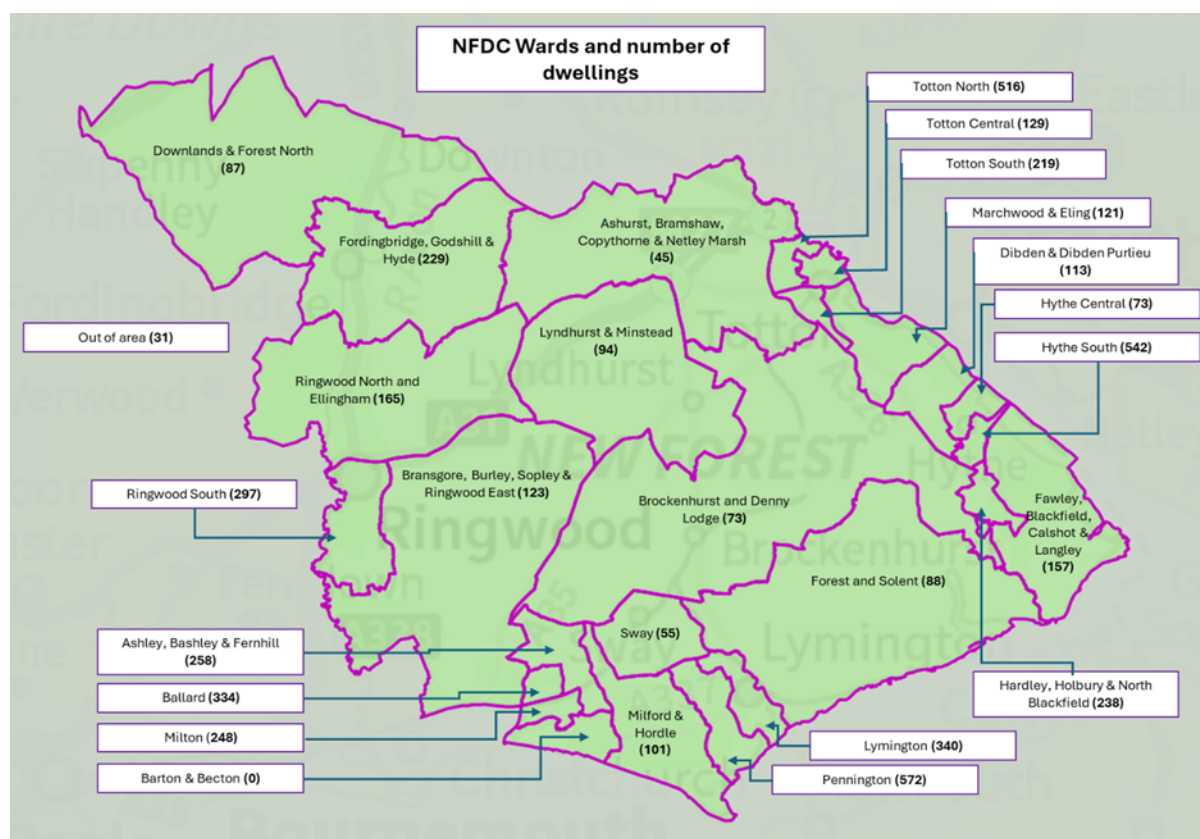
We are also the freeholder of 117 Leasehold properties within the district, the make-up of which is as follows:

<b>Property Type:</b>	<b>Number of Bedrooms:</b>
-----------------------	----------------------------

Flats: 105	1 bed: 45
Maisonettes: 6	2 bed: 71
Bedsit: 6	3 bed: 1

The New Forest area is predominately a rural area, though the district council's boundaries include urban and semi-rural Towns, villages, and settlements. The distribution of our housing stock across our wards is demonstrated below.

**Fig. 1 – NFDC Wards and Housing stock**



We also own and manage 1,759 garages across our district and are currently reviewing their use and occupation with a view to better use the sites and land for new homes development, commercial storage, and other uses as part of the asset base.

(The following images / information have been snipped from the Corporate Peer Challenge Local Government Association 2024 Position Statement to demonstrate the demographic or context information relevant to the LA area.)



## The New Forest

### At a glance

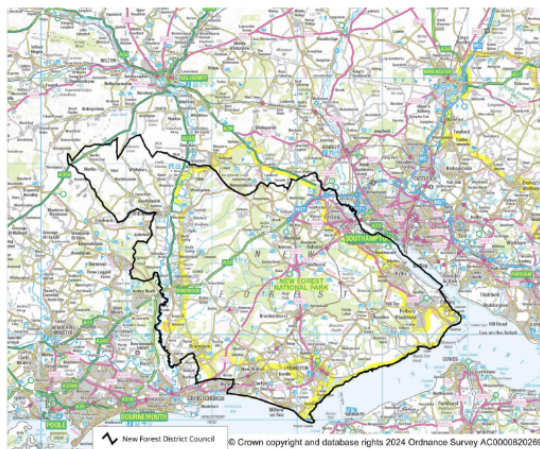
175,785 residents living within the district	51.9% of residents are female	96.8% of the population are White	Average age in New Forest is 51.8 years
Life expectancy is 83 years	48.1% of residents are male	1.3% of the population are Mixed Race	Average age in England is 40.
		1.2% of the population are Asian or Asian British	
		0.4% of the population are Black or Black British	
		0.3% of the population are other ethnic groups	
Median gross annual earnings are £34,647	The salary growth rate is 1.5% lower than England	51.8% of residents are employed	
		33.4% of residents are retired	
		18% have a disability which limits their day-to-day activities by a little or a lot	

Main language is English | 0.2% of residents reported having poor English language skills

We collect Council Tax from 83,380 properties | 4th largest economy in Hampshire with £4.4 billion (GVA) generated in 2020 and circa 8,000 business enterprises

Around 80% of all registered businesses are small businesses (fewer than 10 employees, less than £250,000 annual revenue)

Data sourced from: NOMIS ONS 2021 census data, ONS Local statistics, 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation, New Forest Economic Profile 2022.



### The place

The New Forest is located within the county of Hampshire on the south coast of England positioned between Bournemouth and Southampton. It is a vibrant and unique area known for its natural landscapes, ancient woodland, and 40 miles of stunning coastline.

It is a working forest that has prospered for nearly 1,000 years. Many local practices are unique and date from historic times.

This includes most significantly the depasturing of the iconic New Forest ponies, as well as cattle, pigs, and donkeys in the open forest

by authorised landowners known as Commoners. These agricultural commoning practices are administered by the Verderers.

The New Forest is the second most populated district authority in the southeast, with over 175,000 residents, although the population has decreased since the 2011 census. It is home to an increasingly aging population with 30% of residents over the age of 65 compared to 19% nationally.

The largest settlements are Fordingbridge, Hythe, Lymington, Marchwood, New Milton, Ringwood, and Totton. Approximately 72% of residents live in urban areas, while around 28% of residents live in rural areas.

On average, residents could expect to pay around 11.4 times their annual earnings on purchasing a home in the district (England, 8.26 times).

The average property price is just over £498,000 and around 74% of householders own their homes. Rental prices are high with the average monthly rent £125 higher than that for England.

Although the New Forest ranks highly against other authorities for low levels of income deprivation, 4 of our 114 neighbourhoods appear in the top 20% of most deprived neighbourhoods in England.

21.5% of children are eligible for free school meals (4th highest of Hampshire authorities) however there are known localities within the district where this percentage is significantly higher.

Just over half of our residents of employment age are in full time employment. 30.4% of working people now state they work from home full time and around 2.2% of employment age residents claim unemployment benefit, representing a rise from previous years.

The economic inactivity rate of the district is 14.2% which is lower than the Hampshire average but is driven in part by higher levels of early retirees.

Around 30,100 people who live locally cross district boundaries to go to work with the main working areas being Southampton, Bournemouth, and Test Valley. Approximately 22,500 workers travel inwardly from where they live to their employment within the district.

Marine, hospitality and health and social care occupations make up some of the major industries. Administrative occupations are the most common job type at 13.6%, followed by corporate managers and directors at 12.0%, and customer service occupations make up 10.9%.

The area's largest employers include Exxon, Garmin, Paulsons Park (home of Peppa Pig World), as well as public sector bodies including the NHS and ourselves as the district council.

Data sourced from: 1) ONS statistics, 2011 and 2021 census data, 2) 2011 rural/urban classification using population figures from mid-2022, 3) New Forest District Council Local Plan 2016 – 36, 4) The New Forest Economic Profile (2022).



### The council

New Forest District Council was created on 1 April 1974, following the 1972 Local Government Act, and is celebrating its 50th year.

Our most recent district elections were held in May 2023, when an electoral review of the district was implemented. 48 councillors (a reduction of 12) were elected to 26 new wards, comprising of the following political groups:

- 26 Conservative
- 14 Liberal Democrat
- 4 Independent
- 3 Green
- 1 Labour and Co-operative

We operate a leader and cabinet form of governance under the majority administration of the Conservative Group. Councillor Jill Cleary is the council's leader.

The chairman, elected each year by all members, chairs full council meetings and is the civic head and the first citizen of the district.

The local government administrative area of New Forest District Council includes the National Park, which was designated in 2005. The New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA) is the planning authority for its specific area, and we share responsibilities in other service areas as well as working in close collaboration.

Hampshire County Council (HCC) are responsible for upper tier services. There is 145 square miles of Crown land managed by Forestry England and 37 town and parish councils active within our boundaries.

## Devolution and local government reorganisation (LGR)

Hampshire County Council, Isle of Wight Council, Portsmouth City Council, and Southampton City Council have been accepted by Government (5 February 2025) to join the Devolution Priority Programme.

For our wider region, this will mean a new strategic regional Mayor for Southampton, Portsmouth, Hampshire, and the Isle of Wight.

As of May 2025, NFDC is continuing to work with other councils in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight to explore options for reorganisation.

Different options for changes are being looked at in detail to see which would work best.

NFDC has made it clear from the start that we do not support any model that will break up the New Forest district. This will form the basis of our proposal to government.

A proposal will be submitted to government by NFDC in September this year.

The Landlord Strategy ([link](#)) sets out how the Council will continue to deliver its landlord service at a local level over 2025 - 2030, accepting that in the latter two years this is likely to be in the form of working through a smooth transfer of assets, finances, and our landlord services within a newly formed council under LGR.

## Section 2- The operational management structure of the Council

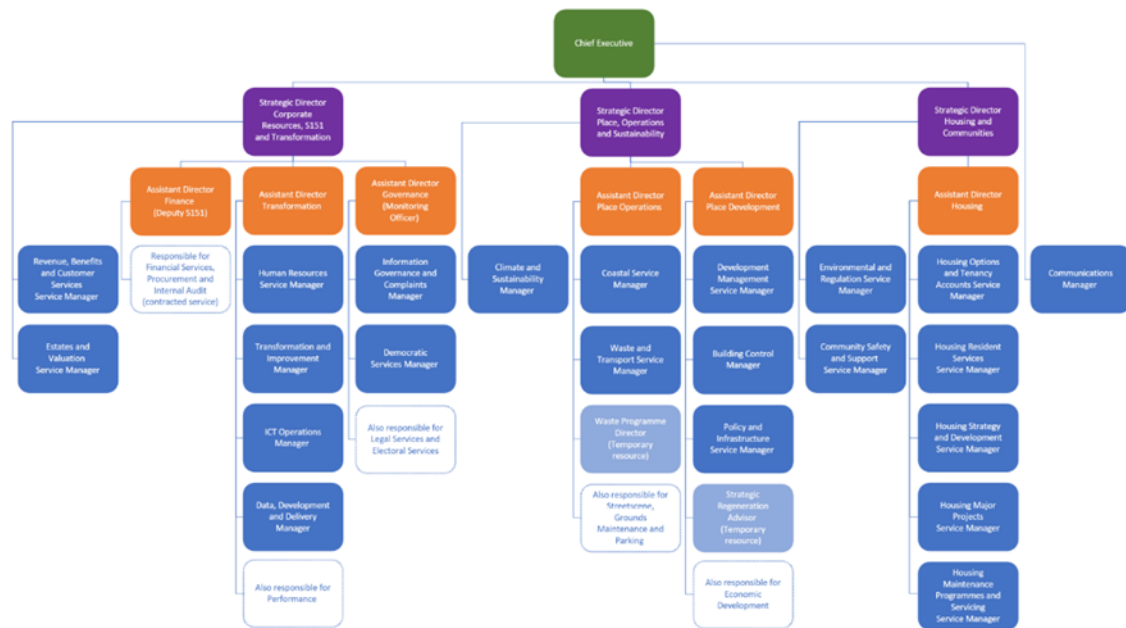
The Council's Chief Executive. (Details will be added here about the Chief executive when requested by the regulator) The Council employs approximately 830 full-time and part-time staff across three Directorates:

- Housing and Communities
- Place, Operations and Sustainability
- Resources, S151 and Transformation.

A new senior leadership team was established in 2021, moving from a 4 executive head model to 3 strategic director roles. This was designed to enable greater capacity and focus on strategic change, partnership working and experience in leading resident services. The team is known as the executive management team (EMT) and meets formally twice a month. The monitoring officer and democratic services manager also attend.

Each directorate benefits from assistant directors who oversee the delivery of key strategic areas of the organisation.

The Corporate Leadership Team structure is shown below:



19

The Strategic Director for Housing and Communities (Details will be added here about the Strategic Director for Housing and Communities when requested by the regulator).

- The Housing and Communities directorate covers the following areas of Council service.
- Housing Estate Management and Support
- Housing Maintenance and Compliance
- Housing Options, Rents, Support and Private Sector Housing
- Housing Strategy and Development
- Environmental and Regulation (including licensing, health and wellbeing and Arts and Culture)
- Community Safety

The Strategic Director for Housing and Communities is also the designated lead for Health and Safety under the Social Housing Regulation Act (2023).

The Assistant Director Housing (*Details will be added here about the Assistant Director for Housing when requested by the regulator*). The Assistant Director Housing has responsibility for the Councils Landlord function including the Housing Management functions, Strategy Development, Estate Management, Compliance and Repairs for council provided housing alongside statutory Homelessness functions and rents.

(The Housing Senior Leadership Team structure will be added here when requested by the regulator.)

### **Service Manager responsible for Housing Major Projects**

Structural surveying, Fire Safety, Asbestos management.

### **Service Manager, Housing Maintenance Programmes and Servicing**

Reactive maintenance delivery and Repairs, including all trades. Warehouse, equipment, and cleaning coordination. Housing Decarbonisation. Gas and Electrical.

### **Service Manager Housing Strategy and Development**

Housing Initiatives and development programme.

### **Service Manager Housing Resident Services**

Private Sector Housing, Tenant Engagement, Neighbourhood lettings and Tenancy Sustainment, Anti-Social Behaviour. Resident Services also oversees the Housing Business Support and Customer Services, Workforce Planning and Business Development.

### **Service Manager Housing Options and Tenancy Accounts**

Tenancy Accounts, Housing Options and Homelessness.

### **Repairs and Maintenance Delivery**

To maintain control of our repairs, maintenance, and investment programmes the council has always employed its own staff to provide these services in the form of a Direct Labour Organisation (DLO).

This is supported by a range of robustly procured, contracted, and monitored contractors that assist and deliver a range of housing maintenance and planned works improvement programmes such as new windows, doors, and kitchens etc.



This hybrid approach enables us to have better management control to assure compliance with all the relevant health and safety standards including for gas, electric, legionella testing, and damp and mould that now apply to all social homes. It also provides assurance in retrofitting new green technologies such as insulation, solar panels, and air-source heat pumps etc.

The DLO service is one of our unique landlord service features at NFDC and forms an important part of our service offer to tenants who report high levels of satisfaction with our teams and day to day repairs. This approach is different to many council and housing association landlords in the region that have outsourced all their repairs and maintenance services to external contractors.

Whilst there is no right or wrong way of providing these services, we believe our flexible arrangements led by our own DLO staff and contract managers can better meet the needs of our tenants and fulfil our statutory duties as a landlord. As outlined, the HRA pays for investment and maintenance of the council's own housing stock and related housing services provided solely for the benefit of council tenants and leaseholders.

## Section 3 – The Council's governance structure

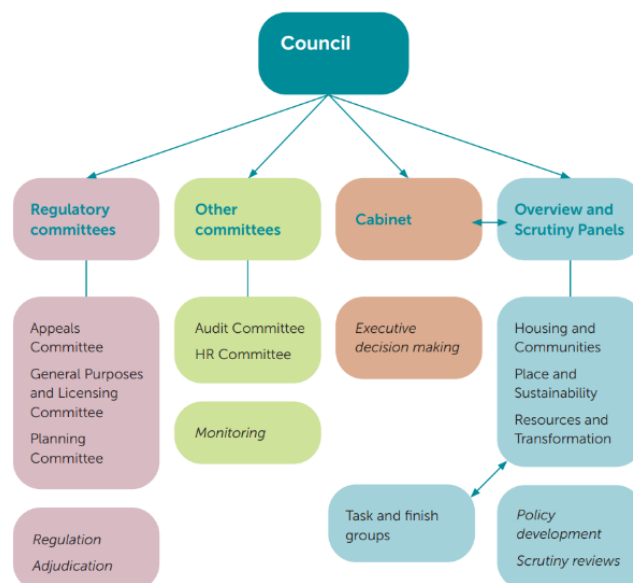
### Governance and culture

#### Our governance

##### How decisions are made

The Council operates a Leader and Cabinet governance model, with portfolio holders having certain powers within the constitution to determine policy and approach to the way that services are delivered.

The constitution reflects the local demands and specific issues of the New Forest district and sets the delegated processes and the codes of conduct for councillors, along with the framework for officer decision-making within the council. The Council's 48 members are elected every 4 years, and cover 26 district wards.



## **Cabinet**

The Cabinet is a group of 6 Councillors, all from the majority political group (Conservative) represented on the Council. The Leader of the Council (*Leaders details to be added when requested*) chairs the Cabinet. She has appointed the other 5 members. The Cabinet is responsible for taking all decisions classed by the law as "Executive" decisions. Many of these decisions are taken at a meeting of the whole Cabinet. However, each Cabinet member has a "portfolio", that is, a list of the responsibilities assigned specifically to that member. Subject to certain conditions, individual Cabinet members can take decisions on matters within their portfolio.

## **Committees**

Committees are groups of Councillors appointed by the full Council. They are appointed "proportionally" - that is, they contain Councillors from more than one political group, in the same proportion as the political groups are represented on the Council.

## **Overview and Scrutiny Panels**

Overview and Scrutiny Panels, like Committees, are appointed "proportionally". There are 3 Panels. Cabinet members cannot serve on Overview and Scrutiny Panels. Each Panel is responsible for overview and scrutiny of several service areas. The Panels can undertake reviews of the Council's policies, either on their own initiative or at the request of the Council or the Cabinet, advise on policy development, and review executive decisions to make sure the Cabinet does not exceed its powers.

The Landlord functions of the Council are scrutinised by the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel. (Details of Chairperson, and Vice-Chairman to be added when requested).

(List specific items scrutinised by panel over the year prior to inspection)

The Council uses Modern.gov to manage its reporting arrangements and formal meetings are live streamed and available on You Tube.

## **Councillors and democracy - New Forest District Council**

**The Portfolio Holder - Housing and Homelessness** is (*details to be added when requested*).

He has oversight for

- Housing Strategy and Development
- Housing Maintenance and Compliance
- Housing Estates Management
- Housing Allocations and Options
- Housing Delivery and Performance
- Homelessness
- Private Sector Housing including HMO licensing
- Disabled Facilities Grants
- Tenant Engagement

The current The Portfolio Holder - Housing and Homelessness is also the member responsible for complaints.

Monthly Portfolio Holder Briefings are held between the portfolio holder, the Housing Senior Leadership Team, any other relevant members of the service to ensure the portfolio holder has regular updates on service delivery.

## Section 4 – The Council’s strategy and long-term plan for its housing stock.

Our Housing Department including the Landlord service has been on a journey of improvement since 2018, with a major focus on the home standard including carrying out a 100 per cent stock condition survey alongside making significant investments in the housing stock to ensure that all our homes are safe, warm, and free from hazards such as damp and mould.

We understand the importance of providing safe and warm homes for our tenants to live in and the positive impact on our communities, individual tenants, and leaseholders that our initiatives can bring including addressing the significant carbon emissions arising from our social housing use and development.

Our Corporate Plan amplifies that the housing landlord service has an ambitious decarbonisation agenda which aims to reduce carbon emissions of council owned homes to net zero by 2050, and to reduce carbon emissions of the housing operational services, respectively.



A more specific measure stated in the Corporate Plan is to improve the energy efficiency of over 3,200 council houses by 2030, and coherent spending plans for the decarbonisation of our housing stock have been incorporated into the long term HRA investment plan to deliver this objective.

This on-going commitment builds upon the significant capital investment made into our housing stock over recent years, and we fully understand the importance of providing safe and warm homes for our tenants and the positive impact on their households and communities that these initiatives bring. Our approach focuses on lowering tenants' energy bills and helping lift our most vulnerable households out of fuel poverty.

We understand improving the energy performance ratings (EPCs) of all our homes to band C by 2030 is only a stepping stone towards longer term decarbonisation, improving energy efficiency, reducing energy demand, and make it easier to transition to renewable technologies, once fossil fuel-based fuels are no longer viable.

This is a fundamental ambition as a social landlord given the significant responsibilities for decarbonisation of all our homes including retrofitting new green technologies such as fabric insulation, solar panels, and air-source heat pumps to achieve at least an EPC band C that now apply to social housing in general.

For the 24/25 year the council has been successful in obtaining £549,253 of additional grant funding through the Social Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF). This was match funded by the council. Following successful delivery of measures to 70 homes, introducing renewable technology with insulation improvements the Council was offered an additional amount of funding through the SHDF programme seeing a further 98 homes improved with £630,000 of matched funding.

This year, another successful bid under the Warm Homes Grant funding (WHGF) will see a further 174 properties improved with £1.493 millions of grant funding.

Software and AI technology, staff qualifications and changes to the delivery of housing services has seen a further 474 homes improved to EPC band C through its capital works streams and day to day repairs at no additional cost to the council. A total of 642 homes have seen their energy performance increase since 2022.

This remains a fundamental service ambition as a social landlord given the significant responsibilities for decarbonisation of all our homes including retrofitting new green technologies such as fabric insulation, solar panels, and air-source heat pumps to meet the new standards and at least EPC C from 2030 that now apply to social housing in general.

This includes addressing the significant carbon emissions arising from our social housing use and new development.

### **Our Housing Strategy and affordable housing investment**

As written in 2018 states our ambitions for developing new homes and meeting local housing needs including: -

Future housing development - Accelerating and maximising future housing development to meet local need and deliver sustainable growth.

Council housing provision - Increasing the supply of high-quality affordable homes through an ambitious council house building and acquisitions programme.

Meeting our greatest needs - Improving housing options for those within our communities with greatest need

- Best use of existing stock - Enabling the best use of existing housing to meet local needs

The council has also made substantial progress to date against its 2018 -2026 target of directly delivering 600 new “affordable” council homes. We have delivered 373 to date and have a growing pipeline of new developments in place to meet this target. This is despite two or three years of slow-down in the construction industry during the pandemic when most housing development, both private and publicly funded, was put on hold nationally.

So, whilst we cannot fully guarantee that all the 600 new homes will be completed by April 2026, we will ensure that they are all legally contracted for delivery or purchased in 2026 having set aside £15.2m for this purpose in the 2025/26 annual budget. We are assuming similar levels of annual HRA investment for newly built homes throughout the lifetime of this strategy. Though given the Government’s £39 billion social and affordable homes investment programme as recently announced (July 2025) we can be more confident about the 600 new “affordable homes” corporate target, noting that there may be a switch to delivering more socially rented homes as a proportion in the coming years.

In addition, due to current uncertain market conditions and impending LGR we have shifted our strategic approach from Council commissioned 'land-led' opportunities to purchasing at a larger scale from private developers under existing Section 106 affordable housing agreements via the Planning system.

Whilst recently approved off-the-shelf homes will not meet future homes standards, they will nevertheless be quality homes built to acceptable and high energy efficiency ratings.

S106 affordable homes can also be available to meet the needs of households on our social housing register more quickly whilst also reducing the risks associated with land-led developments not being fully built-out before the council is dissolved through LGR. The risk is sites may be consequently stopped or stalled if the new council's priorities do not align with our own at the point of transfer.

It is worth noting that we have decided not to refresh the housing strategy at the present time due to the LGR process and timescales. Going forward, we anticipate that most of the new affordable homes in the district will be delivered through the planning system and by our housing association partners at a larger scale due to the government's planning reforms and government's national 1.5 million new homes target.

Given that over 60% of our tenants and leaseholders rely on state benefits, our robust council housing development programme continues to make a significant contribution to meeting local housing needs particularly for those who need a lower social rent and a secure tenancy.

Therefore, delivery of new Council owned social housing will follow the following principles:

- Where strategic need is identified.
- Represents value for money in terms of investment, pay back, and the % of price to market value.
- Distributes stock around the Council's area, and takes in to account the investment of other social housing landlords in areas of new and forthcoming development.
- Is incorporated into the HRA Business Plan and the plan remains viable over 30 years.

- Prioritises s106 sites, but takes into account the Council's strategic responsibilities as a housing enabler and supporting other social landlords secure stock in our area
- Prioritises social and affordable rented properties over shared ownership, whilst seeking to increase the investment in shared ownership within manageable levels.
- Incorporates Temporary Accommodation stock wherever possible.

The Landlord Strategy establishes our vision for Council-owned social housing within the district and acknowledges the contribution that it will make towards the ambitions of our Corporate Plan 2024-2028 and our other linked strategies and policies.

## Section 5 – How tenants are involved in decision making about their homes.

The Council recognises it has significant responsibilities to ensure that tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in decisions affecting the services they receive and the quality of their homes.

Our priority remains to amplify the 'voice' of tenants and leaseholders making it visible in priority decisions such as rent increases, balance of spend between stock investment and housing development, and having robust input into new policies including Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), and in the overall delivery of landlord services.

This includes the commissioning of appropriate aids and adaptations to properties, especially minor works that will allow tenants to remain in their own homes for longer.

We are confident that our culture is one of trust and openness with our tenants and leaseholders, where our housing staff and elected members do their best to help households and provide additional support where necessary.

At the same time, many staff report increasing challenges in engaging with other agencies or in getting the wrap-around services many of our tenants' need in maintaining their tenancies, health, and wellbeing.

This is despite our excellent partnership and regional working contributions, across the health and social care domain, as evidenced by our recent Corporate Peer Challenge Review. We are committed to keep improving our service offer to older and vulnerable tenants including offering advocacy and support through the maze of existing health and care systems including representation to the regional Health and Wellbeing Boards at Council Leader and Chief Executive levels.

We understand that many social landlords have similar pressures and acknowledge the immense pressures our colleagues in health and social care are facing at the present time. However, our aim remains to give more “tailored” service responses especially around repairs and maintenance timescale responses, ASB, and offer support throughout the different housing services where tenant vulnerabilities are identified.

We remain on a journey of culture change to empowering our customer facing staff to make bespoke service decisions for residents, and particularly for tenants that need more specialist housing support. We place great emphasis on property condition, tenant experience and accountability.

Our new Tenant Engagement Strategy commits us to action by carrying out a full tenant data survey to generate a robust needs analysis and to inform service design. We will improve engagement outcomes for tenants and take opportunities to engage to where our tenants live, to give us a unique understanding of what it means to be a tenant or leaseholder, in the places they call home.

We are also very aware the council’s landlord function has significant responsibilities to ensure that our homes, estates, and surrounding areas including public open spaces are safe, well maintained, and contribute to better health and environmental outcomes including making biodiversity gains wherever possible.

### **Tenant Insight Data**

As stated, the housing service is committed to understand who our tenants are, what they need, their characteristics and vulnerabilities which mean we may need to design our services differently to maximise engagement, collaboration, and tenancy sustainment. To do this we have commissioned a tenants’ survey from a trusted provider to independently give us this data to help better shape our service offers in the future with our tenants and leaseholders.

We know there has been a significant rise in the expectation for council landlords to ensure that tenants and leaseholders are given a wider range of opportunities to influence and be involved in decisions affecting their quality of their homes, landlord services, and broader services provided by the council.

For example, our tenants and leaseholders have told us that the implementation of the council's Waste Strategy is particularly important to them. Whilst good progress has been made to date the actual service change of rolling-out wheelie bins for the first time, opening a new depot at Hardley to service the east of the District, and building new bin-stores in our flatted blocks, changing collection frequencies and new recycling rules is a current hot-topic for residents, tenants and leaseholders alike.

This is where our Tenant Engagement Team steps in to amplify the tenants voice in the corporate decision-making process and in the communication of changes which is championed by the Housing Portfolio Holder in the Cabinet decision making process.

The Tenant Engagement Group (TIG) also invites council managers and the Executive Team to their meetings to independently challenge and help co-produce areas of policy and change through their lived experience as both a tenant and resident of NFDC.

Equally, we recognise that tenant and leaseholder engagement is an on-going area of improvement for us, and we have already committed to invest significant resource and do more to engage tenants and leaseholders in the decision-making processes and better understand their needs and expectations.

The overall aim is to better tailor individual service responses particularly for older, disabled, or more vulnerable tenants and leaseholders taking account of any protected characteristics and housing demand factors, as necessary.

### **Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)**

TSMs consist of a mixture of 10 management measures and 12 tenant perception measures. Our perception measurement results have provided valuable insight for the council to ensure that tenants' views on services that are important to them can be measured and improved.

**Table 1: Yearly Comparison of TSM perception measure results**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>Change</b> ↑↓↔
Overall satisfaction	81%	84%	↑ 3%
Overall repairs	82.8%	81%	↓ 1.8%
Time taken repairs	82.8%	82%	↑ 0.8%
Well maintained home	82.1%	78%	↓ 4.1%
Safe home	84.7%	85%	↔
Listens and acts	67.8%	71%	↑ 3.2%
Keeps you informed	78.9%	81%	↑ 2.1%
Fair and with respect	82.2%	86%	↑ 3.8%
Approach to complaints	29.1%	32%	↑ 2.9%
Communal areas	68.6%	72%	↑ 3.4%
Neighbourhood	72.1%	76%	↑ 3.9%
ASB handling	62%	64%	↑ 2%

**Table 2 Yearly Comparison of Management Measures**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>Change</b> ↑↓↔
RP01 Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	2.14 %	1.20%	↓ 0.94%
RP02 – Emergency repairs completed within target timescale	94.30%	93.40%	↓ 0.90%
RP02 – non-emergency repairs completed within target timescale	91.98%	93.69%	↑ 1.71%
BS01 Gas safety checks	98.21%	100%	↑ 1.79%
BS02 Fire safety checks	95.59%	100%	↑ 4.41%
BS03 Asbestos safety checks	98.27%	100%	↑ 1.73%
BS04 Water safety checks	75.50%	100%	↑ 24.5%
BS05 Lift safety checks	100%	100%	↔
CH01 Stage 1 complaints received per 1000 dwellings	7.9	12.9	↑ 5.00
CH01 Stage 2 complaints received per 1000 dwellings	1.5	5.1	↑ 3.60

CH02 Stage 1 complaints response handling in time	100%	95.59%	↓ 4.41%
CH02 Stage 2 complaints response handling in time	100%	100%	↔
NM01 Anti-social behaviour cases per 1000 dwellings	30.8	39.4	↑ 8.60
NM01 Anti-social behaviour cases that involve hate incidents per 1000 dwellings.	0.57	0.19	↓ 0.38

With two years' worth of data now available, the Council can evidence notable increases in overall tenant satisfaction and particularly in the 'transparency, influence and accountability' measures, complaints outcomes, and in maintaining communal areas. This improvement profile reflects the significant work all our teams have been putting in over the last several years towards continuous improvement, which has ramped up since the introduction of TSM data collection in April 2023.



**Cabinet – 6th August 2025**

## **Housing Annual Compliance Report**

Purpose	An interim Housing Compliance report was presented to the Executive Management Team on 10 December 2024, as part of the twice-yearly reporting arrangements on statutory compliance across the housing service. This report provides the next scheduled update on Housing compliance performance which was presented to the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 18 June 2025.
Classification	<b>Public</b>
Executive Summary	Compliance with statutory safety standards is a critical priority across the Housing Service. This report provides the next scheduled update on housing compliance and performance across a range of statutory safety requirements in respect of the council's housing stock. The data in this report is a snapshot in time reflecting the position on 31 March 2025. Figures can fluctuate over the year based on equipment replacement and individual resident needs.
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	<b>Note the annual compliance report for Housing compliance.</b>
Reasons for recommendation(s)	It is recommended that Cabinet note the annual Housing Compliance report covering the period up to 31 March 2025 in respect of the Housing Services' performance against key statutory compliance measures to ensure effective scrutiny is provided at all levels of governance in the Council.
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Steve Davies – Housing and Homelessness
Strategic Director(s)	Richard Knott – Strategic Director, Housing and Communities  Paul Thomas - Assistant Director, Housing

Officer Contact	Sophie Tuffin Service Manager – Housing Maintenance Programmes and Servicing <a href="mailto:sophie.tuffin@nfdc.gov.uk">sophie.tuffin@nfdc.gov.uk</a>
-----------------	--

## Introduction and background

1. An interim Housing Compliance report was presented to EMT on 10 December 2024, as part of the twice-yearly reporting arrangements covering statutory compliance across housing.
2. Monthly reporting is presented to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness and this report will also be presented to the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 18 June 2025.
3. This report provides the next scheduled update to EMT across a range of statutory safety requirements in respect of the council's social housing stock.
4. The council's Housing Statutory Compliance Board, which regularly monitors operational compliance and is made up of senior housing officers and is chaired by the Strategic Director – Housing & Communities, last met on 2 April 2025.
5. The Housing Service, introduced a suite of M365 digital performance dashboards in April 2023, providing key performance and analytical data across a range of activities which is used to monitor and improve performance. This report will include an overview of key items to include:-
  - Fire Safety;
  - Asbestos;
  - Recruitment;
  - Damp, Mould, and Disrepair.

## The Tenant Satisfaction Measures

6. In 2023 the Council submitted its first set of results to the Social Housing Regulator under the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023. The new Consumer Standards, place greater emphasis on tenant safety, and improved tenant services. All registered providers report annually to the Regulator of Social Housing on a wide range of matters, including performance with statutory compliance measures. Additional detail can be found here [TSM Dashboard \(24-25\) - Power BI](#)

**Table 1: Target Performance against compliance TSMs along with latest scores for 2024/2025.**

<b>Tenant Satisfaction Measures</b>	<b>24/25 NFDC Target</b>	<b>24/25 Results</b>	<b>25/26 Target</b>
Decent Homes standard (RP01)	90%	98.80%	97%
Emergency Repairs (RP02)	90%	93.40%	90%
Non-Emergency Repairs (RP02)	90%	93.69%	90%
Gas Safety (BS01)	97%	99.98%	98%
Fire Safety (BS02)	95%	100%	97%
Asbestos Management (BS03)	95%	100%	98%
Water Safety (BS04)	95%	100%	98%
Lift Safety (BS05)	95%	100%	98%

**Table 2:- Comparison of data relating to tenant perception of repairs performance 2024 and 2025**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>Outturn</b>
Overall satisfaction	81%	84%	↑ 3%
Overall repairs	82.8%	81%	↓ 1.8%
Time taken repairs	82.8%	82%	↓ 0.8%
Well maintained home	82.1%	78%	↓ 4.1%
Safe home	84.7%	85%	↔

7. Table 2 shows a 3% increase in overall tenant satisfaction. A 1.8% drop in overall satisfaction of repairs and 4.1% drop in tenant perception of a well-maintained home, could be attributed to increased work to raise the profile of condensation, damp, and mould and general awareness of reporting dissatisfaction. There is a significant programme of work taking place to better understand our

residents and IT system changes are planned over the next 12 months aim to improve these results.

8. 24/25 has seen a significant period of positive change to merge the Electric and Gas Safety Teams, to fully implement the learning of complaints and a new round of improvement plans linked to the Government's new Consumer Standards. The Council will continue to value resident feedback and the learnings to improve satisfaction.

### **Housing Compliance Performance Monitoring**

9. In addition to the TSMs, the service operates a more detailed set of indicators in the form of a housing compliance reporting dashboard, run monthly. This snapshot gives a more in-depth view of servicing components and frequencies than the TSM dashboard. [Housing Compliance Report - Power BI](#)

**Table 3:- Additional Compliance monitoring targets 31st March 2025.**

<b>Housing Compliance</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Equipment</b>
Lift Checks	95%	Stairlifts, Hoist, through floor lifts – safety records each year
Heating Safety	95%	ASHP, oil, and solid fuel – 175 safety records each year
Fire Safety Risk Assessments	95%	166 blocks risk assessed each year
Electrical Safety Inspections	95%	Domestic and commercial installations – 5,461 tests every 5 years
Water Hygiene Tests	95%	29 blocks inspected (All outlets and frequencies)
Doors & Shutter Inspections	90%	82 Inspections (All frequencies)

10. Periodic policy reviews are underway and include new and revised policies covering:-
  - Lifts and Lifting Equipment;
  - Playgrounds and Play Equipment;
  - Maintenance and Repair;
  - Voids and Mutual Exchanges;
  - Electrical;
  - Gas;
  - Water Hygiene.

The revised Policies will be brought to EMT and the Housing O&S Panel during the Summer 2025, for approval, before being published on the Council's webpages [Housing strategies and policies](#) - [New Forest District Council](#)

### **Damp, Mould, and Condensation (DMC)**

11. The Council's Damp, Mould and Condensation policy was presented at the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 19 March 2025 with recommendation made to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness to approve the policy by way of Portfolio Holder Decision.
12. The Council has already put in place additional resources to bring about improvements and strengthen the council's approach to disrepair reports via a dedicated task force of customer services triage lead, inspector and trade responders. A recently procured survey and cleaning company will help deliver the short turnaround times proposed under Awaab's law.
13. Officers will continue to work to improve residents' awareness of the risks where DMC is present, through HomeTalk, social media and the council's web pages.
14. Repairs Supervisors have received a level 2 VRQ certificate in understanding and prevention of damp and mould in housing. The course is designed specifically for officers involved with damp and mould prevention focusing on legislative standards, guidance, best practice and tenant rights.
15. The Council has purchased equipment to better detect and reassure residents reporting loss of cavity insulation and excessive cold. Damp meters, moisture meters and new thermal camera are now available to officers.
16. In complex cases the council is using environmental sensors to provide insights in tackling high humidity, reports of excessive cold and providing residents insights to help awareness around ventilation.
17. Table 4 shows a drop in overall cases of reported damp and mould, which is attributed to the priority and process adopted to managing DMC within the housing service.

**Table 4:- DMC monitoring 2024/25**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Jobs Raised</b>	<b>Area 1</b> (Totton, Hythe Dibden)	<b>Area 2</b> (Lymington, Pennington Milford on Sea)	<b>Area 3</b> (Ringwood, New Milton, Fordingbridge)
2023-2024	500	194	135	171
2024-2025	317	119	99	99
Total	817			

### **Disrepair**

18. The council's [corporate complaints procedure](#) aligns with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. The Pre-Action Protocol now utilised by the Council, states that the parties should consider whether some form of alternative dispute resolution procedure would be more suitable than litigation for these sorts of claims and for council tenants a suitable option includes the council's own complaints procedure.
19. The council as at today is dealing with 16 active cases of disrepair, where a letter of claim has been served under the Pre-Action Protocol for housing conditions claims. These continue to be managed through the corporate complaints' procedure and legal process, supported by Legal Services.
20. Awaab's Law forms part of the government's White Paper pledge to reduce non-decency in rented homes by 50% by 2030. In February 2025, the government released an update which will require social landlords to investigate and fix dangerous damp and mould in set time periods and repair emergency hazards within 24 hours from October 2025.
21. This is part of a phased approach through the Renters Reform Bill which aims to introduce phased improvements in standards which are likely to include expanding current legislation in 2026, to apply to a wider range hazards like excess cold and excess heat in domestic buildings, risk of structural collapse, fire, electrical and explosions and hygiene hazards.
22. The Council is implementing improvements to make sure that we are working to the new standards now. We are actively participating at round tables and other networking events, training staff and undertaking process improvements.

23. In 2027, the requirements of Awaab's Law will expand further to the remaining hazards as defined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) (excluding overcrowding). The full list of hazards can be found in schedule 1 to [the Housing Health and Safety Rating System \(England\) Regulations 2005](#).
24. Officers are continuing to attend key meetings with other local authorities and key stakeholders, to stay informed of the latest news and best practice, which will be fed into policies and processes accordingly.
25. Housing teams continue to focus on good ventilation and fabric warmth, through its retrofit programme adopted through the Greener Housing Strategy, which prioritises ventilation and insulation and through its planned capital work programmes.
26. To increase knowledge within the housing teams, two planned surveyors have now completed their level 5 Diploma in Retrofit Coordination and Risk Management.
27. The council's retrofit and new development programme is increasing the number of homes with renewable technology. The majority of homes within the district are heated with gas central heating. The government have proposed changes to how Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) are calculated, this is likely to favour electrical sourced of heating like air Source Heat Pumps.
28. The current KW price of electricity is still prohibitive in swapping the councils 4,582 gas homes for electric alternatives, without increasing costs for residents.
29. Three Electricians have completed their solar Photovoltaic (PV) qualifications, which will allow the Council workforce to safely repair and maintain domestic PV panels on council roofs.
30. Five Gas Engineers have completed their qualifications in repairing and maintaining air source heat pumps. These renewable qualifications will maintain the best level of service to tenants and improve staff morale and retention as we invest in their skills and development.

### **Gas Registered Business**

31. The Council is a registered Gas Safe Business, employing 14 registered engineers including a Gas Supervisor and Gas and Electrical Manager.

32. Corgi Technical services operate as the council's independent auditors for gas. Their monthly assessments help the council to monitor quality and performance to include health and safety legislation under the **Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000 (PSSR)** regulations designed to ensure the safe design, installation, operation, and maintenance of pressure systems in the workplace and the **Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 (DSEAR)** regulations that aim to protect people from risks related to fire, explosions, and substances that can corrode metal.
33. Corgi have currently completed 21 independent Gas Audits since April 2025. This includes work in progress (WIP) and gas safety certification audits. A link to May's figures has been included:- [Corgi Gas Compliance Snapshot](#). The results provide assurance that the Council are complying with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations.
34. Through a restructure of the Housing Maintenance Programmes and Servicing team in July 2024, the council has appointed a new Gas and Electrical Manager replacing separate gas and electrical roles. This will create greater oversight of utilities inspections and bring together the operatives as the council moves towards its goals for decarbonisation and whole house retrofit programmes.
35. The new Manager holds a Level 3 VRQ Certificate in Gas Auditing Processes, and a VRQ level 4 in Gas Safety Management in Social Housing, while they are currently undertaking a CIH level 4 certificate in housing.

### **Electrical Registered Business**

36. The Council is a registered business of the Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC). This ensures that installation work we undertake meets the standards expected.
37. Under the Approved Contractor Scheme, the council employs 11 registered engineers, including an Electrical Supervisor who takes the role of registered Qualified Supervisor (QS). The council recently supported one of its electrical engineers to complete their QS competency improving resilience across the service.

### **Southern Internal Audit Partnership**

38. Southern Internal Audit Partnership, (SIAP) commenced a review of the council's lift servicing and maintenance regimes. Giving a 'Substantial' assurance opinion with 3 identified management



actions. A close off audit meeting covering lift servicing took place in April 2025 with the following actions identified:-

1. Introduce formal monitoring/reporting for defects and delivery timeframes (Action complete);
  2. Ensure a full stock condition list for all lifting equipment. To include a risk status Low, medium, high. (Revised condition report to incorporate high/med/low status, underway);
  3. Utilise TCW document reader to identify gaps in safety records, and act on information to improve safety (Commenced).
39. SIAP commenced audits of gas and asbestos safety compliance in 2024/25 Q4. A close off audit meeting took place on 2 May 2025 for asbestos and the draft audit report has been approved for publication, giving a 'Substantial' assurance opinion with no identified management actions. A close off audit meeting covering gas is scheduled to take place late May 2025.

## **Key Compliance Measures**

### **Asbestos**

40. The council's Corporate Asbestos Policy and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) ensures that there is clarity in terms of structure and responsibility for managing asbestos across the council, with an established Asbestos Working Group overseeing the council's approach to ensure good practice.
41. The Housing Service takes a lead role in ensuring a consistent approach across the whole Council, with individual Service Managers being required to comply with the same policy for the property assets falling within their respective areas of responsibility.
42. The Council has in place a multi-supplier 4-year framework for the provision of providing specialist asbestos related works and services, including surveying, analytical work, training, and asbestos removal. The framework is due to expire in July 2025 and is included within the procurement pipeline for retender prior to expiry.
43. A programme of surveys on all communal areas of housing blocks was commissioned and completed in 2022. An annual reinspection programme covering all housing blocks and garages is undertaken in house by the Council's Asbestos Management Officer and the annual programme is progressing on time.

44. Asbestos management surveys are carried out on all void social housing properties (approx. 400 each year) prior to any maintenance work commencing, which also enables us to provide asbestos information guides to the incoming tenants. All refurbishment surveys required to support capital planned maintenance works, i.e., kitchens, bathrooms etc. are now commissioned under one survey to cover both asbestos management and refurbishment, which in time will improve asbestos management data held on all individual housing dwellings.
45. All corporate buildings, including offices, depots, public conveniences etc., where maintenance and repairing responsibilities rests with the council also undergo an annual reinspection programme. The majority of re-inspections for 2024 were outsourced to Casa Environmental and a handful of smaller buildings inspections undertaken inhouse. Inspections are ongoing on a rolling bases forming part of our annual re-inspection programme and records updated where necessary to reflect any change in material assessment.

Compliance on inspections required currently sits at **100%**

### **Electrical Safety**

46. The Council is required to carry out periodic electrical installation safety inspections on all housing stock, including communal landlord supplies every 5 years.

Defects are categorised as:-

- **C1 (Danger present)**  
Immediate danger and requires urgent attention.
- **C2 (Potential danger)**  
Something that could become dangerous if left unresolved.
- **C3 (Improvement recommended)**  
Not immediately dangerous but not up to current standards.

47. C1 and C2 rated defects are completed by operatives completing their safety inspections. C3 defects could include items such as replacing plastic consumer boards with metal equivalents. The Council takes a pragmatic approach to such changes in line with IET wiring Regulations (BS-7671) as there is no immediate requirement for replacement, unless other issues arise.
48. Officers are implementing a new certificate auditing system called **Technical Compliance Workflow (TCW)**. The cloud-based

software has the ability to read all electronic certificates for the Council's compliance areas. Starting with electrical certificates. Defects will be easily recorded and prioritised into planned programmes of works. The system will be used to improve operative training and remove the need for manual checking.

### Domestic

49. As of 12 May 2025, from a total of 5,320 5-year cyclical inspections there are currently 23 inspections overdue. Of these, 9 require remedial works, 3 are being progressed to appointment and 11 have been escalated to the tenancy sustainment team to support further engagement with tenants before being managed through the Council's legal process.
50. Due to retirement, we are currently recruiting 1 electrician with 1 further post being allocated to incorporate emergency light testing within our in-house electrical team. Interviews have taken place and vacancies offered.

Compliance of domestic EICR inspections is **99.57%**, an improvement of 0.03% from December's report. (December's figure 99.54%).

### Landlord Communal

51. The Council has 140 housing blocks with communal power and/or lighting. Of these landlord electrical installations we have 3 blocks not in date, this is due to 2 requiring remedial works following inspection and 1 block requiring further repair investigations.

Compliance on inspections required currently sits at **97.9%** a decrease of 2.1% from December 2024 report.

### **Fire Safety**

52. The Council is using a combination of in-house resources and external contractors to respond to the necessary actions.
53. The Council has retained the services of project management consultants and fire safety specialists who are assisting the council where required, and officers continue to work closely with the Fire Service through the Joint Fire Steering Group Liaison Meetings, Local Remediation Plan meetings, and as a Statutory Consultee forming part of the building regulatory regime.
54. In December 2022, the Council appointed an external specialist to undertake cyclical fire risk assessments (FRAs) to the council's

housing blocks and corporate buildings for the next 3 years. FRAs are undertaken on a rolling basis continually throughout the year and there are always likely to be outstanding actions reported. Each FRA is reviewed within 14 days of completion and high-risk actions scheduled as a priority.

55. Regulation 10 of the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 requires that, if the top storey of the building is above 11m in height (typically, a building of more than four storeys) the Responsible Person must use best endeavours to check all flat entrance doors at least every 12 months and carry out checks on any fire doors in communal areas at least every 3 months. Although the Council do not have any housing residential buildings that fall within the requirements of the current regulations, it is likely that the height requirement will be lowered at some point in the future and is considered best practice.
56. The housing building safety team are in the process of building a detailed fire door asset register using a new barcoding and door tag system in preparedness to commence formal periodic fire door inspections as soon as reasonably practicable during 2025.
57. Compliance on completing periodic fire risk assessments currently sits at **100%**.
58. As of 20 May 2025, a total of 788 Fire Risk Actions have been raised since December 2022. Of these 773 were deemed unlikely or low-risk and 15 medium-risk. No high-risk actions have been observed. Of those actions raised, 542 have been completed (68.78%) and 246 are in progress of being actioned (31.22%). Of these, 39% relate to items included within our capital planned maintenance programmes for 2025/26 with an estimated completion date of 31 March 2026 and 26% related to building housekeeping and managing resident behaviour.
59. As FRAs are undertaken on a rolling basis continually throughout the year there are always likely to be outstanding actions reported, and these often include resident related housekeeping issues observed at the time of inspection. For example, items stored within common escape routes which are required to be kept clear.

**Table 5:- Fire Risk Actions**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Sub Description</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Compartmentation	-	<b>20</b>	<b>8.13</b>
Fire Doors or Hatches	Repair	1	
	Notional doors (Stores)	10	
	Notional doors (Flats)	28	
	Self-closing device	10	
	Loft hatches	49	
		<b>98</b>	<b>39.84</b>
Fire Stopping	-	<b>34</b>	<b>13.82</b>
Housekeeping	Balconies	2	
	Behaviour	17	
	Periodic inspection	1	
	Security	2	
	Service cupboards	13	
	Signage	22	
	Waste	7	
		<b>64</b>	<b>26.02</b>
Means of Escape	-	<b>26</b>	<b>10.57</b>
Testing & Commissioning	Evidence of testing & commissioning	<b>4</b>	<b>1.63</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>100</b>

Progress against Plan – Workstream A

60. A programme of work commenced in the Spring of 2022 on the 3 Extra Care blocks (Barfield's Court, Gore Grange and Winfrid House) to deal with compartmentation issues, install a new fire alarm system including a Telecare system (to ensure communication between tenants and the onsite care provider), replacement fire doors to dwellings, ancillary and cross corridor doors and other remedial works. Forming part of this work, the council piloted a newer innovation, in the form of a fire suppression sprinkler system, in Barfield's Court and Winfrid House. The final phase of this work at Winfrid House concluded in May 2024.
61. There was a need to temporarily decant Robertshaw House in Lyndhurst to enable necessary safety work to be undertaken. The work required within this block replicated that of Compton and Sarum House which completed in November 2023. A two-phase programme of work commenced in the May 2023 and concluded in August 2024.
62. Retrofitted glazed screening enclosing what were originally open balcony walkways on 2 further housing blocks has been removed and work to retrofit 32 double glazed panels with smoke vents

within the stairwells at 7 North Milton Housing blocks has also been completed.

63. Investigatory work has now concluded to inform the necessary scope of work for 4 further general needs age-restricted blocks. This investigatory work was supported by the council's commissioned fire engineer to determine the regulatory fire strategy for each building. Pre commencement planning, design and tender scoping is now underway and will inform the necessary building regulatory regime formal approval process.

#### Progress against Plan – Workstream B

64. The key elements of fire safety improvement work completed includes circa 50 ad hoc replacement fire doors, upgrading electrical meter boxes and loft hatches within common means of escape, fire stopping, fire signage and ongoing monitoring and clearance of communal areas to maintain sterile environment. This work is ongoing with work to a further 24 walk-up blocks nearing completion.

#### **Investment**

65. For the 2025 -26 financial year our proposed budget includes a total of £22.11m to be spent on maintaining tenant's properties including fire safety, statutory compliance, and our accelerated decarbonisation programme, respectively.
66. During the preceding three financial year period 2022 -25 we invested £52.13m on maintaining tenant's properties including £6.2m on identified fire safety improvements, £2.7m on major refurbishment to bring empty properties suffering structural disrepair back into use, £21.07m on capital planned maintenance programmes, £3.16m on decarbonisation and £18.98m on statutory compliance and general repairs and The Council is currently in the process of procuring a four-year framework agreement for the replacement of fire doors and communal doors. The programme anticipates the replacement of approximately 150 to 200 fire doors annually. Officers are required to submit full building control applications for each fire door replacement to ensure full compliance.

#### **The Building Safety Act 2022 – Section 156**

67. Section 156 of the Building Safety Act 2022 was introduced under Article 50 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and came into force on 1 October 2023 and applies to all non-domestic

premises, such as where people work, visit, or stay, including workplaces, and the non-domestic parts of multi-occupied residential buildings (e.g., communal corridors, stairways, plant rooms). The requirements do not apply within individual domestic premises.

68. The new legislation had the effect of amending the Fire Safety Order to require the Responsible Person/s to undertake specific duties and require the Responsible Person/s of buildings containing two or more sets of domestic premises to provide residents with relevant fire safety information. The additional duties placed on the Responsible Person/s strengthens the status of statutory guidance issued under Article 50 of the Fire Safety order. More information can be found here: [Check your fire safety responsibilities under Section 156 of the Building Safety Act 2022 \(accessible\) - GOV.UK](#)
69. Local fire and rescue authorities remain the primary enforcing body for the Fire Safety Order, including these additional requirements. The Housing Act 2004 lists enforcement by the Local Authority in non-domestic parts of multi-occupied residential buildings.
70. The council's housing fire safety web pages have been redesigned to comply with the requirements and to respond to hard copy requests for information by exception.  
<https://www.newforest.gov.uk/firesafety>
71. Housing managers continue to work closely with HIWFRS via our Fire Safety Management Steering Group and our Building Safety team are in the process of rolling out new fire and building safety posters to our larger housing schemes, with posters modified to reflect the individual characteristics of each scheme. An example can be found here:- [Robertshaw House House 2025\\_Housing\\_Building Safety Posters.pdf](#)

## **Training and Development**

72. The Council continues to invest in its housing team to maintain the skills and knowledge adapting to proposed changes in legislation and energy efficiency:-
  - The council's Housing Fire Safety Manager and Senior Building Safety Officer commenced the Level 4 Fire Safety Inspector and Level 3 Fire Safety Advisor apprenticeships respectively in September 2024 utilising the apprenticeship levy;
  - The Gas and Electrical Manager successfully completed an RVQ level 4 in Gas Safety Management in social housing;

- Seven operatives completed training in renewable technology which will help the Councils manage a transition to renewable technology;
- Two Planned Maintenance Surveyors completed their level 5 Diploma in Retrofit Coordination and risk management;
- Two Service Managers started the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) level 5 qualifications in Housing;
- Housing Managers and Supervisors completed their IOSH Managing safely certificates;
- Construction Design Management (CDM) Workshops have been provided to staff to improve knowledge and management of Health and safety;
- RVQ Level 2 in damp and mould and compliance Certificates completed by Repairs Supervisors;
- Operatives have benefitted from training that improves personal safety to include Tetra ladder training.

## **Gas Safety**

73. The council's in-house team of qualified gas engineers complete yearly gas safety inspections of all 4,582 housing properties containing a gas burning appliance.
74. As of 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025, there are 7 inspections overdue. Of these, 3 were escalated to the Tenancy sustainment team to support engagement with residents, with 3 expired certificates escalated to legal services seeking an injunction to gain access. 1 expired certificate is in the process of having a replacement boiler.
75. Landlord Gas Safety Records (LGSR's) Are currently paper based. As a new software is introduced, electronic certification will further improve compliance reporting.

Compliance on inspections required currently sits at **99.85%**

The Council has 25 housing blocks served by communal boiler plant rooms supplying heating and hot water.

Compliance on inspections required currently sits at **100%**

76. In addition, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) requires landlords to inspect equipment acting under or containing pressure.



The Pressure System Safety Regulations (PSSR) is an essential safety check completed yearly.

Compliance on inspections required currently sits at **100%**

77. Housing blocks with gas supplies, must comply with the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 (DSEAR). A zoned, risk assessment for the council's 30 applicable blocks, including meters, is required to identify and manage the suitability and safety of pipework installations through each building. While the risk of an incident is low. Should an explosion occur, the impact could be significant.
78. The council is currently completing new risk assessments for all applicable blocks, which is anticipated to complete in July 2025.
79. All blocks are routinely inspected by the council's Building Safety Officers, whose role it is to observe and mitigate safety issues.

### **Legionella Safety**

80. Statutory legislation requires weekly flushing of outlets in communal bathrooms and kitchens along with temperature checks at nearest, intermediate, and furthest points from feed tanks or calorifiers in 30 housing blocks where communal water tanks or heating cylinders are present. These checks are carried out monthly to ensure compliance.
81. Additionally, the council carries out annual risk assessments, including sampling and cleaning of water tanks in all 29 of its applicable blocks, and all actions arising from these risk assessments are dealt with as they arise.

In April 2025, contractors identified 13 actions. 5 of these require monitoring of water temperatures which will take place throughout May and June 2025. 5 repairs were identified which will be repaired before the next round of monitoring. 3 units have been isolated from the water supply so were unable to be tested, 2 relate to supplies to guest rooms in blocks at Evergreens and Compton House, and further investigation as to why they have been isolated are underway. 1 shower has been isolated from the water supply as it is no longer in use. The Shower is to be removed from the asset list in due course.

Compliance on assessments required currently sits at **100%**

## Lifts and Lifting Equipment

82. In domestic properties there are currently 141 stairlifts, 21 track hoists, 3 bath lifts, 1 step lift and 7 through floor lifts. In communal areas there are 11 passenger lifts and 7 stairlifts.
83. Stock Condition information has been collated for all 11 passenger lifts. As a result of this information, the passenger lift at Howard Oliver House was refurbished in 2024. No passenger lifts are planned for replacement in 2025.
84. The Lifts and Lifting Equipment Policy and external regulation sets out the frequency schedule for lift maintenance and safety inspections. Communal passenger lifts are serviced monthly and undergo a detailed inspection every 6 months. Track hoists, through floor, bath and communal stairlifts are serviced and inspected every 6 months, and domestic stairlifts are serviced and inspected annually.
85. Temple Lifts were successfully re-appointed as the council's lift contractor on 14 October 2024.

Compliance for the 11 passenger lift inspections and servicing sits at **100%**

Compliance for other lifting equipment is set out in table 6 below:-

**Table 6: Lift equipment compliance**

Lifting Baths	<b>100%</b>
Domestic Stair Lifts	<b>94.37%</b> Due to access
Communal Stair Lifts	<b>100%</b>
Track Hoists	<b>100%</b>
Through floor lifts	<b>100%</b>

Domestic Stair Lifts which result in non-access are regularly monitored through the Council's access process in collaboration with tenancy sustainment officers.

## Playground and Play Equipment

86. The housing landlord service has 8 playgrounds under its responsibilities which are subject to weekly routine visual inspections undertaken by the council's Stock Condition Surveyors. Specialist RoSPA trained contractors complete quarterly and yearly detailed inspections.

87. The condition of the playgrounds has been collected. This information has been reviewed, a strategy for upgrading and future provision will be developed in due course, and which will consider consultation responses from the community.

### **Other Compliance Measures**

88. The council's communal buildings contain the following specialist safety systems designed to detect, warn, and protect residents in the event of a fire.

**Table 7: Fire alarm equipment servicing**

<b>Compliance Risk</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Compliance</b>
Fire Alarms	33	100%
Automist and fire suppression systems	5	100%
Fire Fighting Equipment	22	100%

89. Every home contains multiple smoke detectors which are serviced annually. Carbon monoxide detectors are installed in every room containing a fuel burning appliance. An example would be 1 monitor located within a kitchen with a gas boiler and 1 monitor in a living room with gas fire. They have sealed batteries and are replaced at the last yearly service before the detectors expire. Details for each smoke and carbon monoxide detector are recorded for each home on its asset database, Keystone.
90. 118 Blocks contain emergency lighting which illuminate in the event of a loss of power. The systems are tested on a monthly rolling basis by an external contractor and are also subject to a full battery drain down on an annual basis. From 01 October 2025, the Council will take ownership of its Emergency Light testing, giving greater control over compliance and increased resilience within the electrical team with the aim to achieve 100% compliance by the next interim report.
91. On 12 May 2025 there were 4 blocks which had a small number of failures, and works are booked to replace individual light fittings which have failed since the last testing.

Testing compliance currently sits at **96.61%**

### **Heating**

92. The council has several alternative fuel source heating systems shown in table 8:

**Table 8: Heating types and servicing compliance**

<b>Heating Type</b>	<b>Number of appliances</b>	<b>Services out of time</b>	<b>Compliance %</b>
Air source heat pumps	135	21	84.4%
Solid fuel boilers	15	0	100%
Oil fired boilers	25	0	100%
LPG	3	0	100%

93. The above are subject to annual inspection and servicing by appointed specialist contractors.
94. The council has 151 unvented hot water cylinders. These systems are pressurised and contain safeguards which require regular maintenance and yearly servicing.
95. The housing stock has 90 automatic opening doors. These range from individual entrance doors to properties for those tenants with disabilities, communal entrance doors to blocks and automatic roller doors to buggy stores. These are tested and inspected 6 monthly.

Compliance currently sits at **100%**

## **Repairs**

96. Between 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and 01 April 2025, the council received 2,000 customer contacts requiring emergency repairs. 1,868 were attended in time and 132 were completed outside of our standard response times.

Compliance for urgent repairs currently sits at **93.4%**

97. In the same period the number of non-urgent repairs orders raised was 18,065. 1,150 of these repairs were attended to outside of the allotted timescales. This figure is closely linked to customer satisfaction and links to the resilience within our teams. Monitoring these figures alerts the council to trends and themes to such as the breakdown of components such as old and aging equipment, helping plan more effectively for planned capital works.

Table 9: Details the compliance in each category over the last 12 months.

**Table 9: Repair response performance**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Total 01 April 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025</b>	<b>Out of time</b>	<b>In time</b>	<b>%</b>
3 hours	2,000	132	1,868	93.40
24 hours	2,728	94	2,634	96.55
5 working days	3,118	116	3,002	96.27
20 working days	10,006	933	9,073	90.67
90 days	2,213	7	2,206	99.98

### **Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery (MVHR)**

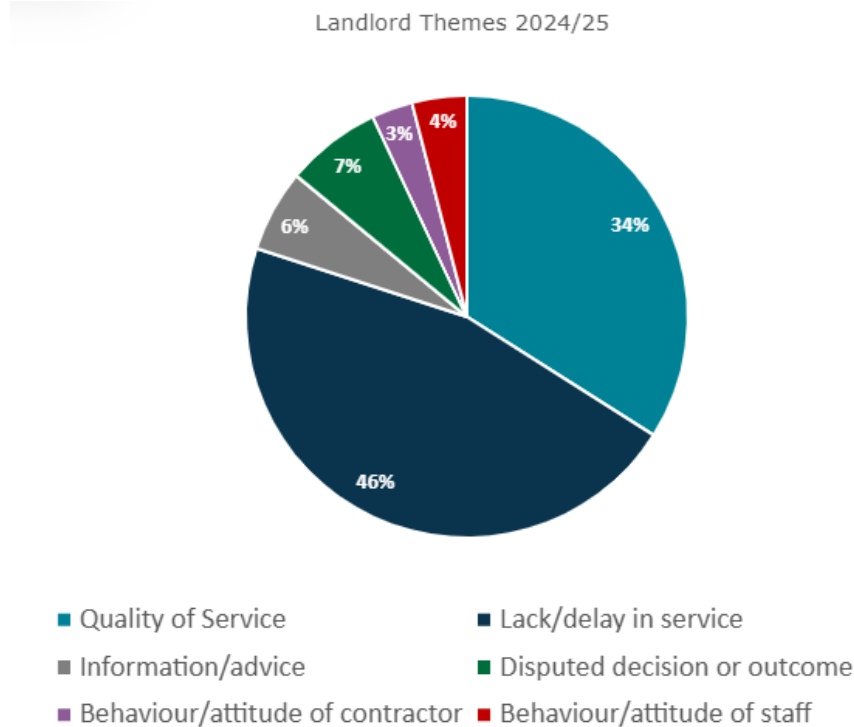
98. The council has 20 MVHR units and 1 x air conditioning unit which requires yearly inspection. The Council has 2 MVHR systems which have not been serviced due to non-access. Officers are working with colleagues and residents and will utilise other regulatory inspections where access continues to be denied.

Servicing compliance currently sits at **90%**

### **Complaints**

99. The Housing Maintenance Programmes and Servicing Service has received 45 Stage 1 complaints and 18 Stage 2 complaints for the period March 2024 to March 2025. The Council is currently awaiting the outcome of 1 Housing Ombudsman decision relating to a resident complaint, over the handling of a gas leak.
100. The complaints received have increased 45% when compared to the same 12 months in 2023/2024. Internal investigation highlighted two main themes: Tenant perception of a quality service and lack/delay in service. Officers and operatives are undergoing training on the Council's customer records, to make sure officers record all resident interactions. Operatives will also be encouraged to add detailed job notes to assist. There has been an increase in the number of routine appointments being rebooked since January due to Vacancies within our electrical team and their completion of 5 yearly safety inspections, increased demand to DMC, general sickness absence both resident and operative appear to be the root

cause. A decrease in available vacancies and better weather has reduced demand on the service.



**Fig 1: Complaint themes**

101. Complaint handling is reported through monthly Portfolio Holder Briefings and to the wider housing teams, Improved technology through resident self-serve and new housing maintenance system will enable better data insights to help improve service to residents.

### **Social Housing Regulation Act (2023)**

102. The Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 introduces several key measures to ensure compliance and improve the standards of social housing. Here are some of the main principles:-

1. Safety and Health Standards;
2. Performance Transparency;
3. Complaint Handling;
4. Professional Standards.

103. These measures aim to rebalance the relationship between landlords and tenants, ensuring that tenants feel safe, listened to, informed, and supported in their homes. Compliance with these regulations is crucial for maintaining high standards in social housing.

## Resources

104. Current Vacancies within the housing maintenance teams are set out in table 10 below:-

**Table 10: List of current vacancies**

<b>Position</b>
Planned Maintenance Surveyor
MTO Plumber
MTO Carpenter (Reactive) x1
MTO Carpenter (Voids) x 2
Mobile Cleaner

Officers have worked hard to reduce the number of vacancies from 12 posts to 6 over the last 6 months.

105. There are currently 6 trades vacancies. Carpenters continue to be difficult to recruit, due to a shortage nationally which is increasing competition. After several rounds of unsuccessful recruitment, Managers are exploring alternative solutions.
106. One option has been to proactively communicate with people who may be job seeking, or who have updated their CV recently through the recruitment site *Indeed*. This has proven to be successful in recruiting electricians and gas operatives.
107. The second is through apprenticeships, whereby a business case will be put forward in June to establish recruitment of people at the start of their careers, pairing them with experienced operatives, offering both an opportunity to learn and pass on years of experience.

## Corporate plan priorities

108. This report supports the council's People Priority 3; meeting housing needs and People Priority 2: Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives. We are working with our housing tenants to understand their needs and provide high quality service standards in line with the government's new Social Housing Charter and regulatory regime measured through the percentage scores for the 5 safety and compliance management Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs).

## **Options appraisal**

- 109. There are no alternative options to consider in the report at the current time. The Transformation process and replacement ICT systems will provide additional opportunities for change and review in due course.
- 110. The Service Manager for Housing Maintenance and Compliance is reviewing all approaches to compliance response and will bring forward any options for change if, and when required.

## **Consultation undertaken**

- 111. None arising directly from this report. However, compliance performance is regularly reported to the Housing Portfolio Holder and Tenant Involvement Group (TIG). In addition, this specific report will be presented to the Portfolio Holder, TIG and Housing & Communities Scrutiny Panel in June 2025.

## **Financial and resource implications**

- 112. The Housing Revenue Account Budget and Housing Public Sector Capital Expenditure Programme 2025/26 was approved by Council at its meeting on 22nd January 2025.
- 113. It was agreed for there to be an enhanced level of capital spending of £18.939 million to deliver an increased level of improvement works, to include fire safety and statutory compliance as well as decarbonisation works and energy efficiency measures.
- 114. Funding of £2.234 million was approved for 2025/26 cyclical maintenance budget to include resources for the mainstream statutory safety requirements, such as gas, electrical, legionella, and lift inspections etc.
- 115. Further fire safety work was identified with £1.500 million approved to continue the capital fire safety expenditure programme.

## **Legal implications**

- 116. There are significant risks and implications for the council should the council fail in its compliance duties in any area, including unlimited fines and punitive legal action that can be taken against it.
- 117. An increased number of complaints may lead to greater intervention by our legal teams and increase in the risk of maladministration findings by the Ombudsman. The Housing Ombudsman can also issue unlimited fines for serious failings or maladministration and will refer wider breaches to the regulator.



118. Poor quality or unmaintained homes increase the risk of tenant harm and property damage.

### **Risk assessment**

119. [The housing maintenance risk register 2025/26](#) is a working document used to identify and manage uncertainties that could impact our ability to maintain residents' homes. The main risk continues to be the department's new asset management system; dynamic repair scheduler and repairs management system's replacement during 2025. A dedicated project team are meeting regularly to minimise disruption.
120. A move from analogue to digital, continues to progress as the Council transfers its analogue telephony for fire alarms, careline services, door entry and lift monitoring to digital solutions.
121. Health and safety, compliance continue to play an important part in keeping homes safe for residents, while providing a safe working environment for operatives and contractors. Accredited training on health and safety and Construction (Design and Management (CDM) workshops has provided staff with updates on building regulation changes and management of CDM within the Council. A revised Standard Operation Procedure has been drafted in response with collaboration from staff and corporate health and safety team leads.
122. Decarbonisation of the council's housing stock and improving homes to EPC band C by 2030 presents significant challenges relating to cost. Reaching EPC band C is achievable, with a focus on insulation and collaboration with our own capital work programmes as required, as government funding focuses on homes with low energy performance certificates and those 'off-gas'. The Council receives little funding for its 'on-gas', EPC band D rated homes as these homes don't attract grant funding as they are often the better performing homes.

### **Environmental / Climate and nature implications**

123. The Council considers climate change as part of the tender evaluation questions for every tender. Allocating a percentage of the awarded scores to contractors who are working towards a reduction in carbon emissions, or through other improvements like recycling of packaging or commitment to reduce paper-based activities.
124. The introduction of TWC software and move to digital compliance certificates has now started. This will reduce paper usage and make

the process of update compliance certification faster helping to improve compliance scores.

### **Equalities implications**

- 125. The Council is required to consider what adjustments it can reasonably make when carrying out work within a tenant's home to manage disabilities, or other issues arising. Such adjustments are considered on a case-by-case basis following consultation and assessment with the council's Housing Occupational Therapist.
- 126. The design of fire safety systems and evacuation strategies considers the vulnerability and disabilities of residents, and each building will receive a different a tailored response to its individual circumstances.
- 127. Implications arising from the capping of gas supplies to ensure safety and compliance are addressed separately in the Gas Safety Policy and Report, but which provide a welfare assessment and practical support to tenants affected by such action.

### **Crime and disorder implications**

- 128. It is important for housing providers to ensure that statutory safety work is carried out to a high standard. Poorly performing landlords can be fined or prosecuted for failing to take the necessary measures to protect tenants.

### **Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications**

- 129. The council's asset management system holds all records for the council's properties, the responsive repairs system is used to log all repairs, and the dynamic scheduling system plans all appointments for operatives. These systems are in the process of being replaced due to aging software and potential security concerns.
- 130. Careful consideration of resident data and their individual needs is critical in maintaining high levels of compliance in all areas.
- 131. The council receives digital compliance records from several external providers.

### **New Forest National Park / Cranborne Chase National Landscape implications**

- 132. This report covers compliance actions for properties located within the New Forest National Park, and the Cranbourne Chase National Landscape. Properties in rural areas are often the worst performing

in terms of energy efficiency and are more likely to feature in works programmes in the next few years.

133. Any works requiring planning permission in the New Forest National Park are submitted to the NPA Planning Service.

## **Conclusion**

134. The council prioritises the safety of its tenants and its homes, which is reflected in this report, performance measures, TSMs, its corporate plan, and transformation journey.
135. Retaining staff and staff recruitment is an ongoing risk which will require careful consideration; an aging work force, sickness and national shortage is creating an increased turnover remains a risk in 2025.
136. New and expiring contracts create a risk in performance which needs close monitoring and contract management to avoid dips in Key Performance Indicators.
137. The council's compliance is considered of a good overall standard, and in comparison, with peers features as top quartile performance, which will continue to be improved by replacement software systems, process improvements and digitisation in the coming months.

## **Appendices:**

None

## **Background Papers:**

[Housing Maintenance  
Programmes and Servicing  
Service Plan 2024-25.docx](#)

[Housing Major Projects Service  
Plan 2024-25.docx](#)

This page is intentionally left blank

## CABINET – 6 AUGUST 2025

### TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES 2024/25

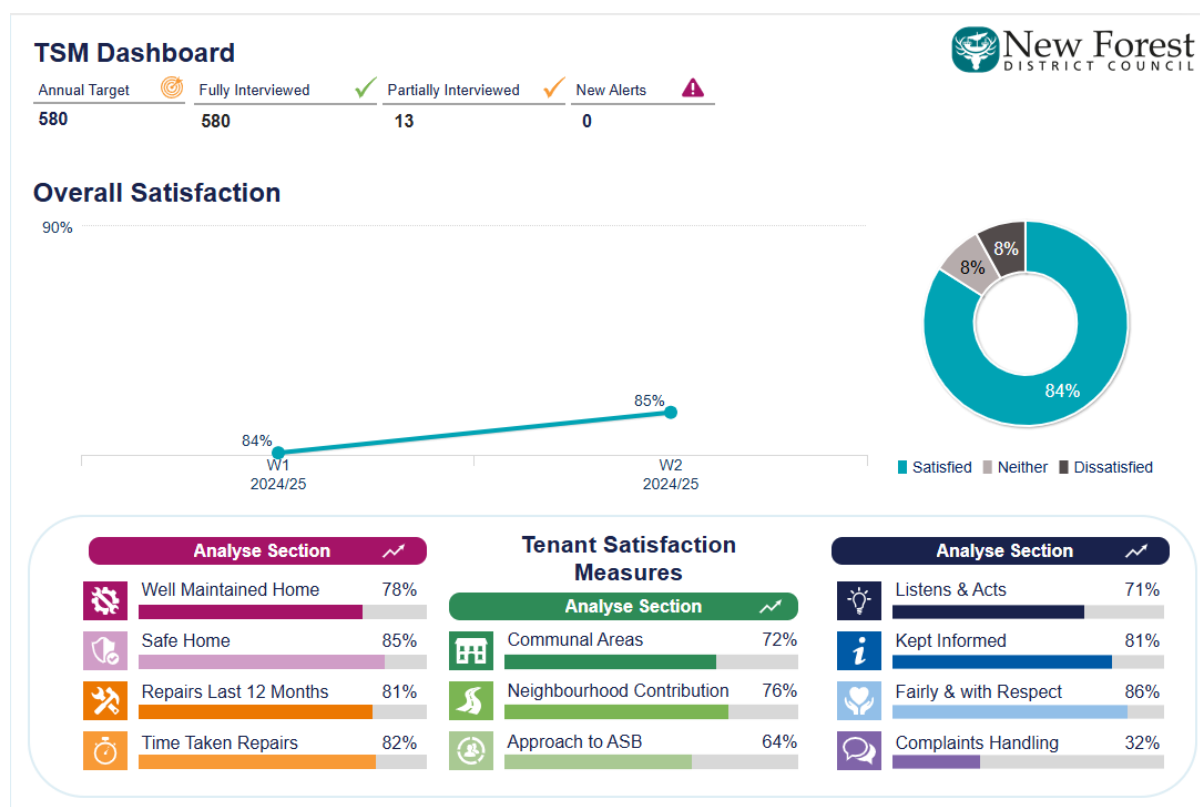
Purpose	For Review
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>This report provides Cabinet with the Council's Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) performance for 2024/25. It is a regulatory requirement that all registered providers of social housing collect and then report to the regulator and their tenants a set of standardised measures.</p> <p>These measures, called the 'TSMs', highlight performance against a total of 22 performance indicators (12 tenant perception measures, and 10 internal performance measures) – providing insight to influence service improvement and enable tenants to measure the Council against other providers, and hold the Council to account</p>
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	<b>1. That Cabinet review the TSM results and note performance reported for 2024/25.</b>
Reasons for recommendation(s)	The recommendation supports the council's requirement to meet the Social Housing Regulation Act, associated consumer standards, and enable effective scrutiny of the Council's Housing Services.
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Steve Davies – Housing and Homelessness
Strategic Director(s)	Richard Knott – Strategic Director Housing and Communities
Officer Contact	Paul Thomas Assistant Director - Housing 02380 285191 david.brown@nfdc.gov.uk

## **Introduction and background**

1. The Regulator of Social Housing launched its current regulatory framework on 1 April 2024, including the introduction of statutory reporting requirements of standard Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs).
2. TSMs are collected by the council representing both tenants' perceptions of housing services, as well as internal management measures representing the safety and quality of our homes and services. These measures must be reported to the Regulator on an annual basis, with the regulator publishing this data for all registered providers of social housing in the autumn of each year.
3. There are 12 tenant perception TSMs, where the Council must seek the views of a representative proportion of our tenant population. These perception TSMs are undertaken by Acuity Research and Practice on behalf of the Council to ensure they are not only independent, but also meet the strict requirements of the regulatory technical requirements for survey, submission and publication. Details of both the methodology and outcomes of this survey and outlined in Appendix 1 – New Forest District Council TSM 24-25 Annual Report.
4. There are then 10 internal management TSMs which the Council must measure and report on. Following strict technical guidance from the regulator, these measures focus on tenant safety and compliance areas, alongside how the Council performs relating to repairs, anti-social behaviour and complaints.
5. This Council now has 2 years of TSM data with which to measure our performance, whilst also being able to compare our performance nationally with both housing associations and other stock holding local authorities.

## **TSM performance – Tenant perception**

6. The following image gives an overview of this year's TSM tenant perception performance, outlining satisfaction as a percentage on each of the key areas set out by the regulator.



7. The following chart gives a view of how our performance compares to last year's (2023/24) TSM performance.

Measure	2023/24	2024/25	Change ↑↓↔
Overall satisfaction	81%	84%	↑ 3%
Overall repairs	82.8%	81%	↓ 1.8%
Time taken repairs	82.8%	82%	↔
Well maintained home	82.1%	78%	↓ 4.1%
Safe home	84.7%	85%	↔
Listens and acts	67.8%	71%	↑ 3.2%
Keeps you informed	78.9%	81%	↑ 2.1%
Fair and with respect	82.2%	86%	↑ 3.8%
Approach to complaints	29.1%	32%	↑ 2.9%
Communal areas	68.6%	72%	↑ 3.4%
Neighbourhood	72.1%	76%	↑ 3.9%
ASB handling	62%	64%	↑ 2%

8. It is observed that overall satisfaction has improved this year compared to last, with improved satisfaction in several other key areas.

9. There are some areas of tenant perception that have dropped slightly in satisfaction levels, and a review is underway to understand comments given by those surveyed, considering the reasons why. These comments largely relate to reports of damp and mould.

### **TSM performance – Internal management measures**

10. The following chart provides an overview of this year's internally measured TSM performance indicators, alongside a comparison to last year's reported performance.

<b>Measure</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>Change</b> ↑↓↔
RP01 Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard	2.14 %	1.20%	↓ 0.94%
RP02 – Emergency repairs completed within target timescale	94.30%	93.40%	↓ 0.90%
RP02 – non-emergency repairs completed within target timescale	91.98%	93.69%	↑ 1.71%
BS01 Gas safety checks	98.21%	100%	↑ 1.79%
BS02 Fire safety checks	95.59%	100%	↑ 4.41%
BS03 Asbestos safety checks	98.27%	100%	↑ 1.73%
BS04 Water safety checks	75.50%	100%	↑ 24.5%
BS05 Lift safety checks	100%	100%	↔
CH01 Stage 1 complaints received per 1000 dwellings	7.9	12.9	↑ 5.00
CH01 Stage 2 complaints received per 1000 dwellings	1.5	5.1	↑ 3.60
CH02 Stage 1 complaints response handling in time	100%	95.59%	↓ 4.41%
CH02 Stage 2 complaints response handling in time	100%	100%	↔



NM01 Anti-social behaviour cases per 1000 dwellings	30.8	39.4	↑ 8.60
NM01 Anti-social behaviour cases that involve hate incidents per 1000 dwellings	0.57	0.19	↓ 0.38

11. It is observed that key areas of tenant safety and compliance have seen a positive improvement compared to last year.
12. Initial reviews have been undertaken to consider those areas seeing a decrease in performance. It is acknowledged that complaints and anti-social behaviour reports have seen an increase in reporting, predominantly due to increased national and local focus, and the fact that the Council now has a track record of treating complaints seriously and acting upon tenant feedback, giving confidence to those who have genuine complaints with the service they have received.

### **Comparison performance to national 2023/24 results**

13. Annual publication of all Registered Providers performance on the TSMs is undertaken by the Regulator of Social Housing in the Autumn of each year. As a result, the Council cannot at this stage compare this year's performance nationally. Nevertheless, when comparing the Council's results with the national picture from Autumn 2024, the Council remain in the upper quartile (top 25% of all landlords and top 10% of local authority landlords) with tenants rating our services highly.

### **Financial implications**

14. The measurement, reporting and service improvements associated with the Council's TSM performance are embedded within existing budgetary commitments and provisions.

### **Environmental / Climate and nature implications**

15. Whilst the report has no direct implications, the work of NFDC associated with TSMs and performance continues to complement its existing commitments to neighbourhood and climate objectives in the longer term.

### **Equalities implications**

16. TSM collection and reporting, specifically for the perception measures, must ensure it is both representative of the Council's tenant population, and also is accessible. Appendix 1 details how this has been achieved for this year's TSMs.

### **Crime and disorder implications**

17. Whilst there are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report, through our service improvement plans (specifically relating to Anti-Social Behaviour and neighbourhood) it is anticipated there will be potential indirect and positive impacts on the Council's tenants and neighbourhoods.

### **Data protection**

18. The collection, retention and deletion of tenant data is governed by GDPR and associated guidance.

### **Conclusion**

19. Housing management, compliance & tenant perception performance continues to perform well and improves on 23/24 performance. There are some areas of tenant perception that have dropped slightly in satisfaction levels, as well as increased reporting of complaints and anti-social behaviour. A review is underway to understand comments given by those surveyed to further understand the reasons why and consider action plans where needed.
20. The TSM have been submitted to the Regulator of Social Housing, and tenants have been provided with the results in the Summer HomeTalk edition – with further publication being provided on our website and through a communications release. Service Managers are also provided with the TSM results to ensure their service plans take into account the results.
21. It is recommended that Cabinet review this performance and report, and use the data to ensure scrutiny takes into account tenants views and performance.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – New Forest District  
Council TSM 24-25 Annual Report

### **Background Papers:**

Published documents

111

# **New Forest District Council**

## **TSM 2024/25 Annual Report**

Prepared by: Acuity Research & Practice



## Key TSM Metrics

### Overall Satisfaction

### Good Repair

### Building Safety

### Neighbourhood

### Engagement

### Complaints

### 12 NPS

### Wellbeing

### Value for Money

### Improvements

### Trends

### Summary

### Demographics

## Introduction

In 2024/25, New Forest District Council (NFDC) commissioned Acuity, an independent market research company that specialises in the social housing sector, to undertake an independent satisfaction survey with its residents. The survey was designed to collect data on their opinions of, and attitudes towards, their landlord and the services provided, which will allow the Council to:

- Provide information on residents' perceptions of current services
- Compare the results against the previous surveys
- Inform decisions regarding future service development

The survey was designed to collect Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) which the Council must report annually to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) and publish to residents. However, additional questions were included to provide further insight and support understanding of resident perception of the Council's services.

The survey used a sampled approach (random stratified sampling) whereby approximately 580 residents were contacted by telephone to participate in a survey with an Acuity interviewer. Residents also had the option of requesting an online (email) survey if they preferred to use this method to complete the survey. Quotas were applied to the sampling frame (on tenure, area, ethnicity and age) to ensure the response was balanced and representative of the total resident population. Fieldwork took place across two waves, enabling the Council to track trends over time. The first wave of fieldwork took place in November 2024, while the second commenced at the end of January running through to February. Fieldwork ended on 10 February 2025.

The telephone survey was confidential, and the results were sent back to NFDC anonymised unless residents gave their permission to be identified – 87% of residents did give permission to share their responses with their details attached and 93% of these residents are happy for NFDC to contact them to discuss any information they provided.

At the close of the survey on 10 February 2025, a total of 580 completed interviews had been achieved, as well as an additional 13 partially completed interviews, which are also required to be included as part of the Council's TSM submission to the RSH. For the overall results, the RSH requires that landlords with between 2,500 and 9,999 Low-Cost Rental Accommodation (LCRA) units achieve a margin of error of at least  $\pm 4\%$  at the 95% confidence level. With 5,061 LCRA units, the response for 2024/25 is high enough to conclude that the findings are accurate to within  $\pm 3.78\%$  annually, which falls within the required margin of error.

This report will explore results from NFDC's 2024/25 surveys, including changes in satisfaction throughout the year as well as satisfaction by various subgroups (including age and tenure). The report will also include benchmarking information, allowing NFDC to see how satisfaction compares against other similar landlords.

# 84%

## Overall Satisfaction



Satisfaction with the overall service provided by NFDC is high, at 84% – which compares well with other landlords, particularly other Councils. This is one of the highest scoring metrics in the survey, demonstrating that high-quality service provision is resonating well with residents.

Satisfaction levels are particularly high for NFDC in providing a safe home (85%) and treating residents fairly and with respect (86%), which tend to be higher scoring metrics.

The lowest satisfaction scores are for how NFDC handles ASB (64%) and complaints (32%). Both metrics are commonly among the lowest performing in surveys of this kind. While satisfaction with complaints handling is particularly low, this sits just above the median against data published by the RSH for 2023/24.

## TSM Key Metrics

### Keeping Properties in Good Repair



**Well Maintained Home**

78%



**Safe Home**

85%



**Repairs Last 12 Months**

81%



**Time Taken Repairs**

82%

### Respectful & Helpful Engagement



**Listens & Acts**

71%



**Kept Informed**

81%



**Fairly & with Respect**

86%



**Complaints Handling**

32%

### Responsible Neighbourhood Management



**Communal Areas**

72%



**Neighbourhood Contribution**

76%



**Approach to ASB**

64%



# National Context

When considering the results, it is important to consider the national context and external factors.

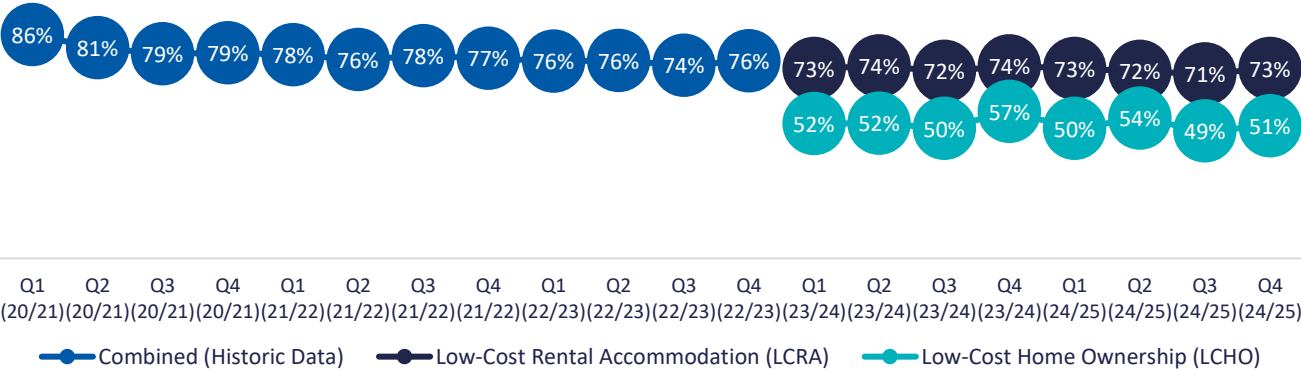
For example:

- Cost of Living Crisis, increase in poverty and pressure on local authority funding
- Government & Political Changes
- Uncertainty about the Future
- Brexit and the economy

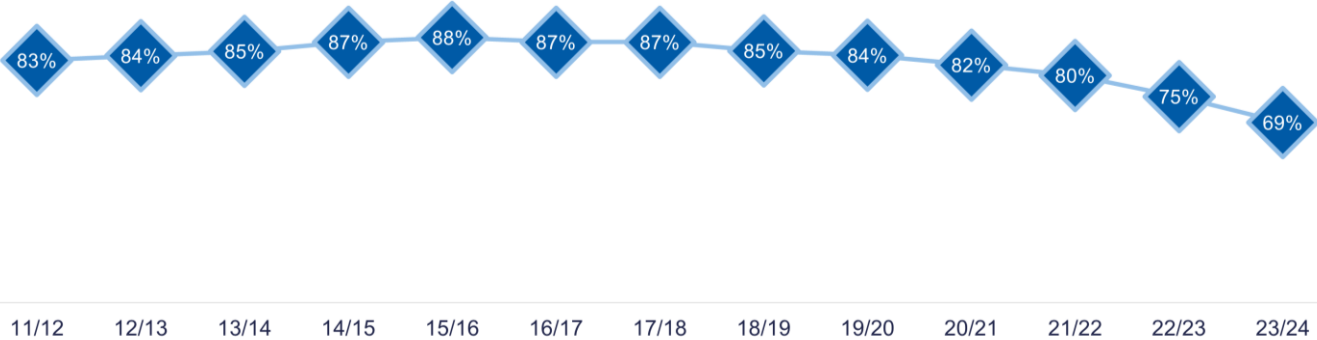
Satisfaction is based on perception rather than specific values so can be affected by these factors and how positive people feel about their lives. Factors such as the pandemic have altered the way some social landlords operate.

The top graph demonstrates how overall satisfaction has changed over time (tracker only). The trendline is downward. The lower chart shows the results from NHF members with a peak in 2015/16 but a slow decline since; this started before the effects of the pandemic started to hit.

## Overall Services (Acuity Clients)



## Satisfaction with services provided (NHF median – general needs)







# Overall Satisfaction



# Overall Satisfaction

Residents were asked, "Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by NFDC?" This is the key metric in any tenant perception survey.

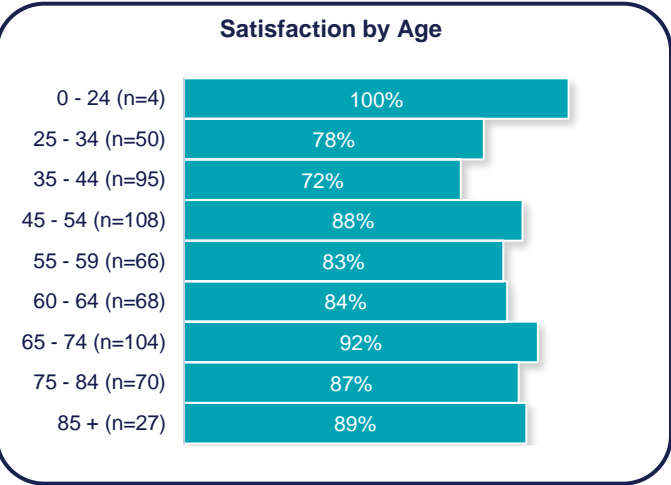
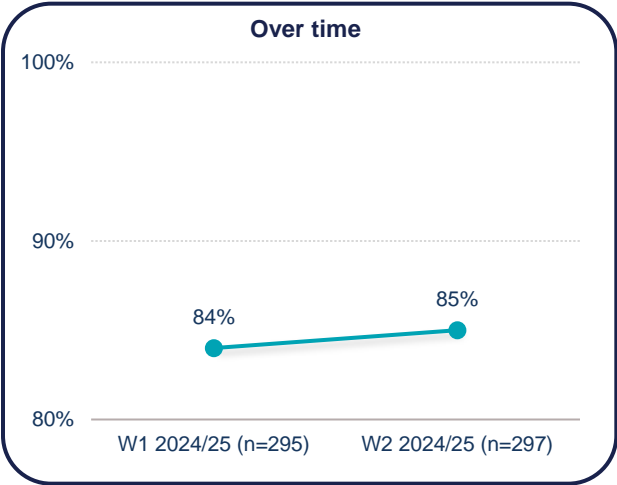
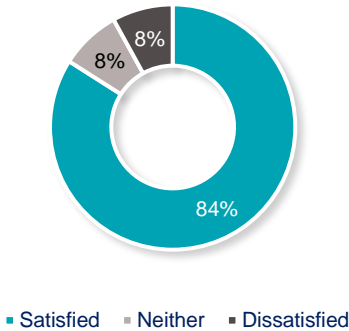
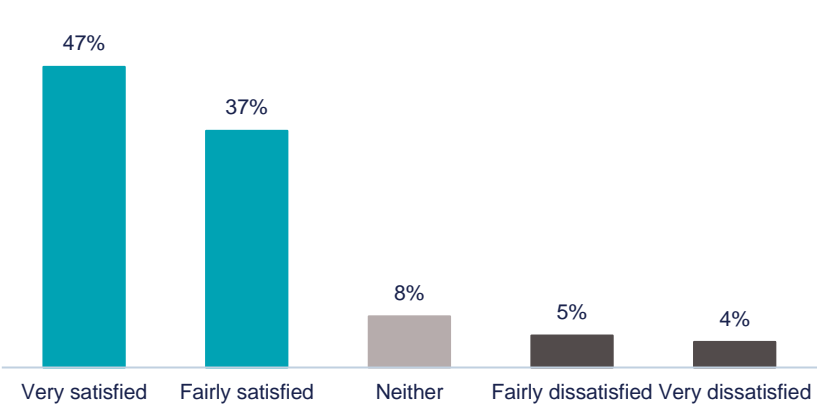
Only 9% of residents are dissatisfied with the services provided and a further 8% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Satisfaction is high at 84%, which compares well against other landlords, in particular other local authorities. This has remained stable across the final two quarters of the year.

When looked at by age, satisfaction varies, with those aged 35-44 being the least satisfied (72%) and those aged 65-74 being the most (92%).\* This is quite common in surveys of this type with additional responsibilities of household management and young families leading those in the 35-44 category to have lower levels of satisfaction.

The main body of the report focuses on high-level scores. Towards the end of the report, a section explores the differences by age, area and tenure.

\* Those aged 0-24 were not included in this analysis due to the low sample size.







To understand why some tenants are dissatisfied with the overall service provided, this group was probed further to understand the core reasons. 48 comments were received from this group, reflecting low levels of dissatisfaction found within the survey.

While dissatisfaction is low and the comments reflect a minority of respondents, it is important that these voices are heard and are used to aid service improvements.

The main reason for dissatisfaction centred around outstanding or forgotten repairs and recurring damp and mould issues. Some respondents, for instance, reported health impacts due to unresolved mould problems, with a few experiencing severe allergic reactions and respiratory issues.

Quality of work is cited by seven of the 48 respondents. Additionally, complaints about the condition of the property were reported by six residents.

To improve tenant satisfaction, the recommendations would be to:

- Enhance communication to ensure timely updates on repairs.
- Prioritise health-related issues, such as mould, to address concerns more promptly.
- Implement a more efficient tracking system for maintenance requests to help reduce delays and improve response times

# Comments - Dissatisfied





# Overall Satisfaction - Example Dissatisfied Comments

Outstanding Jobs	Damp and Mould	Communication / Customer Service	Quality of work
<p><i>"Pending jobs. It has been six months and still no one has called me back. I have chased it up and still have not heard from them."</i></p> <p><i>"A lot of repairs that haven't been carried out for a number of years. People just don't stick to appointments to carry out repairs..."</i></p> <p>8 <i>→ On some of the big repairs it takes a long time... I reported about a year and a half ago, and still not been done and I haven't heard anything; you are just left not knowing."</i></p> <p><i>"I've mentioned some repairs like my front door handle... They say they will get someone on it, but it has been months."</i></p>	<p><i>"We've had ongoing damp and mould issues for the past five years."</i></p> <p><i>"My house is riddled with mould. It's everywhere and I am allergic to it and my children have been ill with chest infections."</i></p> <p><i>"I have a mould issue which has been going on for three years and is affecting my health."</i></p> <p><i>"My bungalow is full of damp. Nothing is being done."</i></p> <p><i>"My ceiling in the downstairs bathroom has collapsed and is full of black mould. I have mould all over the windows. None of these issues have been resolved."</i></p>	<p><i>"Communication with tenants is not good and I have an issue with mould which I have taken further."</i></p> <p><i>"I don't feel like they care..."</i></p> <p><i>"It is the people around me. I have made many complaints about them but nothing gets done."</i></p> <p><i>"Every time I call up to speak about matters - rude service and don't understand how to do their job. Had to take days off for repair work - cancelled last minute various times. Cancelled three or four times."</i></p> <p><i>"...I'm not treated fairly and they never look into my complaints when I raise them..."</i></p>	<p><i>"New kitchens that were fitted were done extremely badly and already falling apart."</i></p> <p><i>"Ongoing problems with my wet room, they do botched jobs, and the shed they just laid some felt over the top and it hasn't been secured properly."</i></p> <p><i>"... the work on repairs and maintenance is below sub standard – the average person could do a better job."</i></p> <p><i>"Whenever workers come out they do a botched job, they don't do it nicely just as cheap as possible, not to a high standard. When I ask for repairs they give a big timescale and I can't wait all day."</i></p>



**Keeping Properties in Good Repair**



# Keeping Properties in Good Repair

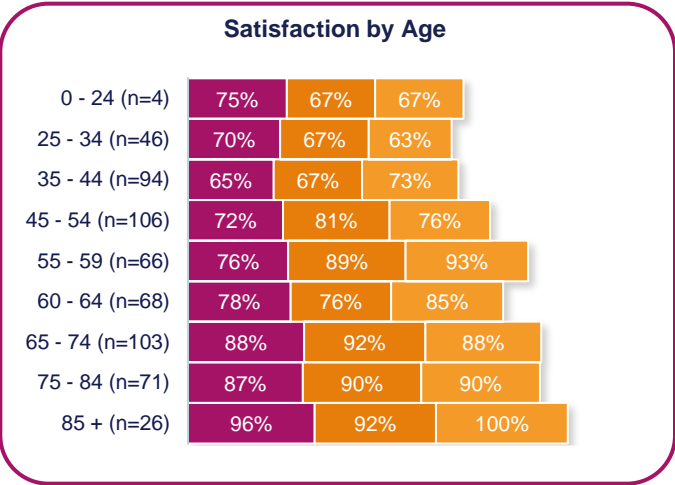
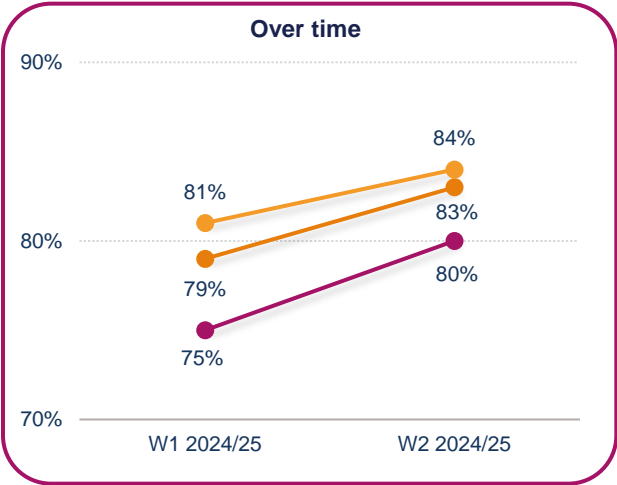
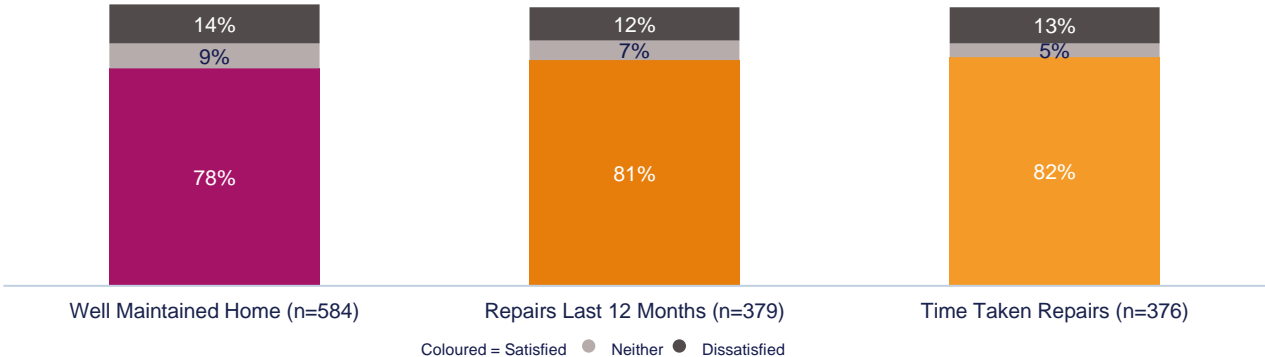
While day-to-day repairs was highlighted as a core trigger for dissatisfaction with the overall service provided, satisfaction with the service as a whole is high.

Of the 379 respondents (81%) who reported that they had a repair in the last 12 months, 81% were satisfied with the overall repairs service while 82% were satisfied with the time taken to complete the most recent repair after they reported it.

This latter measure is typically a challenge for landlords across the sector, often falling short of tenant expectations. Poor service here will also often drag down satisfaction with other metrics, not least with the overall service provided. That both measures sit in the highest quartile when compared against other landlords demonstrates the quality service provided in this area.

Both measures have also increased from Q3 to Q4, again showing positive signs.

As with satisfaction with the overall service provided, satisfaction is higher among older tenants, particularly after the age of 45.





**Maintaining Building Safety**



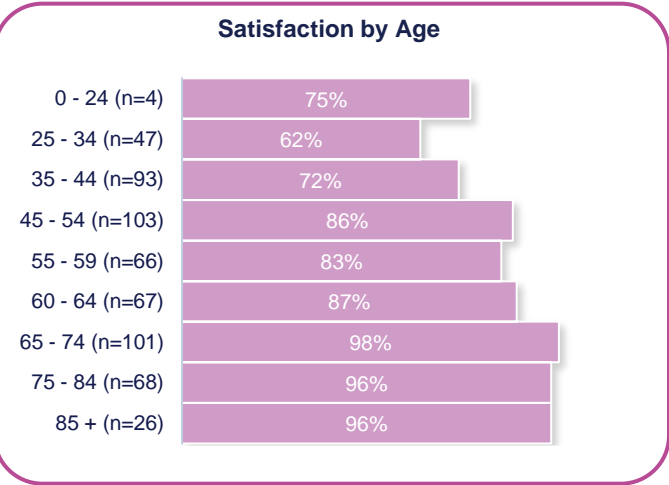
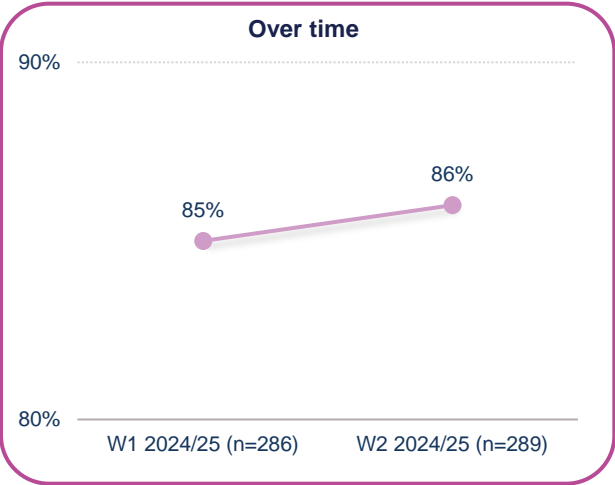
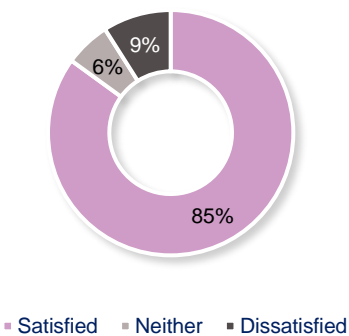
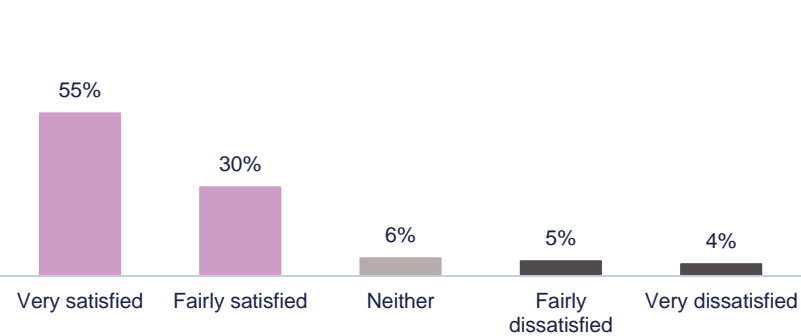
# Maintaining Building Safety

Satisfaction with the safety of the home is one of the highest scoring metrics in the survey, with 85% saying that they are satisfied with over half (55%) very satisfied that the condition of their home or building means that it is safe. Just under a tenth of residents are not satisfied that their home is safe (9%), and 4% are very dissatisfied. A further 6% of residents are neutral.

It is common that more residents are satisfied with the safety of their home than with its maintenance, and that is the case here, 85% compared with 78%.

When satisfaction is broken down by age, residents 65 and older appear to be the most satisfied, while residents aged 25-34 are the least satisfied with the safety of their home.

Although the survey doesn't include a probing question about the safety of the home, customers will often view safety much more broadly than the structure and condition of the property alone.







# Responsible Neighbourhood Management

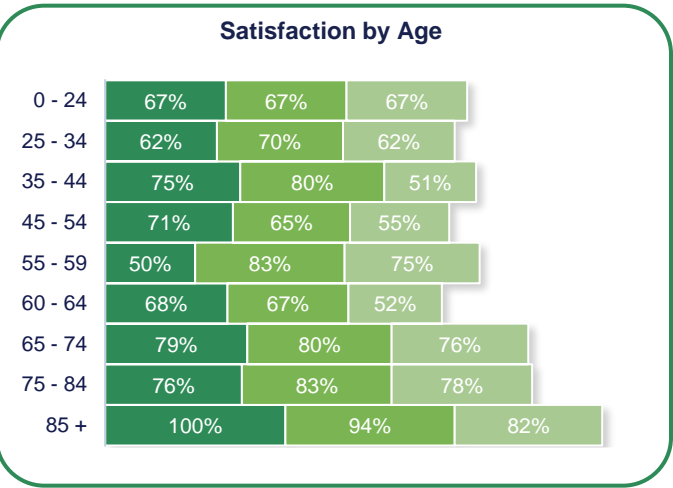
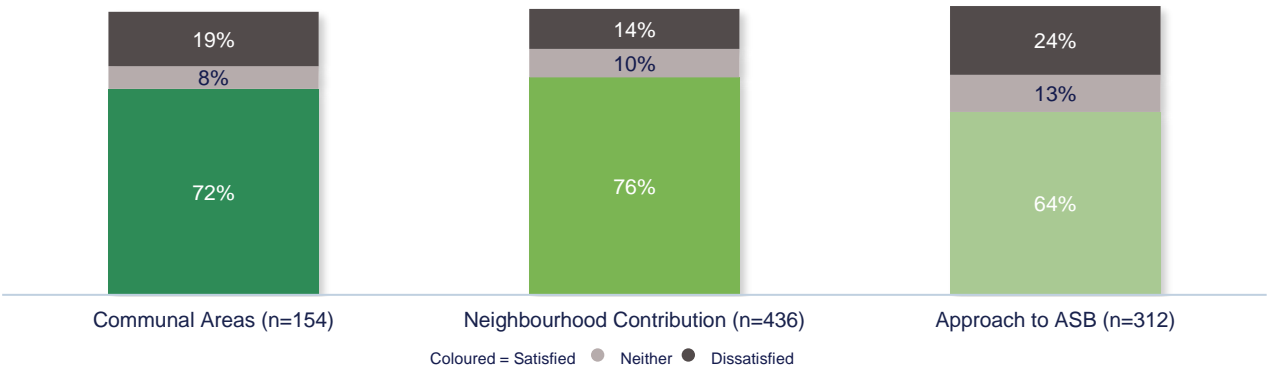


Over 150 residents stated that they live in a building with communal areas, either inside or outside, that NFDC is responsible for maintaining. 72% of these residents are satisfied that NFDC keeps their communal areas clean and well-maintained. 19% said they felt dissatisfied and 9% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Just over three-quarters of residents are satisfied that NFDC makes a positive contribution to their neighbourhood (76%), with only 14% dissatisfied. This measure can often draw a higher number of neutral responses; while it can be difficult for tenants to ascertain exactly what a 'positive contribution' means, there can also be awareness issues which increases uncertainty. NFDC tenants, however, appear to be more decisive when it comes to this measure. In future surveys, NFDC may wish to probe this question further to understand what a 'positive contribution' means to tenants.

In terms of anti-social behaviour, almost two-thirds of tenants (64%) are satisfied with NFDC's approach to its handling, which sits among the bottom two performing metrics. From Q3 to Q4, this metric has fallen by 7p.p, which is the only metric to have fallen within this period. Anti-social behaviour forms the majority of complaints that were raised by tenants over the past 12 months (see page 20).

# Responsible Neighbourhood Management







**Respectful & Helpful Engagement**

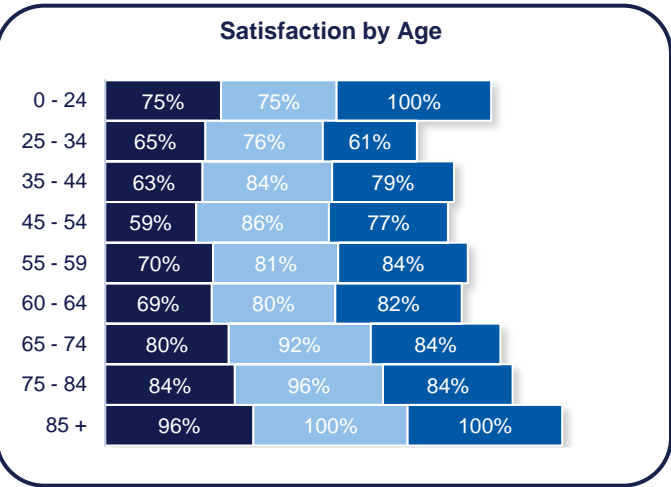
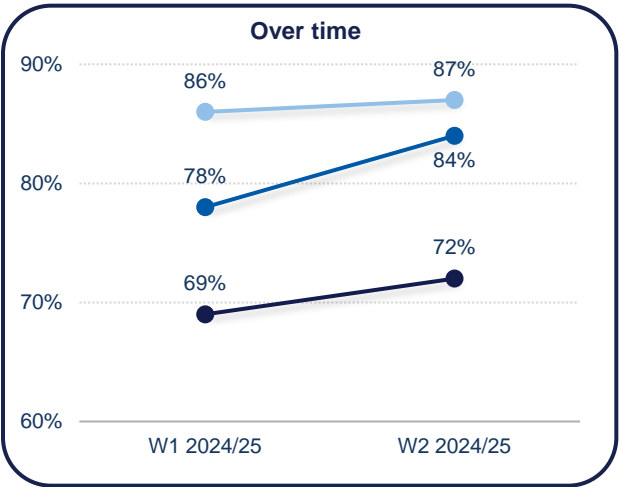
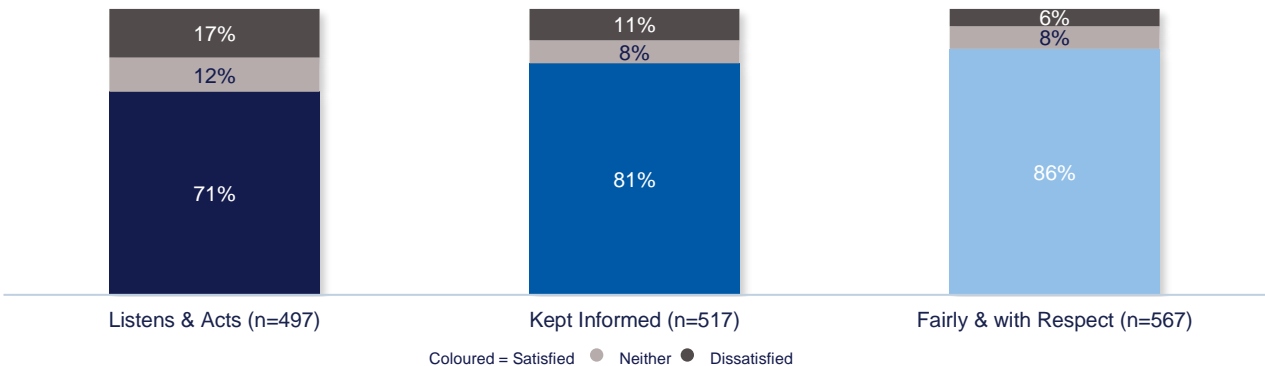


# Respectful & Helpful Engagement

Just over four-fifths of residents reported that NFDC keeps them informed about things that matter to them (81%).

Fewer residents are satisfied that NFDC listens to their views and acts upon them (71%), which falls within the bottom three performing metrics. This is commonly found in TSM surveys, and satisfaction here is tightly bound to tenant expectations which may not always necessarily align with practical and operational constraints of social landlords. Tenant expectations can be informed by wider experiences of other sectors (such as retail and information services) where speed and efficiency are prioritised.

A large proportion of residents agree that they are treated fairly and with respect by NFDC (86%). This was the highest metric in the survey, with very little dissatisfaction (just 6%), suggesting NFDC are delivering quality customer service and effective staff training.





## Effective Handling of Complaints



Just 17% of respondents reported that they had made a complaint to NFDC in the last 12 months. Of these, 32% were satisfied with the way the complaint was handled by NFDC.

As is commonly found, this was the lowest performing metric in the survey. It was also the only metric whereby dissatisfaction outweighs satisfaction. Just over a third of respondents were very dissatisfied with NFDC's approach to complaints handling.

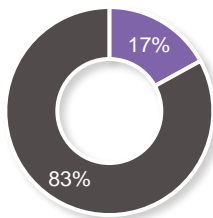
While the question is framed around 'handling', the 'outcome' of the complaint can be just as important for tenants when assessing their satisfaction. It is also unclear how many of the reported complaints were complaints which proceeded through the official complaints process or service requests still awaiting action.

Tenants aged 65+ have reported the fewest complaints. This group also report higher satisfaction than younger tenants, apart from those aged between 45 to 54 who report the highest satisfaction (53%). Tenants aged 25 to 34 are the least satisfied group (8%).

Respondents who have held their tenancy for 6 to 10 years reported the lowest levels of satisfaction among all tenancy length groups. This is potentially due to the accumulation of unresolved issues over time which infiltrates satisfaction.

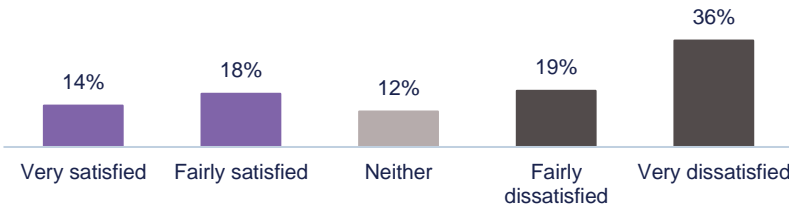
# Effective Handling of Complaints

Complaint in last 12 months

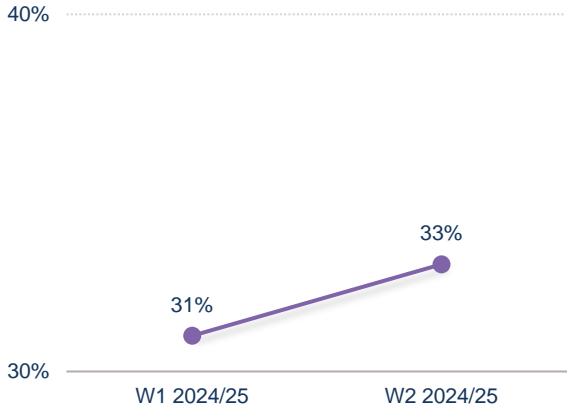


■ Yes ■ No

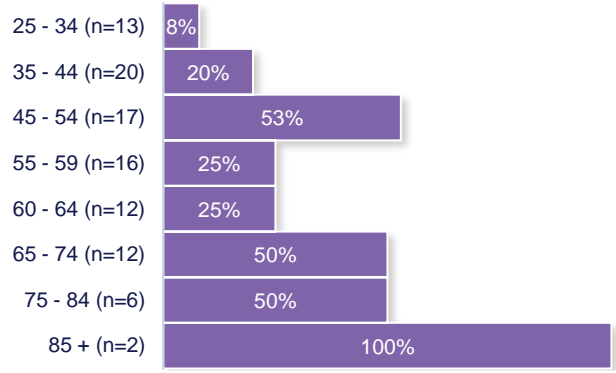
Satisfaction with Complaints Handling



Over time



Satisfaction by Age





# Comments - Complaints



To gain deeper insights into tenant dissatisfaction regarding complaint handling, all dissatisfied respondents were asked to elaborate on their concerns.

Key themes include ineffective responses to complaints and perceptions of management as dismissive or unresponsive.

Of the 54 residents who responded, six specifically cited issues related to anti-social behaviour, while four expressed that they did not feel they were listened to.

Additionally, many residents voiced frustration over the perceived ineffectiveness of housing officers who were reported to frequently fail to follow through on promises or provide updates.

To improve service delivery, it is recommended that NFDC:

- Strengthen communication protocols to ensure clearer and more transparent interactions
- Ensure timely follow-ups on complaints
- Provide targeted training for staff to handle sensitive issues more effectively.

The following page provides examples of some of the comments made by tenants.





# Complaints - Example Comments

130

Complaints handling	Complaint not resolved	Care, empathy and support	Communication
<p><i>"They do not act on complaints. They say they will but they don't."</i></p> <p><i>"No one got back to me. They say they will but they don't."</i></p> <p><i>"They do not get back to you. I have made many complaints but I have had no phone call or email with a response."</i></p> <p><i>"I just don't think they do anything."</i></p> <p><i>"Because you ring up and you tell them what is wrong with the property, they send a load of people out who all say 'no nothing wrong with it' then they send someone else out who says 'oh no, you're right.'"</i></p> <p><i>"Every time we complain about the neighbours, they just talk to them and that's it – they keep them in the flats."</i></p>	<p><i>"They have not sorted the mould. They don't listen and they say they won't come out and have a look."</i></p> <p><i>"I was told it was my fault the issues were happening."</i></p> <p><i>"I still have the mould issue ongoing and it has been three years."</i></p> <p><i>"Nothing ever gets done."</i></p> <p><i>"I tried several times for something to be done."</i></p> <p><i>"Nothing seems to be have done. There is a lot of noise at night and smoking in the communal areas which should not happen. The front keeps getting left not secure. The complaint was made and nothing altered."</i></p>	<p><i>"They tried to turn things around, that we are a problem and not what we were complaining about."</i></p> <p><i>"It took some time and one of the staff was rude."</i></p> <p><i>"They were very dismissive."</i></p> <p><i>"They didn't seem bothered. It didn't make any difference."</i></p> <p><i>"They don't listen to me, don't care."</i></p> <p><i>"As a tenant New Forest don't listen.... they fob you off. What about MY mental health then?"</i></p>	<p><i>"I didn't hear anything back."</i></p> <p><i>"They get fobbed off as if they are nothing and forgotten about. I have to chase them up all the time and get made to feel a nuisance."</i></p> <p><i>"They do not get back to you. I have made many complaints, but I have had no phone call or email with a response."</i></p> <p><i>"Biggest problem is their communication – four times we have meetings a year. The last few years we've asked for change but no action done – they only tell us what we can't do. They never give us feedback – communication is really difficult."</i></p>





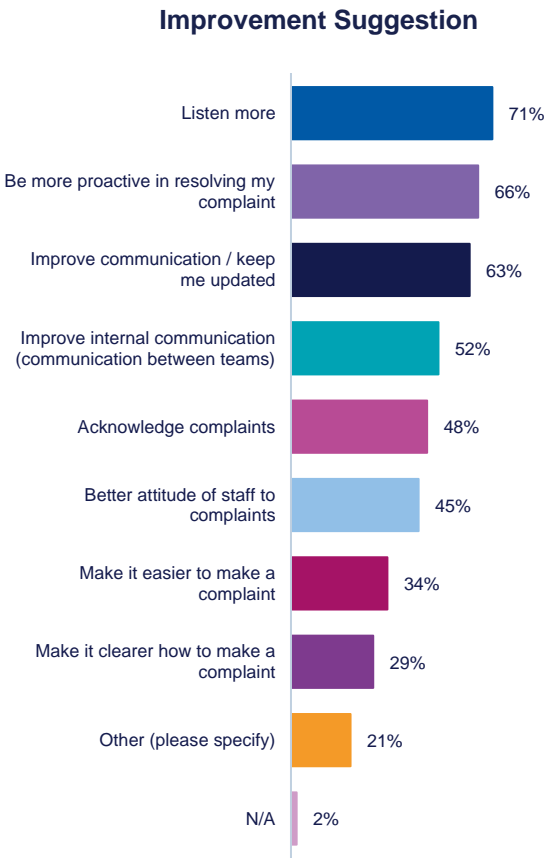
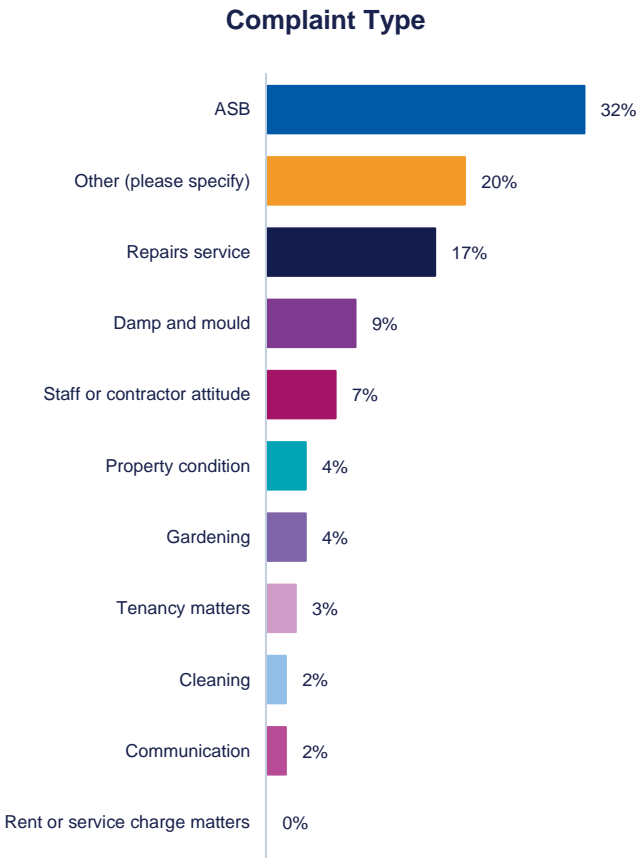
# Complaints Trial

The survey also included further questions beyond those prescribed within the TSM framework which asked what complaints were specifically related to and how the Council could improve the way it handles complaints.

The majority of complaints respondents had reported related to anti-social behaviour (29%), followed by the repairs service (16%). Complaints related to damp and mould and staff / contractor attitude were also mentioned (8% and 7% respectively).

On how complaints handling could be improved, the majority of respondents suggested the NFDC need to listen more to complaints being made (71%), which echoes earlier difficulties around the Council listening to tenant views and acting upon them. Often, listening to the complainant is just as important as fixing the issue itself.

Around two-thirds (66%) would like NFDC to be more proactive in resolving complaints while a similar number (63%) would like improved communication from the Council.





**Improvements**





# Improvement Suggestions

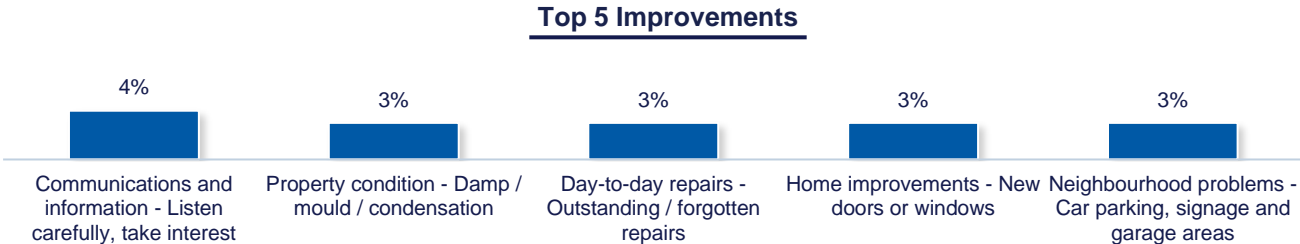
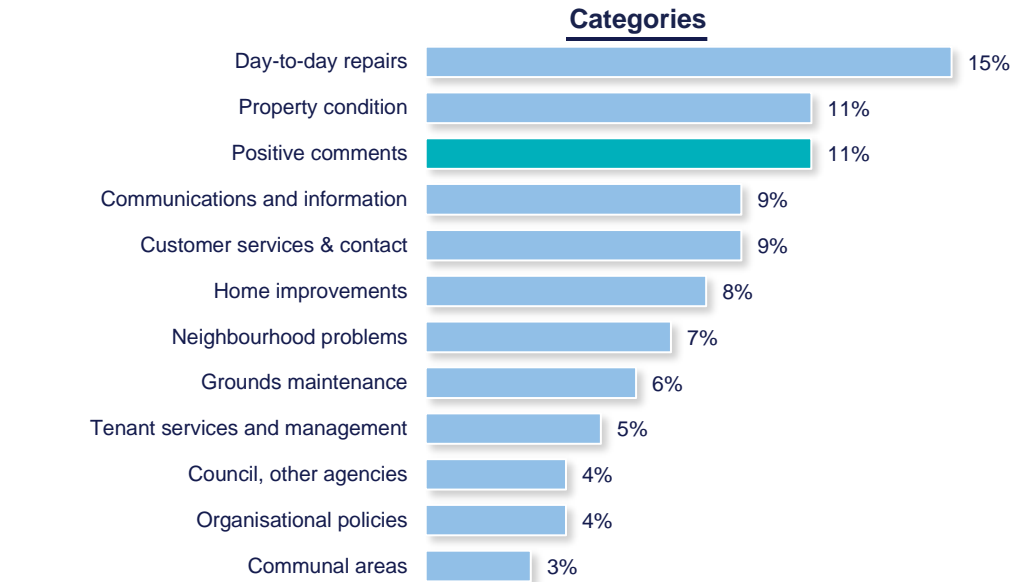
The final question asked tenants what one thing NFDC could improve.

The survey responses reveal areas for improvement in housing services, particularly regarding communication, maintenance, and tenant support.

Many respondents expressed frustration with slow repair times and inadequate follow-up on service requests, highlighting a need for more efficient processes and clearer communication about timelines. Of the 546 respondents, 15% suggested improvements to the day-to-day repairs and 11% responded over the property condition.

Respondents also called for improved accessibility for disabled individuals and more community engagement initiatives.

The following page gives examples of comments made by tenants.





# Complaints - Example Comments

## Day-to-day repairs

*"Response feedback to keep me informed of repairs."*

*"Replacing things that need replacing quicker instead of patching them up"*

*"More flexible appointment hours for people who work full time."*

*"Sort repairs out making the service better and shorter waits."*

*"Communication re: repairs, letters have been received saying sorry we missed you but tenant had never received appt in advance and didn't know they were coming."*

*"Getting people out for repairs when they say."*

*"Work on the pending repairs and follow it up."*

## Property condition

*"To sort out the outside of the property, it is appalling, the paintwork, windows and the guttering."*

*"They can improve how they deal with mould and damp in the properties."*

*"Improve the issues with the mould really and to get rid of it, there is no point in decorating as it just comes through."*

*"Maintenance of properties - windows and outside of buildings as they are run down. Brickwork is rubbish and damp in property."*

*"Maintain the regular checking - for example carbon monoxide alarms have expired on 2nd July."*

## Communications

*"For them to act on what we say."*

*"When they say they will do something, they should do it and follow through complaints."*

*"Definitely listen and take things a bit more seriously."*

*"The online reporting. It is outdated and not user friendly or mobile friendly."*

*"Communication between customer service and maintenance must be better. It is a must!"*

*"Their relationship with tenants. A lot of us don't get taken seriously when we make complaints..."*

*"They need to keep you informed with what they are doing. Communication is a skill..."*

## Positive comments

*"Nothing really because they are doing everything we ask."*

*"I don't need any help with anything, if I need anything I phone the up, they come out and sort it, generally I'm very pleased with my property and the council, I love my bungalow."*

*"I have no complaints at all, I think they are brilliant!"*

*"Nothing. The building is always clean and tidy. I am happy with the way it is."*

*"All good, receives regular letters informing him of things so keep up the good work"*

*"I am more than happy with NFDC as I feel like I am in heaven where I am living now."*



## Further Insight



## Annual Satisfaction & Dissatisfaction

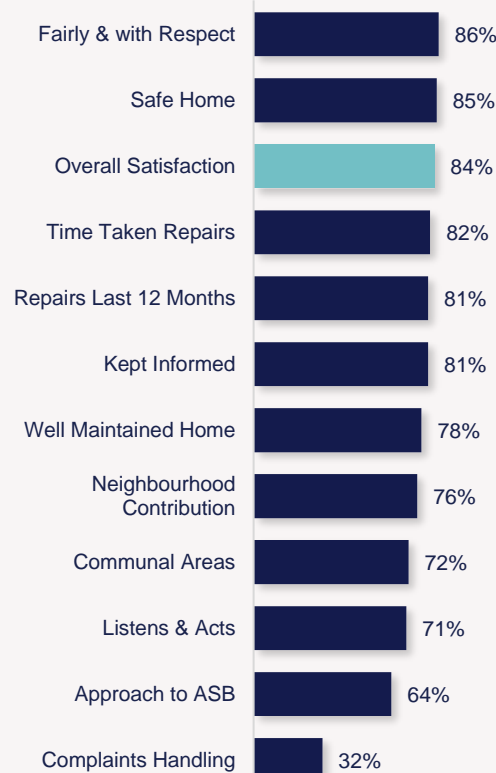
At the end of the financial year, it is possible to look at the annual results to help understand what is driving satisfaction at NFDC.

Sometimes where satisfaction is low, the remaining residents can be split between those who fall into the neutral middle ground and those who are actually dissatisfied. This difference can signal areas where residents do not have strong opinions or areas where a high percentage of residents are actually dissatisfied.

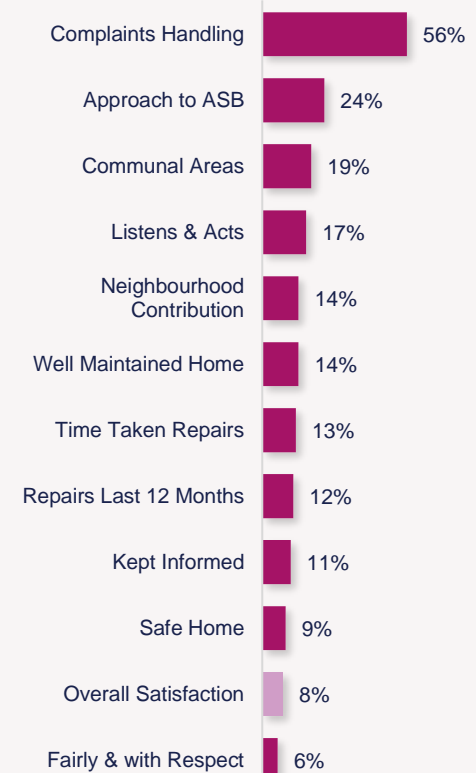
For NFDC it generally follows that measures with high satisfaction also have low dissatisfaction, and vice versa.

Complaints handling has the highest level of dissatisfaction and the lowest level of satisfaction at 56% and 32% respectively which confirms the theory.

### Satisfaction with Measures 2024/25



### Dissatisfaction with Measures 2024/25





# Wave-on-Wave Change

The table shows the results for Wave 1 against Wave 2 2024/25. Those in green show where the results have increased and those in red where they have decreased.

It should be noted, that although the annual margin of error is around  $\pm 3.8\%$ , for a change between waves the margin increases to  $\pm 5.5\%$  a change of more than 11.0 percentage points (p.p) would be needed to be statistically significant, although any change can show a direction of travel. In this instance on communal areas have seen a significant change in satisfaction.

137  
Satisfaction with the overall service is up by 1 p.p from 84% to 85% between waves. Ten out of the remaining measures have increased in satisfaction.

The changes are relatively small, however with eleven of the 12 measures increasing in this should be seen as a positive sign and goes against wider housing trends.

*Note: Some displayed percentage changes may not appear to align exactly with the figures shown in brackets. This is due to rounding in the average calculations, which can cause slight variations in how the data is presented.*

	W1 2024/25	W2 2024/25
Overall Satisfaction	84%	85% (+1)
Well Maintained Home	75%	80% (+5)
Safe Home	85%	86% (+1)
Communal Areas	66%	80% (+14)
Repairs Last 12 Months	79%	83% (+4)
Time Taken Repairs	81%	84% (+3)
Neighbourhood Contribution	73%	80% (+7)
Approach to ASB	67%	60% (-8)
Listens & Acts	69%	72% (+3)
Fairly & with Respect	86%	87% (+1)
Kept Informed	78%	84% (+5)
Complaints Handling	31%	33% (+2)



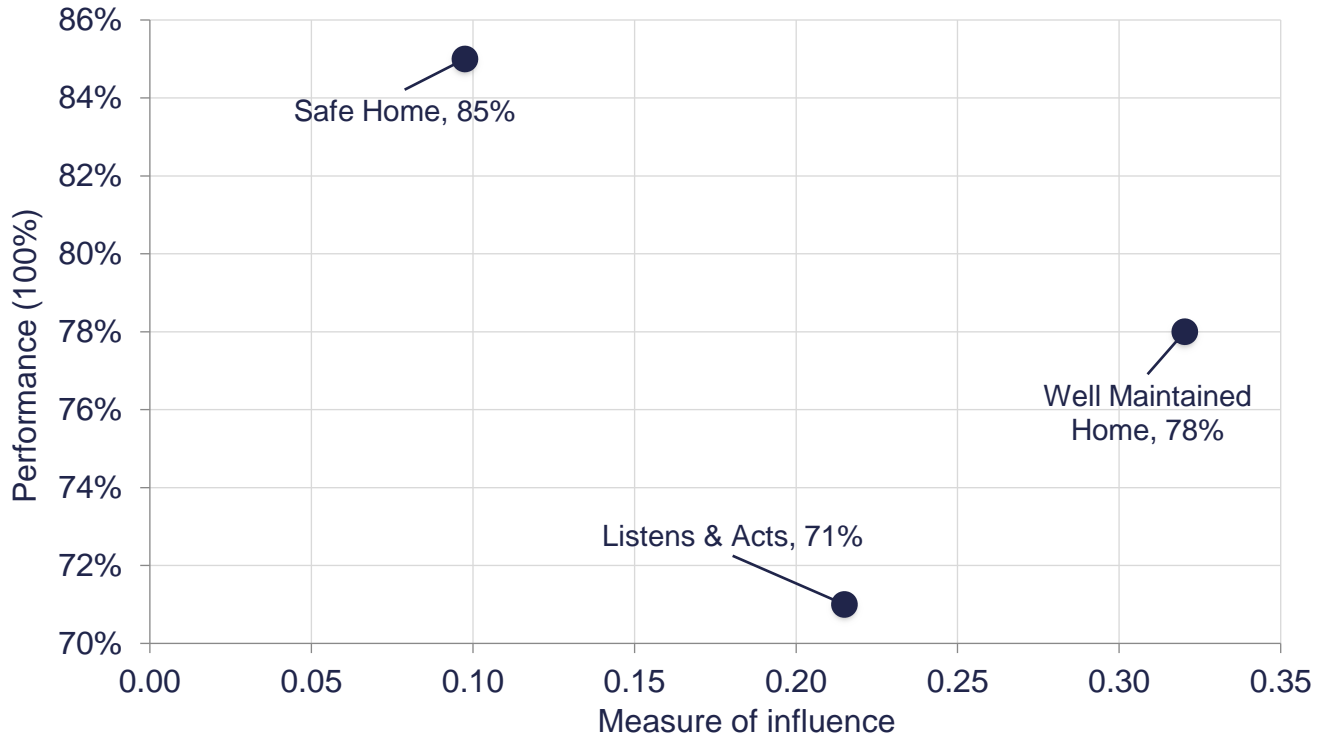
# Key Driver Analysis

Key driver analysis is used to examine the relationship between the different variables (the questions asked in the survey) and determine which elements of the service are the key drivers for residents' overall satisfaction.

Each landlord has its unique pattern of influence. When considering the results for 2024/25, the most important driver for residents' satisfaction with the overall services is that residents have a well maintained home, feel that the Council listens and acts on their views and provides a home that is safe.

This analysis implies that if improvements around the most influential measures can be achieved, it is more likely to lead to increased satisfaction with the overall services provided.

Annual Key Driver Analysis – Overall Satisfaction



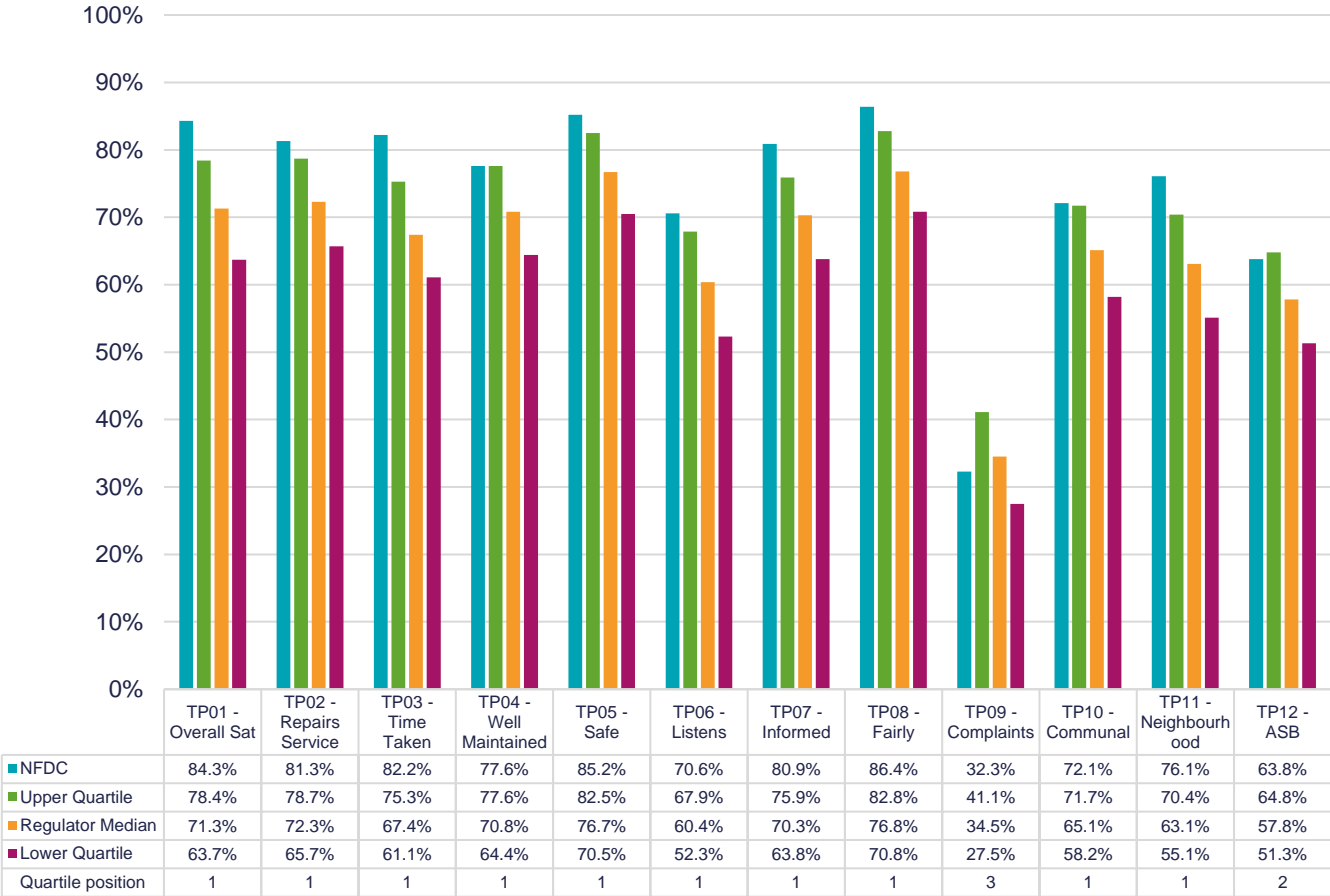


# Benchmarking – RSH 23/24 (LCRA)

It is possible to compare performance on the core TSM questions against recently published RSH data for social landlords who reported their results in 2023/24. While the data does not include figures for 2024/25 (yet to be published), it provides valuable context for assessing landlord performance.

When compared against other LCRA landlords, the results from this year's NFDC survey are above the Regulator median value for all measures except satisfaction with complaints handling which sits just 2 percentage points below the median.

The majority of metrics (10 of 12) are in the highest quartile, with satisfaction with ASB handling falling into the second quartile, just 1p.p short of the upper quartile threshold.





# Benchmarking – RSH 23/24 (Councils)

The chart opposite shows the comparison of NFDC's TSM results this year against those of other councils across all regions in 2023/24.

Again, NFDC performs very well, with all but one metric in the highest quartile – the exception being complaints handling which falls into the second quartile.

The Council performs particularly well for satisfaction with the overall service provided, the time taken to complete repairs and positive contribution to the neighbourhood, all of which are more than 16p.p above the RSH median.





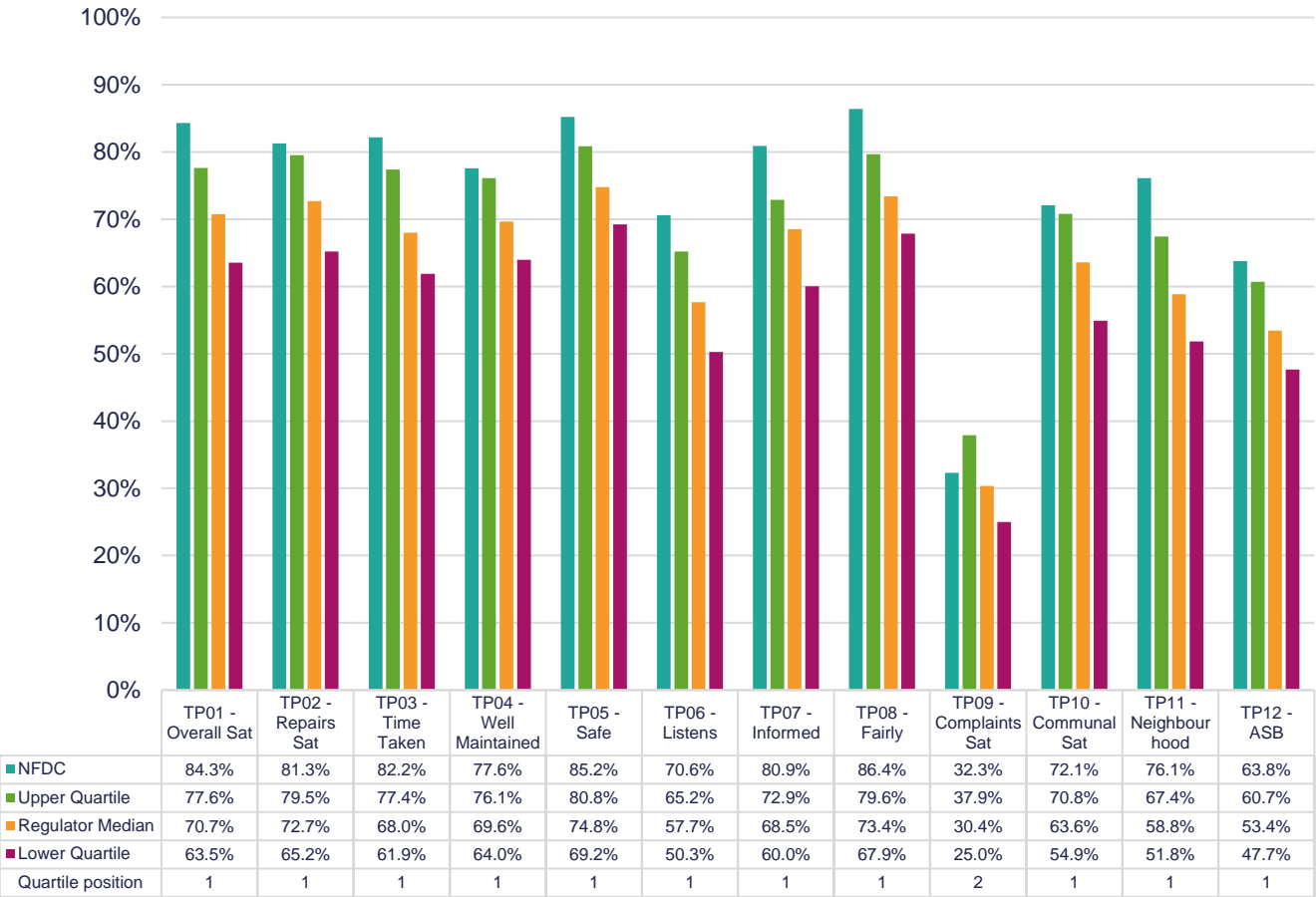


# Benchmarking – RSH 23/24 (<10,000 units)

The chart opposite compares NFDC's TSM results for this year with those of other councils managing fewer than 10,000 properties.

The data highlights NFDC's strong performance relative to similar-sized councils. Of the 12 measures, 11 are in the upper quartile, while complaints handling falls again into the second quartile.

141

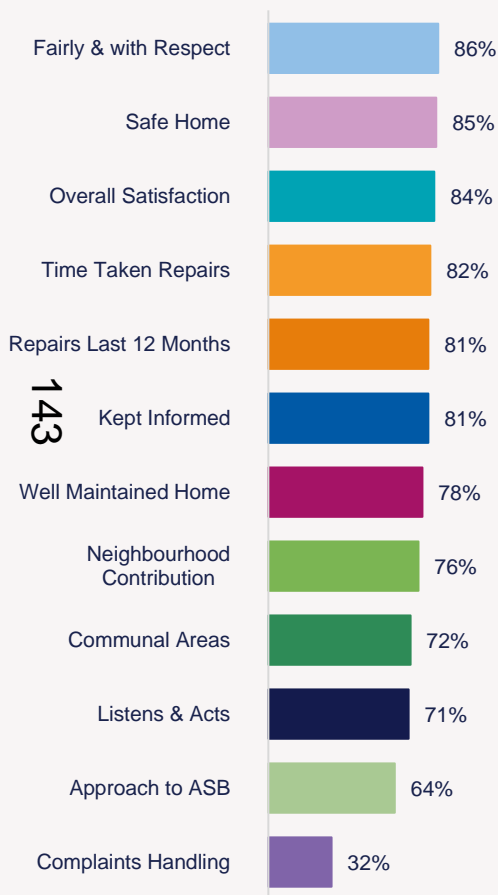




142

# Summary

## Satisfaction with Measures



## Summary

In 2024/25, New Forest District Council (NFDC) commissioned Acuity to conduct tenant perception surveys to assess Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), which the Council must report annually to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). The survey was conducted in two waves (Q3 and Q4) and primarily carried out via telephone. By the close of the survey, 580 responses were received, along with 13 partially completed submissions.

The survey reveals high levels of satisfaction across most service areas. Satisfaction with the overall service provided – a key indicator reflecting experiences across all services – stands at an impressive 84%. This was one of the highest performing metrics in the survey, only exceeded by satisfaction that NFDC provides a home that is safe and with NFDC treating tenants fairly and with respect. Six of the twelve TSMs drew satisfaction above 80% and all compare well against RSH data published for 2023/24.

The lowest performing metrics were complaints handling (32%), ASB handling (64%) and listening to tenant views and acting upon them (71%). These are commonly the bottom three metrics in TSM surveys. While satisfaction with complaints handling is particularly low, this still ranks above the RSH median when compared to other Councils who submitted TSM data to the RSH in 2023/24. When complaints handling was probed further, tenants commented on the need for the Council to listen more and be more proactive in resolving complaints.

Key driver analysis reveals that the maintenance of homes and the Council listening and acting on tenant views have the largest influence on satisfaction with the overall service provided. Improvements in these areas are likely to lead to an increase in overall tenant satisfaction.

Tenants were asked what one thing the Council could improve. Of those who could suggest improvements, these were mostly around day-to-day repairs and property condition, which included damp and mould issues. When tenants who were dissatisfied with the overall service provided were probed further, the same issues were mentioned. Linked to this is the way that the Council communicates with tenants, which is a common thread throughout and an area where improvements should be targeted.

Finally, the survey also looked at satisfaction by various subgroups, which revealed that tenants above the age of 45 tend to be more satisfied than younger tenants. Those with secure tenancies are more satisfied than fixed-term and introductory tenancies, while newer tenants tend to be more satisfied than those with mid-length tenancies (6 to 10 years). Those with tenancies of over 20 years also tend to report high satisfaction, which is likely linked to the age of tenants.



# Recommendations

NFDC provides homes in Hampshire with a vision to create balanced communities for its residents and providing a range of housing options that are affordable and sustainable. Among its priorities is the need to improve the housing circumstances of those within the community who are most in housing need and to enable the best use of housing to meet the needs of local people.

The survey for 2024/25 suggests that the Council is indeed delivering a high quality service across a range of areas. However, there are always areas that can be improved and the recommendations opposite give some suggestions that NFDC may wish to follow up on.

## Listening to tenants

Listening to tenants and acting upon their views is not only a key driver of satisfaction with the overall service but also a recurring theme in the qualitative feedback provided by tenants. It's clear that this should be a priority area for the Council moving forward, not least because it often underpins satisfaction in other service areas (for example, repairs, complaints). When considering how the Council can improve how it listens to tenants, it is important that it views this through the lens of managing tenant expectations effectively. In addition, it is not just about listening to tenants but demonstrating that their voices are being heard. Regular updates and communications which address issues and relay expectations are key to this.

One benefit of using a telephone interview approach is the ability for Acuity interviewers who 'flag' issues to the Council which are raised during calls. It is encouraging to see that the Council are actively managing tenant alerts on the survey dashboard. This can be a very powerful way for landlords to demonstrate that it is acting upon the views of tenants and that survey exercises are not just box-ticking exercises for the Regulator.

## Handling of complaints

The handling of complaints is the lowest-performing metric in the survey. Some 98 residents stated that they had made a complaint in the last 12 months and responded to this question. It is important that residents feel confident any complaint they make will be taken seriously and dealt with effectively and in good time. Clear communications around what constitutes a complaint and the management of expectations around how long it will take to resolve are also needed. Perhaps further training for complaints staff would be appropriate to manage the expectations of residents.

## Damp and mould issues

Some residents also reported damp and mould issues in their homes, which should be addressed as a matter of priority to mitigate any health impacts as well as the deterioration of properties. One common concern for tenants was poor communication from the Council after a report of damp and mould, with some tenants feeling unfairly blamed for the issue.

It may help to provide residents with a leaflet or guide outlining steps they can take to reduce or prevent mould, such as proper ventilation and moisture control. Additionally, ensuring prompt site visits and clear communication throughout the process is crucial. By addressing these issues quickly and transparently, the Council can demonstrate its commitment to tenant wellbeing and property upkeep.



145

# Demographics





# Tenure

Of the different tenure groups, council secure residents scoring the highest on seven metrics, with fixed term tenancy residents scoring the lowest.

The differences are relatively small for most measures which may suggest that service delivery is not substantially different. Almost 90% of council secure residents feel that they have a safe home as opposed to 76% of fixed-term tenancy residents while 90% of introductory tenancies feel they are kept informed. This could be as they have had the most interaction with NFDC in the past months.

	All Residents	Council Secure Tenancy	Council Secure Tenant	Fixed Term Tenancy	Introductory Tenancy	Licensed Caravan	Non Secure	Use and Occupation
Overall Satisfaction	84%	85%	100% *	81%	84%	50% *	100% *	100% *
Well Maintained Home	78%	80%	75% *	72%	79%	25% *	100% *	100% *
Safe Home	85%	89%	100% *	76%	83%	50% *	100% *	50% *
Repairs Last 12 Months	81%	83%	100% *	76%	86%	- *	50% *	100% *
Time Taken Repairs	82%	83%	100% *	80%	79%	- *	100% *	50% *
Communal Areas	72%	76%	- *	65%	67% *	75% *	100% *	- *
Neighbourhood Contribution	76%	76%	100% *	75%	84%	50% *	100% *	100% *
Approach to ASB	64%	67%	50% *	54%	73%	50% *	100% *	100% *
Listens & Acts	71%	73%	67% *	64%	77%	0% *	100% *	50% *
Kept Informed	81%	82%	75% *	77%	90%	33% *	100% *	100% *
Fairly & with Respect	86%	88%	75% *	83%	87%	50% *	100% *	100% *
Complaints Handling	32%	33%	- *	29%	50% *	0% *	- *	0% *

\*Base below 10



## Age Group

It is often found in surveys of this kind that satisfaction generally increases with age.

For NFDC this tends to be the case, with residents aged over 85 the most satisfied, and those aged 44 and under the least satisfied.

Regarding overall satisfaction with the services provided, residents aged 65-74 are the most satisfied with those aged 35-42 the least satisfied, (72%).

The general trend is consistent with many other surveys and means that the age profile of different landlords will be a major factor in determining satisfaction levels.

It is not entirely clear why this is, but it could be that older people are generally less likely to complain, whereas younger residents can have higher expectations of what they feel services should look like.

	All Residents	0 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 59	60 - 64	65 - 74	75 - 84	85 +
Overall Satisfaction	84%	100% *	78%	72%	88%	83%	84%	92%	87%	89%
Well Maintained Home	78%	75% *	70%	65%	72%	76%	78%	88%	87%	96%
Safe Home	85%	75% *	62%	72%	86%	83%	87%	98%	96%	96%
Repairs Last 12 Months	81%	67% *	67%	67%	81%	89%	76%	92%	90%	92%
Time Taken Repairs	82%	67% *	63%	73%	76%	93%	85%	88%	90%	100%
Communal Areas	72%	67% *	62%	75%	71%	50%	68%	79%	76%	100%
Neighbourhood Contribution	76%	67% *	70%	80%	65%	83%	67%	80%	83%	94%
Approach to ASB	64%	67% *	62%	51%	55%	75%	52%	76%	78%	82%
Listens & Acts	71%	75% *	65%	63%	59%	70%	69%	80%	84%	96%
Kept Informed	81%	100% *	61%	79%	77%	84%	82%	84%	84%	100%
Fairly & with Respect	86%	75% *	76%	84%	86%	81%	80%	92%	96%	100%
Complaints Handling	32%	0% *	8%	20%	53%	25%	25%	50%	50% *	100% *

\*Base below 10



# Length of Tenancy

As those with the longest tenancies are often among the oldest residents, satisfaction tends to be high in these groups, as is to some extent the case with NFDC. Interestingly, the shortest tenancies of under one year scored the highest at 97% while also scoring highest in five other metrics, making them the most satisfied group.

Those residents who have lived in properties for 6-10 years are the least satisfied across the board.

One theory for this pattern is that residents are often happy to finally get an offer of a home but as they experience more issues over the years, they become more critical, and then as they age, satisfaction tends to increase again. This is shown here, although satisfaction remains high across all age groups.

	All Residents	A. < 1 year	B. 1 - 3 years	C. 4 - 5 years	D. 6 - 10 years	E. 11 - 20 years	F. Over 20 years
Overall Satisfaction	84%	97%	77%	84%	77%	88%	90%
Well Maintained Home	78%	93%	74%	77%	70%	80%	82%
Safe Home	85%	86%	80%	83%	79%	88%	93%
Repairs Last 12 Months	81%	94%	74%	76%	80%	84%	88%
Time Taken Repairs	82%	81%	75%	84%	80%	84%	88%
Communal Areas	72%	73%	68%	72%	66%	77%	82%
Neighbourhood Contribution	76%	86%	74%	71%	83%	78%	70%
Approach to ASB	64%	71%	61%	60%	59%	58%	78%
Listens & Acts	71%	88%	71%	61%	66%	73%	74%
Kept Informed	81%	96%	79%	79%	77%	81%	83%
Fairly & with Respect	86%	89%	87%	87%	83%	85%	90%
Complaints Handling	32%	40% *	30%	23%	15%	55%	31%

\*Base below 10





# Gender

Female residents outnumber their male counterparts but are generally a little less satisfied with the majority of measures.

In fact, male residents are more satisfied with all but five of the satisfaction measures; overall satisfaction, listening and acting, NFDC's contribution to the neighborhood and being kept informed, although the differences between these two groups are relatively small.

Time taken for repairs provides the largest discrepancy, with 5% more men being dissatisfied.

	All Residents	Female	Male
Overall Satisfaction	84%	85%	82%
Well Maintained Home	78%	77%	79%
Safe Home	85%	84%	88%
Repairs Last 12 Months	81%	81%	82%
Time Taken Repairs	82%	81%	86%
Communal Areas	72%	72%	72%
Neighbourhood Contribution	76%	77%	74%
Approach to ASB	64%	63%	65%
Listens & Acts	71%	71%	69%
Kept Informed	81%	81%	80%
Fairly & with Respect	86%	87%	85%
Complaints Handling	32%	32%	34%



150

This research project was carried out to conform with ISO20252:2019 and the MRS Code of Conduct.

For further information on this report please contact:

**Adam Jewitt:** adam.jewitt@arap.co.uk

Acuity

Tel: 01273 287114

Email: acuity@arap.co.uk

Address: PO Box 395, Umberleigh, EX32 2HL



**Cabinet – 6 August 2025**

## **Revised Transformation Strategy and Business Case**

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) has fundamentally changed the context in which the council approaches transformation.</p> <p>Although the originally anticipated financial benefits of transformation may not be realised ahead of reorganisation, the core drivers for change remain strong. The transformation programme continues to deliver significant value, ensuring the council is well positioned and adequately prepared for a smooth and effective transition to the new authority.</p> <p>This paper considers the impact on the approved Business Case and provides clarity over our strategic objectives in this new context through a revised transformation strategy.</p>
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	<p><b>That Cabinet recommend to Council:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. The noting of the revised business case position and</b></li> <li><b>2. The approval of the revised transformation strategy</b></li> </ol>
Reasons for recommendation(s)	<p>A key element of the corporate plan is the underpinning theme of the transformation strategy, Future New Forest.</p> <p>This now needs to be considered through the new lens of Local Government Reorganisation to ensure delivery is focussed on activities and investment that will provide the greatest benefits to enable the organisation to transition to the new authority. The recommendations support this revised position.</p>

Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Jill Cleary – Leader
Strategic Director(s)	Alan Bethune – Corporate Resources & Transformation
Officer Contact	<p>Ingrid Archer Transformation &amp; Improvement Manager 023 8028 5819 Email address</p> <p>Rebecca Drummond Assistant Director – Transformation 023 8028 5080 Rebecca.drummond@nfdc.gov.uk</p>

## Introduction and background

1. The Future New Forest Transformation Strategy was approved by Cabinet in December 2023 and set the scene for a transformed council to meet customer needs, protect our finances, be an employer of choice and embed sustainability to meet the aims and objectives of the Corporate Plan 2024-2028, in the context of significant challenges facing local government.
2. These objectives, whilst still relevant, now need to be considered through a new lens of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). This will ensure that what we are delivering not only positions the organisation and its employees well for future arrangements, it will also have lasting benefits for our residents in improving how they interact with their local council, providing a consistent and easy experience that meets their needs.
3. There remains a clear responsibility to continue delivering high-quality services to our residents in the medium term. The Corporate Plan continues to shape and guide our ambitions, reflecting our commitment to serving communities both now and into the future. Modernisation plays a crucial role in this ongoing legacy, ensuring we are not only meeting current needs but also laying the groundwork for a new organisation that must provide efficient, effective services centred around the needs of the people who rely on them.
4. This is highlighted by the Secretary of State's guidance for proposals for unitary local government which clearly sets out an expectation of efficiency savings and planning for future service transformation opportunities.

*“Efficiencies should be identified to help improve councils’ finances and make sure that council taxpayers are getting the best possible value for their money.” and*

*“Proposals should set out how an area will seek to manage transition costs, including planning for future service transformation opportunities from existing budgets, including from the flexible use of capital receipts that can support authorities in taking forward transformation and invest-to-save projects.”*

5. To ensure a successful transition to new arrangements under LGR, additional preparation and coordination will be essential. There is an opportunity to deliver this through the current programme management approach and align with Future New Forest, using both existing and emerging skills within the transformation team and across the wider organisation. Establishing a programme management office (PMO) will be key to coordinating this effort, enabling the delivery of priority projects and activities in alignment with both transformation goals and the strategic priorities of LGR, while supporting the governance arrangements now being established.
6. It is appropriate in this new context that we revise the original strategic objectives, provide clarity around what is now in scope for delivery and what is no longer feasible. The revised strategy at Appendix 1 sets out this future approach.
7. It is also appropriate within this report to revisit the August 2024 Business Case, given that the financial benefits assumed will no longer be deliverable.

## **Revised transformation strategy**

8. The revised *Transformation Strategy (2025 Update)*, presented in Appendix 1, evaluates the original transformation drivers in light of the implications of LGR. It subsequently updates the strategic objectives to reflect this new context.
9. The strategy also redefines the scope of transformation activities, identifying those that remain within scope and excluding those no longer feasible or practical under the LGR framework. While not an exhaustive list, this provides a high-level overview of the revised programme scope. Correspondingly, the delivery roadmap outlines the principal activities to be undertaken within this updated scope.

10. Most critically, these revisions recalibrate the strategic direction of the transformation programme, ensuring closer alignment with LGR preparedness. This provides the organisation with greater clarity regarding its priorities and areas of focus over the next two to three years.
11. While the strategy places less emphasis on the immediate realisation of financial benefits, it remains firmly focused on delivering a range of substantial non-financial outcomes that are critical to the long-term success and resilience of services provided to New Forest residents. These include:
  - Enhancing customer outcomes - by designing services that are more responsive, accessible, and tailored to the needs of our communities.
  - Increasing organisational capacity - through smarter ways of working, streamlined processes and better use of data and technology.
  - Fostering a high-performance culture - that empowers teams, drives continuous improvement, and encourages accountability at all levels.
  - Developing staff skills and capabilities - to build a confident, agile workforce ready to meet current and future challenges.
  - Promoting environmental sustainability - by rethinking how services are delivered to reduce carbon emissions and minimise environmental impact.
  - Strengthening cross-organisational collaboration - by breaking down silos and encouraging integrated working across services and with partners.
  - Improving adaptability and readiness for change - ensuring the organisation can respond effectively to future challenges, including the transition to the new authority.
  - Positioning the council - as a modern, agile organisation, equipped to thrive in a rapidly changing public sector landscape and deliver lasting benefits for residents.
12. These non-financial benefits are essential to achieve over the coming years, as they will play a critical role in modernising the organisation and positioning it to capitalise on future opportunities. The transition to LGR will necessitate substantial transformation plans for the new unitary authority, and the foundations established through this strategy will be instrumental in supporting their successful implementation.

## **Revised Business Case**

13. The original Business Cases were approved by Cabinet on 7 August 2024 and comprised two separate elements; Customer & Digital Services (including organisational design) and the ATC accommodation works.
14. The Customer & Digital Services (including Organisational Design) Business Case was developed following the adoption of the original Transformation Strategy. It enabled the implementation of the transformation programme by setting out a clear future organisational design for the council to leverage new technology, service and process redesign as well as looking at how some teams were structured to improve customer experience and the

efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation. Organisational design is the structures, processes and roles needed to achieve the organisation's objectives.

15. The ATC Business Case considered options to exploit the commercial opportunities of Appletree Court and make better use of the currently underutilised office accommodation.
16. The ATC Business Case and associated works are not now being progressed considering the uncertainties of LGR (Cabinet 5 February 2025, Asset Maintenance and Replacement Programme and General Fund Capital Programme 2025/26) however, it is appropriate to revisit the Business Case for Customer & Digital Services (including organisational design).

### **Original proposal (Organisational design model BV2)**

17. The agreed organisation design model (BV2) intended to move the organisation from a service led position with services adopting their own technology and processes, largely in isolation, to a more cross cutting enterprise approach with similar technology and processes used across the entire organisation, bringing about standardisation and maximising efficiencies. The existing service led model resulted in inconsistency in customer experience and technology depending on which service was being used, with phone and email being the main communication channels and multiple email addresses and phone numbers available to customers.
18. In brief the preferred option B(v2) for the target future organisational design included:
  - Enterprise technology capabilities applied to all services i.e. a single view of the customer through one CRM (Customer Relationship Management) and customer portal, customer contact management and master data management.
  - A single customers services team, dealing with most enquiries for some services and smaller subsets for others.
  - Aggregated business support functions into three teams aligned to universal, supported and place services.
  - Leaving case management and specialist activities largely unchanged.
19. Significant changes to roles have been deliberately excluded from the current strategy, as the anticipated long-term benefits are unlikely to be realised within the timeframe of the LGR. In addition, maintaining workforce stability is a key priority in the lead-up to reorganisation. To this end, efforts are being made to minimise disruption by avoiding structural changes to teams, roles, or job descriptions. It is also recognised that the successful delivery of LGR will require additional capacity, and existing resources may be redeployed as necessary to meet emerging demands. Furthermore, dedicated resources will be required to support the increased workload and capacity pressures associated with LGR implementation.

20. A new approach is advocated, supported by the revised strategic direction, that continues to invest in modern technology that will give us a leading edge in a new organisation and support our employees to better transition with the skills and customer focussed approach that will be sought after. This will not be defined by a specific organisation design model but we will continue to adopt the principle of applying enterprise technology capabilities across all services to enable a single view of the customer through one 'front door' enabled by a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) and customer portal, customer contact management and master data management.
21. Additionally legacy systems will require replacing irrespective of transformation to ensure continued service delivery and manage risk. This includes the current procurement of a Housing Maintenance system and replacement of the Planning and Regulatory Services software. In terms of the latter, procurement has been paused to allow time to align the solution with neighbouring authorities. However, a replacement system will be necessary ahead of any new arrangements being established.

## **Financial position**

22. The nature of the Business Case was to focus on the costs and financial benefits of the programme due to the fact the programme had a significant financial target to deliver. The decision has since been taken to remove transformation savings from the budget (Cabinet 19 February, Medium Term Financial Plan and Annual Budget 2025/26) and the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is not reliant on transformation savings at this point in time with a balanced budget produced for 2025/26 and predicted for 2026/27. Budgetary gaps arising thereafter are anticipated to be met through fees and charges growth and budget equalisation reserves.
23. Financial benefits of the Business Case included estimated process efficiency benefits and benefits associated with remodelling and leadership and management benefits achievable. Whilst the process analysis did show the potential to realise some small non-staff budget savings, for example through reduced printing and distribution costs, the majority of financial benefits from process efficiencies, remodelling and leadership and management were likely to be realised through workforce reductions.
24. It also identified other strategies to meet the financial target including:
  - Being more ambitious in targeting and realising process and channel efficiencies, for example by pushing harder for automation or closing more expensive customer channels.
  - Increasing the revenue received from assets, for example by rationalising the amount of office space used by council teams and renting spare space to tenants.
  - Using the spend analysis outlined in section to guide a conversation with members around strategic reductions of services, aligned with corporate priorities.



25. The timescales for LGR now mean that these strategies cannot now realistically be deployed although the programme remains ambitious to improve efficiencies, release capacity where appropriate and deliver the important non-financial benefits.

## Costs

26. Original costs to deliver the Customer & Digital Business Case were based on estimated 'one-off costs' and 'recurring costs' and modelled over a two-year period with a number of assumptions on staffing, the use of cloud-based technology and dual running costs were appropriate to maintain old and new systems for a period of time if not avoidable.
27. The original costs for Option B(v2), excluding contingency, were:

Project	Total one off	Net recurring
Contact centre	£24,000	£34,000
CRM*	£314,000	£233,000
Digital data platform	£150,000	£30,000
Digital housing maintenance system*	£230,000	£27,000
Locata data warehouse	£5,000	£2,000
Planning and regulatory services system*	£586,000	£25,000
Programme delivery resources	£780,000	
Revenues and benefits	£20,000	£55,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>£2,109,000</b>	<b>£406,000</b>

\* These projects will need to be funded irrespective of transformation, due to the current systems approaching end of life.

28. The Business Case assumed that no cashable benefits would be realised until year three with Option B(v2) projected to break even mid-way through year five.
29. It is important to note that £816k of one-off investment and £52k of additional revenue costs included in the Business Case are for replacement housing, planning and regulatory services systems which would be the subject of funding requests even if the council was not considering a transformation programme. This can now be extended to the CRM replacement as the supplier has given notice that the existing system will no longer be supported.
30. A contingency sum of up to £600k was also agreed to cover potential outplacement costs and any unplanned programme costs for example support from a transformation partner to support specific capacity needs and expertise and outplacement support.
31. The original total one-off funding requirement (including contingency) was £2,709,000 with a resultant estimated net annual financial benefit (saving) of £854,000.

## Revised costs

32. The approved Business Case related budget for 2025/26 and forecast budget for 2026/27, including one-off and recurring costs is set out below:

One off Project Costs	2025/26 Budget	2026/27 Budget	TOTAL
Contact Centre	24,000	0	24,000
CRM*	207,000	107,000	314,000
Digital Data Platform	75,000	75,000	150,000
Digital Housing Maintenance System*	165,000	65,000	230,000
Locata Data Warehouse	5,000	0	5,000
Planning and Regulatory Services System*	293,000	293,000	586,000
Programme Delivery Resources	390,000	390,000	780,000
Revenues and Benefits	20,000	0	20,000
<b>One Off Total Costs</b>	<b>1,179,000</b>	<b>930,000</b>	<b>2,109,000</b>

Year 1 Recurring Costs (Allocated across financial years)	2025/26 Budget	2026/27 Budget	TOTAL	Projected Savings	Net Recurring Costs
Contact Centre	32,000	32,000	64,000	-30,000	34,000
CRM*	183,000	183,000	366,000	-133,000	233,000
Digital Data Platform	15,000	15,000	30,000	0	30,000
Digital Housing Maintenance System*	30,000	30,000	60,000	-33,000	27,000
Locata Data Warehouse	1,000	1,000	2,000	0	2,000
Planning and Regulatory Services System*	40,000	40,000	80,000	-55,000	25,000
Programme Delivery Resources	0	0	0	0	0
Revenues and Benefits	27,000	27,000	54,000	0	54,000
<b>Recurring Total Costs</b>	<b>328,000</b>	<b>328,000</b>	<b>656,000</b>	<b>-251,000</b>	<b>405,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,507,000</b>	<b>1,258,000</b>	<b>2,765,000</b>		

33. As outlined in this report and the accompanying revised strategy, there remains a strong and well-substantiated rationale for continuing the current investment in digital transformation. It is appropriate that this is supported by dedicated organisational development resources to effectively guide the organisation through a period of significant change. Additionally, appropriate service backfill is essential to ensure that the benefits of technological advancements are fully realised and operational capacity is maintained.

34. The three principal digital transformation projects currently underway include:

- the implementation of a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Customer Platform,
- the replacement of the Housing Maintenance system, and
- the replacement of the existing Regulatory Services software.

While there is an option to defer or forgo the replacement of one or more of these systems in light of LGR, this would carry considerable risk. The legacy nature of the current systems poses a threat to the continuity and quality of service delivery. Moreover, failure to modernise these systems would leave the organisation in a transitional state, inadequately preparing both the organisation and its workforce for integration into a new future structure.

35. The ICT work programme provides for an annual investment of £625,000, amounting to £1.25 million over two years and is being utilised to partially offset the overall funding requirement for the transformation programme.

## Corporate plan priorities

36. Future New Forest underpins the delivery of the corporate plan priorities, influencing how we operate and enabling us to support our strategic objectives through efficient and effective working practices centred around our customers, being an employer of choice and being financially responsible. This continues to be the case through the revised Transformation Strategy presented at Appendix 1.

## Options appraisal

37. The following table considers alternative options with a recommendation for Option 1 to proceed with the programme as set out in the revised strategy and within this report.

Option	Description	Strategic Impact	Risks & Limitations	Overall Assessment
Option 1: Proceed with the revised transformation programme as recommended	Deliver the revised programme, including key system replacements, organisational development support, and transformation team capacity.	- Positions the council to transition smoothly into LGR- Improves customer outcomes, staff capability, and service resilience- Aligns with corporate plan and digital investment roadmap	- Requires sustained investment and leadership focus- Ongoing change demands on staff and teams	Recommended – This option supports critical improvements while securing organisational readiness for reorganisation and beyond. The only option that delivers long-term value and stability.
Option 2: Continue with original strategy and business case	Deliver the programme as originally designed, including key system replacements, structure and role changes and transformation/ OD team capacity	- Improves customer outcomes, staff capability, and service resilience- Aligns with corporate plan and digital investment roadmap. Return on investment not possible given timescales	- Requires sustained investment and leadership focus- Ongoing change demands on staff and teams – Structure and role changes require significant resource, create uncertainty and have potential to destabilise teams	High risk - This option supports critical improvements but places additional uncertainty on staff and directs resources at short term activities that will not generate longer term benefits. Creates significant risk to LGR preparedness and delivery of priorities.

Option 3: Deliver only the minimum system upgrades (CRM, housing, planning)	Replace systems reaching end-of-life but pause wider transformation activities including OD and service redesign.	- Addresses immediate technical risks- Some minimal service continuity protected	- No capacity to support staff through change- No preparation for LGR transition- Fails to realise organisational or customer benefits- Risk of service fragmentation and disengagement	Not viable – Addresses only the symptoms, not the root causes. Creates significant risk to LGR readiness and long-term service performance.
Option 4: Defer transformation until after LGR is complete	Halt all transformation activity and wait for the new authority to lead any future change.	- Reduces immediate expenditure- Shifts accountability to future structure	- Abandons current momentum and staff engagement- Delays essential improvements- Leaves legacy systems and processes vulnerable- Reputation risk for failing to prepare proactively	High risk – This passive approach would leave the council unprepared for the demands of LGR and risks major disruption during transition. Not a responsible course of action.
Option 5: Suspend the programme	Withdraw all transformation activity and reallocate remaining funds elsewhere.	- Frees up financial resources in the short term	- Fails to modernise services- Staff morale and engagement likely to fall- No preparation for LGR- Reputational damage- Long-term costs likely to increase due to inefficiency and failure demand	Strategically unsound – This option offers no sustainable path forward. It would leave the council ill-equipped to serve residents or adapt to forthcoming change.

## Consultation undertaken

38. This paper has been informed by the review of priorities (Cabinet 2 April 2025, Corporate Peer Challenge Report and Action Plan, Appendix 3) and consultation with EMT, the Transformation Board, the Member Steering

Board and has been considered by the Resources and Transformation Panel.

### **Financial and resource implications**

39. Although budget provision for the continued delivery of the programme has been approved the return on investment is no longer viable. Costs and financial considerations are considered within the report.

### **Legal implications**

40. Not applicable.

### **Risk assessment**

41. Risks associated with the options available are considered at point 37 within the options appraisal section of this report.

### **Environmental / Climate and nature implications**

42. The revised Transformation Strategy continues to support the council's environmental ambitions and the national and local targets to reduce emissions are unchanged by LGR.

### **Equalities implications**

43. There are no equalities implications arising directly from this report, however delivery of the revised strategy and modernisation of technology will impact our customers and employees. Changes to processes and service delivery will be subject to Equalities Impact Assessments and informed by user testing.

### **Crime and disorder implications**

44. Not applicable.

### **Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications**

45. 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**

46. Not applicable.

### **Conclusion**

47. Analysis of the available options makes clear that continuing with the revised transformation programme is not only the most strategic course of action, but also essential. The programme represents a critical enabler for

delivering improved services, supporting our people through change, and preparing the council for LGR.

48. Alternative options may appear to reduce short-term costs but would expose the council to significant operational, financial, and reputational risks. Delaying or scaling back transformation would compromise the Council's ability to deliver on corporate priorities, undermine staff and resident confidence, and leave the council underprepared for the demands of transition to a new authority.
49. The recommended option delivers the strongest alignment with the council's strategic direction, offers the greatest long-term value, and ensures momentum is maintained at a time when readiness and resilience are more important than ever.

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Transformation Strategy  
(2025 update)

**Background Papers:**

Transformation Strategy – Cabinet 6  
December 2023  
Transformation Business Case  
(Customer & Digital) – Cabinet 7  
August 2024

## NFDC Transformation Strategy (2025 Update)

### 1. Introduction

The Future New Forest Transformation Strategy was approved in December 2023 to cover a four-year period from April 2024 to March 2028, the same period as the NFDC Corporate Plan. The strategy established how the council would transform to meet changing customer needs, protect finances and embed sustainability.

In its introduction it was acknowledged that “Between 2024 and 2028 the economic, political, technological and environmental context is likely to change significantly, so the strategy and objectives set out within it will need to be flexible to respond to those changes.”

This has proved to be the case with the publication of the English Devolution White Paper on 16 December 2024 which signalled the government’s intention to abolish district and county councils and replace them with new unitary authorities by April 2028. This process is referred to as a local government reorganisation (LGR).

Given that the original strategy’s primary intent was to secure the long-term sustainability of NFDC, and that the implication of the White Paper is that NFDC will no longer exist after March 2028, the council must consider whether there is still value in pursuing the strategy.

This updated and revised strategy revisits the case for change and establishes the basis for continuing with the strategy and the delivery of the transformation programme.

### 2. Case for change

LGR has fundamentally changed the context in which NFDC approaches transformation. The projected financial benefits of transformation would not be fully, or even largely, realised ahead of the vesting day of the new unitary authority, ie the day the new authority becomes operational and the existing authorities dissolve. However, this does not wholly negate the original drivers and there is a new responsibility for the council to ensure the organisation is well-prepared for the transition to the new authority.

Cancellation of the transformation strategy and programme would mean that no meaningful progress would be made over the next three years (as a minimum) to improve the council’s use of data and technology, to improve the quality and adoption of online services or to develop the essential skills that staff will need to thrive as part of a new council. Our customers would see a decline rather than improvement in how they access our services.

The responsible course of action is to embrace the reality of change and to respond to the uncertainty surrounding LGR by ensuring the council’s staff, systems, data and processes are well-positioned to adapt to a range of future scenarios. This maximises the chances that New Forest residents will experience service improvements leading up to vesting day, rather than disruption and decline.

Instead of undermining the case for transformation, LGR provides a new lens through which to view the original drivers for change, as Table 1 below shows.

# Appendix 1

Original driver for transformation	Impact of LGR
<p><b>Modernising services</b></p> <p>Our systems and processes need to keep pace with the advance of digital technologies and the impact these are having on people's lives and expectations.</p> <p>There is growing demand for digital access to council services, accompanied by a high level of access to the internet and growing capability among our residents. We need to improve the customer experience by joining up our data and systems, some of which are now outdated. Services across the public and not-for-profit sectors are often poorly signposted and integrated and we need to make it easier for customers to find the services they need.</p>	<p><b>Stronger case for change</b></p> <p>The advance of digital technologies continues. Some council systems are end of life and cannot continue for a minimum of another three years without action being taken. Whilst LGR should make it easier for customers to find services, because most council services will be delivered by a single unitary authority, there is still the need to work with the wider public and voluntary sectors.</p> <p>Furthermore, one of the key drivers for LGR is to put local government on a sustainable footing and deliver efficiencies. We want to demonstrate leadership in transformational design and technical delivery to cement NFDC's position in the emerging LGR context. The new unitary authority will be better placed to realise efficiencies if NFDC has replaced out of date systems and improved the quality and connectedness of its data ahead of vesting day.</p>
<p><b>Financial constraints</b></p> <p>Rising costs and new burdens mean we face a significant and growing budget gap.</p> <p>Rising costs of service delivery combined with new challenges and burdens means we are facing potentially significant budget deficits over the next four years. We must continue to prioritise and find ways to reduce the cost of delivery. We must embed financial responsibility into all that we do.</p>	<p><b>Adjusted case for change</b></p> <p>The financial challenge remains but LGR changes the context in which this is addressed.</p> <p>While we do not believe large scale structural change in advance of LGR is practical or advisable, given the structural changes to local government within Hampshire that are likely as a consequence of LGR, investing in technological enablement and process redesign can still deliver efficiencies that may be cashable over the next 2-3 years due to organic changes such as natural turnover. However, these savings are likely to be significantly smaller than those originally sought.</p>



# Appendix 1

<p><b>Capacity and capability</b> We need new skills to deliver the changes we must make.</p> <p>The world is changing fast with the rapid growth of technology and artificial intelligence (AI). The council needs new skills to respond to the opportunities and challenges we face.</p> <p>However, most councils are facing recruitment and retention problems. We need to release capacity from parts of the organisation to enable increased focus on strategic priorities. We need to develop a more agile workforce to respond to a changing local government landscape and a digital world.</p>	<p><b>Stronger case for change</b> The ambitious timescale laid out by the government for LGR means that it will be even more important to release staff capacity to support the changes.</p> <p>LGR will create significant challenges and opportunities for council staff. As NFDC, we have a responsibility to prepare our staff for this change to ensure they are best placed to thrive in the new unitary world. Change management, digital and customer skills will be even more valuable to both staff and the future unitary authority.</p>
<p><b>Climate and sustainability</b> Meeting national and local targets to reduce emissions and support nature will require us to change the way we use resources and deliver services.</p> <p>The council declared a Climate Change and Nature Emergency in 2021 and is committed to leading efforts to tackle the impacts of extreme weather and climate change in the New Forest, reducing emissions to reach net zero and supporting nature recovery. We must work in partnership with residents, businesses and other public services to make a real impact.</p> <p>These changes will affect all aspects of council operations, including service delivery, the health and wellbeing of staff, the suitability of our housing stock, the lifespan of our assets and the condition of our habitats.</p>	<p><b>Same case for change</b> National and local targets to reduce emissions are unchanged by LGR and the case for change remains.</p>

Table 1: Impact of LGR on NFDC transformation drivers

## 3. Vision, objectives and scope

### Vision

In the context of LGR and the future transition to a larger unitary authority providing the services currently provided by NFDC, we have revised our vision for Future New Forest. We have retained, and in some cases adapted, the four transformation themes from the 2024 strategy and continue to structure our objectives and workstreams around these.

“Future New Forest: Modernising and improving services to meet changing customer needs and ensure our people, technology, data and processes are ready for the significant changes local government reorganisation will bring.”

### Objectives by theme

#### *Customer and digital services*

This theme is about how we redesign services to improve customer experience, make better use of technology and remove manual effort. Services should be digital by design, irrespective of how customers contact us.

#### **Objective C1**

Our customers will be at the heart of our digital-by-design approach.

#### **Objective C2**

We will review and catalogue our data, identify the data that is most valuable as we move towards LGR and ensure it is accurate and accessible to ensure a smooth transition to unitary status.

#### **Objective C3**

We will invest in the digital capabilities that are most likely to bring long term benefits for customers and staff during and after LGR. This means they will be scalable, adaptable, interoperable and reusable.

#### *People and capabilities*

This theme is about how we develop our people and culture, making sure roles, behaviours and skills evolve to meet new service designs and needs.

#### **Objective P1**

We will ensure our values, behaviours and culture are aligned, with a focus on prioritising customer needs through a period of rapid change.

#### **Objective P2**

We will invest in our people to ensure they have the skills they need to deliver, manage and adapt to the significant organisational changes ahead.

#### *Assets and accommodation*

This theme is about how we use and maintain our assets to improve sustainability and ensure they are in the best possible condition at the point of transfer to the new unitary authority.

# Appendix 1

## Objective A1

We will prioritise operational assets so they are in the best possible condition ahead of vesting day to the new unitary authority.

## Objective A2

We will continue to challenge our asset portfolio to reduce environmental impact and enhance their financial contribution

## *Transformation delivery and LGR readiness*

This theme is about how we ensure that our investment in transformation delivers tangible benefits, for customers and such that the council is well-prepared for LGR.

## Objective D1

We will ensure that all transformation activity will deliver meaningful improvements for customers in the short term and/or will position the organisation to transition as smoothly as possible to the new unitary authority.

## Objective D2

We will shift to a more empowered and accountable management culture.

## Scope

Revised scope:

## *Customer and digital services*

In scope	Out of scope
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Any and all service processes may be reviewed to identify ways to improve customer experience, enhance performance and release capacity.</li><li>All current software applications supporting front- and back-office operations are in scope for standardisation, optimisation and integration.</li><li>Replacement of current CRM and housing maintenance systems.</li><li>Identifying, cataloguing, cleansing and connecting key datasets to support customer delivery and/or LGR preparation.</li><li>Implementing the Customer Strategy, including associated changes to channels, customer SLAs, KPIs and feedback mechanisms.</li><li>Partnership working across the public and not-for-profit sectors join up services and processes to make access to key services better for our residents, businesses and visitors.</li><li>Consolidation of customer service activity to simplify, integrate and consolidate existing roles.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Decisions about how capacity released through service design is realised.</li><li>Full structural reorganisation of customer services around the digital platform/CRM.</li><li>Investment in developing systems which are unlikely to be retained post-LGR.</li><li>Changes to formally documented policies that have been adopted by elected members.</li><li>Changes to service delivery, eg stopping services or reducing service levels.</li></ul>

# Appendix 1

## *People and capabilities*

In scope	Out of scope
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People Strategy development and delivery across all services and teams, including developing organisational values, behaviours and staff skills.</li> <li>• Changes to reward and recognition approaches</li> <li>• Minor changes to organisational structures to better align capacity and capability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant changes to staffing structures and job descriptions.</li> <li>• Changes to pay and grading structures, terms and conditions or employment models.</li> <li>• Significant changes to learning management systems or training providers</li> </ul>

## *Assets and accommodation*

In scope	Out of scope
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All operational buildings eg offices, depots, stores</li> <li>• Delivery of the Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) 2025-onwards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HRA assets, eg social housing properties, garages, and associated systems*</li> <li>• Operational assets within Place and Sustainability directorate (plant and fleet)</li> <li>• Redesign of customer, community or workforce facing spaces.</li> <li>• Major investment in assets that would only deliver returns beyond the life of the current authority.</li> </ul>

*\*ongoing investment via HRA business plan outside of scope of transformation scope*

## *Transformation delivery and LGR readiness*

In scope	Out of scope
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversight of all projects and programmes relevant to organisation transformation and/or LGR</li> <li>• Transformation programme governance</li> <li>• Benefits management</li> <li>• Service and financial planning processes</li> <li>• Leadership, management and performance culture.</li> <li>• LGR planning and preparation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of long-term financial savings linked to workforce reductions.</li> <li>• Leadership decisions on the method of realising benefits identified through the transformation programme.</li> </ul>

## 4. Measuring our success

### Customer and digital

- Customer experience (% rating Good or above)
- Number of fully digital services (definition and baseline to be confirmed)
- Customers choosing digital channels (% requests received via digital channels)

### People and capabilities

- Long term vacancies (% vacancies filled first time)
- Staff retention (% of staff who leave within 12 months)
- Equipping staff to do their jobs (% who agree they have had the training and development needed to perform current duties)
- Staff development (% staff agree there are training and development opportunities to support them to achieve their ambitions / progress their career)
- Net promoter (% of staff recommend the council as a great place to work)

### Assets and accommodation

- Assets have been identified, classified and had a condition survey undertaken as part of the asset strategy (% conditions surveys undertaken)
- Improvement in financial return of NFDC asset base (confirm method)
- Reduced emissions from operational council assets (% reduction against baseline)

### Transformation delivery and LGR readiness

- Project objectives and benefits defined for all transformation initiatives, linked to transformation drivers and monitored by PMO.
- New service and financial planning processes implemented
- Managers agree they are empowered to manage resources to deliver their target outcomes (% agreement)

# Appendix 1

## 5. Roadmap

LGR Readiness & Programme Delivery	2025				2026				2027				2028	
	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr
<b>Business Case/Transformation Strategy</b>														
Agree revised Strategy & BC to ensure alignment with LGR impacts														
Agree priorities, objectives, outcomes & measures														
Review and revise programme planning to ensure alignment														
Agree and baseline revised KPIs/programme measures & high level benefits														
Agree transformation support/supplier contract														
Agree work packages for transformation support partners/supplier														
Mobilise transformation support														
<b>Transformation Portfolio Governance &amp; Oversight</b>														
Agree purpose & scope for centralised PMO														
Establish organisational PMO (structures, systems, processes, people)														
Review governance structures to ensure alignment with PMO														
<b>Programme Delivery- Programme benefits management</b>														
Define benefits & agree detailed profiles (owners, measures, returns period)														
Establish benefits management system/process														
<b>Organisational Data</b>														
Conduct organisation data gap analysis & validate outcomes														
Create recommendations to address gaps														
Agree approach to organisation data & associated delivery plan														
Implement plans														
Customer & Digital	2025				2026				2027				2028	
	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr
<b>Define digital architecture and capabilities</b>														
Align customer and digital strategies														
Customer journeys and design patterns														

## 171

[illegible]

# Appendix 1

172

<b>Structures</b>														
Assess opportunities to make customer delivery structure changes where appropriate														
Agree redesigned structures / role changes														
Implement structural changes / role changes														
<b>People &amp; Capabilities</b>	2025				2026				2027				2028	
	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr
<b>Organisational development</b>														
Write People Strategy														
Organisational learning needs analysis														
Values and Behaviours Framework Development														
Roll out and Embed Values & Behaviours														
Leadership development programme														
Employee engagement programme														
<b>LGR/Transformation Readiness</b>														
Identify transformation skills & learning requirements														
Develop solution approach														
Upskill workforce														
<b>Change Management Approach</b>														
Establish org Change Management approach/toolkit														
Establish Change Champions network														
Roll out and embed NFDC Change Management approach														
<b>People Strategy</b>														
Improvements to HR processes eg onboarding and offboarding, performance management														
Refreshed & improved comms and engagement (inc intranet)														
Workforce Data Gaps & Requirements														
<b>Assets &amp; Accommodation</b>	2025				2026				2027				2028	
	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr



# Appendix 1

Asset Strategy														
Develop Asset Strategy														
Operational assets review														
Investment and disposals programme														
Address compliance risks														
Asset disposals policy development														
Community Asset Transfer policy development														
Agree Strategic Asset Management plan and associated policies														
Implement asset management plan														

This page is intentionally left blank

**Cabinet – 6 August 2025**

## **Principal Risk Register Review**

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>This report updates the Cabinet on the position of the Council's Principal Risk Register. The main updates are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Service Risk registers have been reviewed to inform any proposed changes to the Principal Risk Register.</li> <li>• All principal risks have been reviewed, with the latest risk ratings shown in Appendix 1.</li> <li>• Two risks have been removed due to no longer being a key risk to the Council's operation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Hampshire County Council – Political Environment</li> <li>➤ Major Projects – Hardley Depot</li> </ul> </li> <li>• One additional risk has been included that has arisen or become apparent in the previous 6 months: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ People – Recruitment and retention of staff considering Local Government reorganisation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>It is recommended that Cabinet:</b></p> <p><b>1. Consider the Principal Risk Register updates and recommend adoption by Council.</b></p>
Reasons for recommendation(s)	To meet the requirements of the Council's Risk Management Policy and to ensure that the Council complies with the corporate governance requirements relating to risk management.
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	Josie West Strategic Procurement Manager 02380 285741 Josie.West@nfdc.gov.uk

## Background

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. The Council's Risk Management Policy was approved by Council in April 2025. It provides a structured framework to ensure risks and opportunities are reviewed across all Services, Portfolios and Corporately, in a consistent way.
4. The Council's Principal Risk Register is an important element of this framework and is reviewed and updated every 6 months. Service Risk Registers that support the Principal Risk Register are updated quarterly as a minimum.
5. Prior to the previous update in January 2025, the Principal Risk Register was reshaped to focus on the most significant risks encountered by the Council. The risks are strategic and will assist further in the Council achieving the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan.

## Principal Risk Review

6. All Service Risk Registers have been reviewed and updated by the Senior/Service Managers. Where possible, Principal Risks have been aligned to a Service Risk to ensure consistency going forward.
7. All Principal Risks have been reviewed, and the relevant Senior/Service Managers have been consulted on proposed changes.
8. The amended Principal Risk Register can be found at Appendix 1.

### **Proposed changes to the Principal Risk Register**

9. The Principal Risk "Operations - Hampshire County Council – Political Environment" has been removed due to the elections originally scheduled for May 2025, being delayed until May 2026 but we remain alert to this for future inclusion as required.
10. The Service Manager has amended the rating of the Principal Risk "Financial – Fraud" from High to Medium. The Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy has recently been reviewed and approved by Audit Committee. Historically, instances of fraud have been relatively low when compared to the amount of money paid out by the Council.
11. The Principal Risk "Major Projects – Hardley Depot" has been removed, as the construction of the new depot has been completed, and the depot is now open and operationally available, therefore, this is no longer deemed a Principal Risk. Any outstanding low risks will be managed at a Service level. The project is subject to ongoing monitoring by the Waste Programme Board.
12. The rating of the Principal Risk "Major Projects – Planning and regulatory system upgrade" has been amended from Medium to High. The project to replace this system is now on hold as agreed at the latest Transformation Board meeting. However, agreement has been reached with the current software provider to maintain the current software for the next 18 months.
13. The rating of the Principal Risk "People – Working Practices" has been amended from High to Medium. This risk was rated High due to the change in employee terms and conditions for Waste Operatives. All Waste Operatives have now moved across to the new terms and conditions, so the risk has reduced in this area.
14. The Principal Risk "People - Recruitment and retention of staff" has been added. This risk relates to uncertainty amongst staff, brought about by Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution.
15. Other minor amendments to the Principal Risk Register are for clarification, to provide further detail, or to communicate updated

information following liaison with the relevant Service Manager or Assistant Director.

### **Comments from Audit Committee**

16. The Chairman considered that it would be clearer if the unmitigated (inherent) and mitigated (residual) risk scores were both provided, to show the effect of the mitigation. This feedback has been incorporated, and the Principal Risk Register has been amended to show both risk scores. It also shows how each risk score has been calculated using a probability score multiplied by an impact score.
17. Officers have considered a suggestion to increase the risk score of PR2, Emergency Planning, from Medium to High, given the number of recent incidents involving water supply disruptions on the Waterside. However, officers consider this to be a corporate-wide risk, where all risks on the National Risk Register are reviewed (including severe weather, flooding, wildfires, cyber-attacks and many others) along with the role of the Council in responding and recovering from each of these incidents. Whilst water disruption has significantly affected parts of our communities, the responsibility for providing an adequate water supply lies with the water company (Southern Water in the case of the Waterside area); and the Council as a member of the Local Resilience Forum continues to support communities in preparing and responding to water outages whilst Southern Water progresses plans to improve the infrastructure.
18. On PR14, Waste Strategy Implementation and member engagement, officers undertook to confirm that members had the necessary information to support the roll out. Officers have been assured by the Waste & Transport Service Manager that members have been provided with a Communications Tool Kit as well as several briefing sessions and updates. Further guidance can be provided upon request.

### **Corporate plan priorities**

19. 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**

20. An options appraisal is not applicable for this report.

### **Consultation undertaken**

21. Consultation has been undertaken with Senior/Service Managers with responsibility for a Service Risk Register, particularly in areas where changes have been proposed.

### **Financial and resource implications**

22. 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**

23. If the legal principal risks are not managed this does bring risk to the council.

### **Risk assessment**

24. The risk management implications are set out within the content of this report.

### **Environmental / Climate and nature implications**

25. If the climate principal risks are not managed this does bring risk to the council.

### **Equalities implications**

26. There are no direct equality implications from this report.

### **Crime and disorder implications**

27. There are no direct crime and disorder implications from this report.

### **Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications**

28. There are no direct data protection / information governance / ICT implications from this report.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Principal Risk Register

### **Background Papers:**

Principal Risk and Risk Management Policy Update to the Audit Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2025

[Link to Risk Management Policy](#)

This page is intentionally left blank



Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation
<b>Operations</b>						
PR1	Cyber Security	Transformation Priority 4: Designing modern and innovative services	Strategic Director Corporate Resources & Transformation Section 151 Officer	<p>Inherent Risk Score</p> <p><b>High</b></p> <p>Residual Risk Score</p> <p><b>High</b></p>	Malicious attack results in significant loss of sensitive data and/or significant disruption to Council operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated ICT security team in place to manage and maintain the organisations security posture.</li> <li>• ICT Security &amp; Information Governance Policy approved by EMT in place for all to adhere to.</li> <li>• End user awareness provided by eLearning modules.</li> <li>• Cyber incident response service in place to support actual or suspected breaches and expert assistance in the event of an incidence.</li> <li>• The Council funds a reserve to quickly respond in the event of an attack.</li> <li>• Compliance gained and renewed annually to accreditations including PSN and Cyber Essentials.</li> <li>• Regular internal vulnerability scans taking place with remedial action undertaken.</li> <li>• Full IT health check undertaken annually by an external accredited tester with remedial action undertaken</li> </ul>

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation																																																																		
PR2	Emergency Planning	Transformation Priority 4: Designing modern and innovative services	Strategic Director Housing & Communities	Inherent Risk Score	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 and works closely with partners at a local and national level to ensure effective preparedness for response and recovery to incidents.  In April a new relationship was established with Southampton City Council and an Emergency Planning Coordinator role was recruited into, to support the planning, training and exercising of officers at all levels across the Council (Strategic, Tactical and Operational) to prepare and deliver a robust response to incidents across the district.																																																																		
				<div><div>Medium</div><table><tr><td>probability</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Impact</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table></div> <div>Residual Risk Score</div> <div><div>Medium</div><table><tr><td>probability</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Impact</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table></div>			probability	4	4	8	##	##		3	3	6	9	##		2	2	4	6	8		1	1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4				Impact			probability	4	4	8	##	##		3	3	6	9	##		2	2	4	6	8		1	1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4
probability	4	4	8	##	##																																																																			
	3	3	6	9	##																																																																			
	2	2	4	6	8																																																																			
	1	1	2	3	4																																																																			
		1	2	3	4																																																																			
			Impact																																																																					
probability	4	4	8	##	##																																																																			
	3	3	6	9	##																																																																			
	2	2	4	6	8																																																																			
	1	1	2	3	4																																																																			
		1	2	3	4																																																																			
			Impact																																																																					

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation																																																																		
PR3	Homelessness	Transformation Priority 4: Designing modern and innovative services	Strategic Director Housing & Communities	<div>Inherent Risk Score</div> <div>Medium</div> <div><table><tr><td rowspan="4">Probability</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td colspan="5">Impact</td></tr></table></div> <div>Residual Risk Score</div> <div>Medium</div> <div><table><tr><td rowspan="4">Probability</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td colspan="5">Impact</td></tr></table></div>	Probability	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	2	2	4	6	8	1	1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4		Impact					Probability	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	2	2	4	6	8	1	1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4		Impact					Inability to fulfil our legal obligations to the homeless (and/or to utilise our statutory authority to assist them) in a timely, effective, and efficient manner could negatively affect our financial position. This poses health and safety risks related to homelessness, as well as reputational risks, and could lead to another increase in homelessness.	To address the extraordinary demand, urgent efforts are being made to increase temporary accommodation options, while medium-term plans outlined in the Housing strategy are in progress. Funding has been increased and we are investing in homelessness prevention strategies.
Probability	4	4	8	##		##																																																																		
	3	3	6	9		##																																																																		
	2	2	4	6		8																																																																		
	1	1	2	3	4																																																																			
		1	2	3	4																																																																			
	Impact																																																																							
Probability	4	4	8	##	##																																																																			
	3	3	6	9	##																																																																			
	2	2	4	6	8																																																																			
	1	1	2	3	4																																																																			
		1	2	3	4																																																																			
	Impact																																																																							

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation																																												
PR4	Business Continuity	All	Strategic Director Housing & Communities	Inherent Risk Score	Ineffective business continuity response enables an event to seriously disrupt Council operations	The Council acknowledges the previous resource shortfall. In April 2025 the Council embarked on a new working relationship with Southampton City Council to support in the review of its business continuity arrangements. An officer has recently been successfully recruited to implement any changes identified, which 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.																																												
				<div><div>High</div><div><div>probability</div><table><tr><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr></table><div>Impact</div></div></div> <div>Residual Risk Score</div> <div><div>High</div><div><div>probability</div><table><tr><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr></table><div>Impact</div></div></div>			4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	2	2	4	6	8	1	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	2	2	4	6	8	1	1	2	3
4	4	8	##	##																																														
3	3	6	9	##																																														
2	2	4	6	8																																														
1	1	2	3	4																																														
	1	2	3	4																																														
4	4	8	##	##																																														
3	3	6	9	##																																														
2	2	4	6	8																																														
1	1	2	3	4																																														
	1	2	3	4																																														

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation																																																		
Legal and Regulatory																																																								
PR5	Health and Safety	Transformation Priority 2: Being an employer of choice	Chief Executive	<div>Inherent Risk Score</div> <div>Medium</div> <div><div>probability</div><table><tr><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr></table><div>Impact</div></div> <div>Residual Risk Score</div> <div>Medium</div> <div><div>probability</div><table><tr><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr></table><div>Impact</div></div>	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	2	2	4	6	8	1	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	2	2	4	6	8	1	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	A serious health and safety incident occurs in the workplace, compromising the safety and wellbeing of our staff. This includes fatal incidents and incidents within the scope of RIDDOR 2013.	<div>Implementation of the Council’s H&amp;S management system, including proactive monitoring and review of H&amp;S arrangements, risk assessments, Safe System of work, training and performance monitoring.</div> <div>Regular H&amp;S audits are undertaken by the internal H&amp;S team who also take on the role of ‘competent person’ as identified under regulation 7 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.</div>
4	4	8	##	##																																																				
3	3	6	9	##																																																				
2	2	4	6	8																																																				
1	1	2	3	4																																																				
	1	2	3	4																																																				
4	4	8	##	##																																																				
3	3	6	9	##																																																				
2	2	4	6	8																																																				
1	1	2	3	4																																																				
	1	2	3	4																																																				

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation																																																																		
PR6	Information Governance	All	Strategic Director Corporate Resources & Transformation Section 151 Officer	<div>Inherent Risk Score</div> <div>High</div> <div><table><tr><td rowspan="4">Probability</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td colspan="5">Impact</td></tr></table></div> <div>Residual Risk Score</div> <div>Medium</div> <div><table><tr><td rowspan="4">Probability</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td colspan="5">Impact</td></tr></table></div>	Probability	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	2	2	4	6	8	1	1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4		Impact					Probability	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	2	2	4	6	8	1	1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4		Impact					A serious data breach occurs and/or other significant instance of non-compliance with data legislation, leading to imposition of fines by the Information Commissioner's Officer (ICO), reputational risks and risk of litigation.	Implementation of the Council's GDPR action plan continues overseen by the Council's Data Protection Officer and supported by the Information Governance team.  This action plan includes provision of training, raising corporate awareness, introduction of Data Protection Leaders, impact assessments to assess data risks for new projects, data sharing/processing agreements, breach response plan and breach log.
				Probability		4	4	8	##	##																																																														
3	3	6	9			##																																																																		
2	2	4	6			8																																																																		
1	1	2	3		4																																																																			
		1	2	3	4																																																																			
	Impact																																																																							
Probability	4	4	8	##	##																																																																			
	3	3	6	9	##																																																																			
	2	2	4	6	8																																																																			
	1	1	2	3	4																																																																			
		1	2	3	4																																																																			
	Impact																																																																							

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation																																																		
PR7	Safeguarding	People Priority 1: Helping those in our community with the greatest need	Strategic Director Housing & Communities	<div>Inherent Risk Score</div> <div>High</div> <div><div>probability</div><table><tr><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr></table><div>Impact</div></div> <div>Residual Risk Score</div> <div>Medium</div> <div><div>probability</div><table><tr><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr></table><div>Impact</div></div>	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	2	2	4	6	8	1	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	2	2	4	6	8	1	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	A safeguarding incident occurs which, through action or omission by the Council, might otherwise have been prevented.	<p>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.</p> <p>We are in the process of undertaking a Section 11 audit measuring the Council's responses to Safeguarding matters which will be completed in June and reviewed by Hampshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership.</p>
4	4	8	##	##																																																				
3	3	6	9	##																																																				
2	2	4	6	8																																																				
1	1	2	3	4																																																				
	1	2	3	4																																																				
4	4	8	##	##																																																				
3	3	6	9	##																																																				
2	2	4	6	8																																																				
1	1	2	3	4																																																				
	1	2	3	4																																																				

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation																																																		
PR8	Legal & Governance	All	Assistant Director Strategy & Engagement (Monitoring Officer)	<div>Inherent Risk Score</div> <div>Medium</div> <div><div>probability</div><table><tr><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr></table><div>Impact</div></div> <div>Residual Risk Score</div> <div>Medium</div> <div><div>probability</div><table><tr><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr></table><div>Impact</div></div>	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	2	2	4	6	8	1	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	2	2	4	6	8	1	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	Inadequate legal & governance arrangements resulting in unlawful decision making and/or maladministration.	<div>Recruitment and retention of staff with knowledge and skills; ongoing training provided to staff to update knowledge and improve skills; access to specialist external legal advice when necessary.</div> <div>The Council has sound constitutional and governance arrangements in place including Schemes of Delegation and the Annual Governance Action Plan, approved by Audit Committee and monitored by statutory officers.</div>
4	4	8	##	##																																																				
3	3	6	9	##																																																				
2	2	4	6	8																																																				
1	1	2	3	4																																																				
	1	2	3	4																																																				
4	4	8	##	##																																																				
3	3	6	9	##																																																				
2	2	4	6	8																																																				
1	1	2	3	4																																																				
	1	2	3	4																																																				



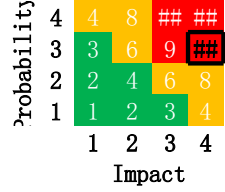
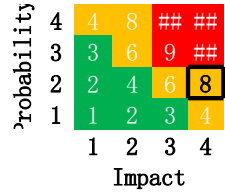
Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation
PR9	Local Government Reform / Devolution	All	Chief Executive	<p>Inherent Risk Score</p> <p><b>High</b></p> <p>Residual Risk Score</p> <p><b>High</b></p>	<p>The publication of the 'white paper'. We will work closely with our local authority partners to carry out specific actions and make sure our internal communications remain clear and effective and to ensure that outcomes are beneficial for our residents.</p>	<p>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.</p>

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation																																																		
PR10	Social Housing Regulatory Compliance	People Priority 3 – meeting Housing Needs	Strategic Director Housing & Communities	<div>Inherent Risk Score</div> <div>High</div> <div><div>probability</div><table><tr><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr></table><div>Impact</div></div> <div>Residual Risk Score</div> <div>Medium</div> <div><div>probability</div><table><tr><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr></table><div>Impact</div></div>	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	2	2	4	6	8	1	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	2	2	4	6	8	1	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	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
4	4	8	##	##																																																				
3	3	6	9	##																																																				
2	2	4	6	8																																																				
1	1	2	3	4																																																				
	1	2	3	4																																																				
4	4	8	##	##																																																				
3	3	6	9	##																																																				
2	2	4	6	8																																																				
1	1	2	3	4																																																				
	1	2	3	4																																																				

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation																																																		
Financial																																																								
PR11	Income and Financial Position	Transformation Priority 3: Being financially responsible	Strategic Director Corporate Resources & Transformation Section 151 Officer	<div>Inherent Risk Score</div> <div>High</div> <div><div>probability</div><table><tr><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr></table><div>Impact</div></div> <div>Residual Risk Score</div> <div>Medium</div> <div><div>probability</div><table><tr><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr></table><div>Impact</div></div>	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	2	2	4	6	8	1	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	2	2	4	6	8	1	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	Income volatility / poor finance settlement / extreme event causing significant financial challenge	With the transformation programme in progress and ongoing reviews of the MTFP, the council is fully committed to ensuring both immediate and future financial stability. This is evidenced by the setting of a balanced budget for 2025/26 and the financial strategy to ensure this continues over the MTFP. Additionally, sufficient reserves are in place, alongside business continuity plans and council-wide emergency planning.
4	4	8	##	##																																																				
3	3	6	9	##																																																				
2	2	4	6	8																																																				
1	1	2	3	4																																																				
	1	2	3	4																																																				
4	4	8	##	##																																																				
3	3	6	9	##																																																				
2	2	4	6	8																																																				
1	1	2	3	4																																																				
	1	2	3	4																																																				

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation																																																		
PR12	Fraud	Transformation Priority 3: Being financially responsible	Strategic Director Corporate Resources & Transformation Section 151 Officer	<div>Inherent Risk Score</div> <div>High</div> <div><div>probability</div><table><tr><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr></table><div>Impact</div></div> <div>Residual Risk Score</div> <div>Medium</div> <div><div>probability</div><table><tr><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr></table><div>Impact</div></div>	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	2	2	4	6	8	1	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	2	2	4	6	8	1	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4		<p>The Council’s approach is set out in the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, which has recently been reviewed and approved by Audit Committee.</p> <p>Every Service area has a Fraud Risk Survey carried out and continually reviewed.</p> <p>All staff complete fraud e-learning each year.</p>
4	4	8	##	##																																																				
3	3	6	9	##																																																				
2	2	4	6	8																																																				
1	1	2	3	4																																																				
	1	2	3	4																																																				
4	4	8	##	##																																																				
3	3	6	9	##																																																				
2	2	4	6	8																																																				
1	1	2	3	4																																																				
	1	2	3	4																																																				

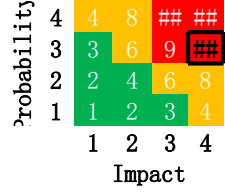
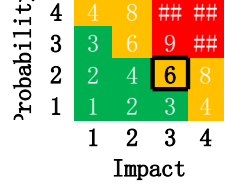
Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation																																																																		
PR13	Procurement	Transformation Priority 3: Being financially responsible	Strategic Director Corporate Resources & Transformation Section 151 Officer	<p>Inherent Risk Score</p> <p><b>High</b></p> <table><tr><td rowspan="4">Probability</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td colspan="5">Impact</td></tr></table> <p>Residual Risk Score</p> <p><b>Medium</b></p> <table><tr><td rowspan="4">Probability</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td colspan="5">Impact</td></tr></table>	Probability	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	2	2	4	6	8	1	1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4		Impact					Probability	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	2	2	4	6	8	1	1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4		Impact					Procurement activity takes place which is not in the best interests of the Council and its stakeholders and/or is in breach of legislation.	<p>The Procurement Act 2023 is now in force. The procurement team have undertaken Cabinet Office training and updated Contract Standing Orders, tender documents and associated guidance for officers.</p> <p>Spend analysis is completed three times per year and shared with the leadership team.</p> <p>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.</p>
Probability	4	4	8	##		##																																																																		
	3	3	6	9		##																																																																		
	2	2	4	6		8																																																																		
	1	1	2	3	4																																																																			
		1	2	3	4																																																																			
	Impact																																																																							
Probability	4	4	8	##	##																																																																			
	3	3	6	9	##																																																																			
	2	2	4	6	8																																																																			
	1	1	2	3	4																																																																			
		1	2	3	4																																																																			
	Impact																																																																							

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation
<b>Major Projects</b>						
PR14	Waste Strategy Implementation	Place Priority 3: Caring for our facilities, neighbourhoods and open spaces in a modern and responsive way	Strategic Director Place, Operations and Sustainability	<p>Inherent Risk Score</p> <p><b>High</b></p>  <p>Residual Risk Score</p> <p><b>Medium</b></p> 	<p>The ineffective transition from black plastic bags to waste bins can lead to significant operational impacts, including increased littering and improper bin usage, which may drive up disposal costs and create health hazards.</p> <p>Additionally, these issues can lead to potential legal repercussions and loss of funding. The reputational risks associated with a failed transition may strain community trust in the Council and heighten operational challenges.</p>	<p>An effective communication strategy is essential for informing the community and facilitating the successful implementation of the new waste management system. It is important for members to engage more broadly with the community regarding this significant service change.</p>

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation																																																																								
PR15	Transformation Programme	Transformation Priority 4: Designing modern and innovative services	Strategic Director Housing & Communities	<div>Inherent Risk Score</div> <div>High</div> <div><table><tr><td>Probability</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td colspan="5">Impact</td></tr></table></div> <div>Residual Risk Score</div> <div>Medium</div> <div><table><tr><td>Probability</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td colspan="5">Impact</td></tr></table></div>	Probability	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	##	2	2	4	6	8		1	1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4			Impact					Probability	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	##	2	2	4	6	8		1	1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4			Impact					Buy in and delivery of the transformation strategy and business case is crucial for achieving the corporate plan objectives. Failure to deliver will hinder the customer experience, modernisation of the organisation, maximisation of our assets and development of our staff.	Programme governance embedded and regular Cllr oversight through the Resources and Transformation O&S panel. Need to stay mindful of LGR context and take proportionate action based on this medium-term outlook.
Probability	4	4	8	##	##																																																																									
3	3	6	9	##	##																																																																									
2	2	4	6	8																																																																										
1	1	2	3	4																																																																										
	1	2	3	4																																																																										
	Impact																																																																													
Probability	4	4	8	##	##																																																																									
3	3	6	9	##	##																																																																									
2	2	4	6	8																																																																										
1	1	2	3	4																																																																										
	1	2	3	4																																																																										
	Impact																																																																													

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation																																																		
PR16	Planning and regulatory system upgrade	Transformation Priority 4: Designing modern and innovative services	Strategic Director Housing & Communities	<div>Inherent Risk Score</div> <div>High</div> <div><div>probability</div><table><tr><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr></table><div>Impact</div></div> <div>Residual Risk Score</div> <div>High</div> <div><div>probability</div><table><tr><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr></table><div>Impact</div></div>	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	2	2	4	6	8	1	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	2	2	4	6	8	1	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	The planning system may face challenges and potential failures without effective management. This underscores the importance of utilising dependable planning software to promote efficient processes and successful project outcomes, which could also impact the transformation program and regulatory services.	The project to replace this system is now on hold (as agreed at the last transformation board), however agreement has been reached with the current software provider to maintain the current software for the next 18 months.
4	4	8	##	##																																																				
3	3	6	9	##																																																				
2	2	4	6	8																																																				
1	1	2	3	4																																																				
	1	2	3	4																																																				
4	4	8	##	##																																																				
3	3	6	9	##																																																				
2	2	4	6	8																																																				
1	1	2	3	4																																																				
	1	2	3	4																																																				



Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation
<b>Reputation</b>						
PR17	Climate and Ecological Emergency	Place Priority 2: Protecting our climate, coast, and natural world	Strategic Director Place, Operations and Sustainability	<p>Inherent Risk Score</p> <p><b>High</b></p>  <p>Residual Risk Score</p> <p><b>Medium</b></p> 	<p>Failure to meet climate change-related goals leading to non-compliance with UK net zero legislation and failure to achieve Corporate Plan and Transformation objectives.</p>	<p>Continuing implementation of the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan.</p> <p>Funding of £150k per year for the corporate plan period.</p> <p>Regular review of budget allocation, seeking alternative funding sources, prioritising projects based on impact and funding availability.</p> <p>Recruitment and expansion of the Climate Change &amp; Sustainability team is in progress to support these actions.</p> <p>Development of a service climate risk assessment template to ensure this risk is being addressed through service delivery.</p>

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation																																																																								
People																																																																														
PR18	Working practices	Transformation Priority 2: Being an employer of choice	Strategic Director Corporate Resources & Transformation Section 151 Officer	<p>Inherent Risk Score</p> <p>High</p> <table><tr><td>probability</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td colspan="5">Impact</td></tr></table> <p>Residual Risk Score</p> <p>Medium</p> <table><tr><td>probability</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td colspan="5">Impact</td></tr></table>	probability	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##		2	2	4	6	8		1	1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4			Impact					probability	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##		2	2	4	6	8		1	1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4			Impact					With a large in-house workforce providing such a variety of diverse services, application of local working practices in comparison to standard terms and conditions could result in inconsistencies across the workforce	A thorough staff consultation has been undertaken recently in Waste Services to advise of proposed terms and conditions changes in readiness for the new waste service. A recent review of Essential User Allowances has also recently been undertaken and is nearing conclusion.
probability	4	4	8	##	##																																																																									
3	3	6	9	##																																																																										
2	2	4	6	8																																																																										
1	1	2	3	4																																																																										
	1	2	3	4																																																																										
	Impact																																																																													
probability	4	4	8	##	##																																																																									
3	3	6	9	##																																																																										
2	2	4	6	8																																																																										
1	1	2	3	4																																																																										
	1	2	3	4																																																																										
	Impact																																																																													

Principal Risk Register  
July 2025

APPENDIX 1

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation																																																																								
PR19	Recruitment and retention of staff	Transformation Priority 2: Being an employer of choice	Strategic Director Corporate Resources & Transformation Section 151 Officer	<div>Inherent Risk Score</div> <div>High</div> <div><table><tr><td>Probability</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td colspan="5">Impact</td></tr></table></div> <div>Residual Risk Score</div> <div>Medium</div> <div><table><tr><td>Probability</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>8</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>##</td><td>##</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>8</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td colspan="5">Impact</td></tr></table></div>	Probability	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	##	2	2	4	6	8		1	1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4			Impact					Probability	4	4	8	##	##	3	3	6	9	##	##	2	2	4	6	8		1	1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4			Impact					The uncertainty of LGR and Devolution may increase the risk of staff leaving the Council and lead to recruitment challenges which could impact the delivery of services.	Development of employer proposition, consideration of other non-pay benefits, provision of flexible/hybrid working. Maintaining talent pool, career progression opportunities, leadership development and upskilling of existing staff; more learning resource in place due to People Strategy to assist managers.
Probability	4	4	8	##	##																																																																									
3	3	6	9	##	##																																																																									
2	2	4	6	8																																																																										
1	1	2	3	4																																																																										
	1	2	3	4																																																																										
	Impact																																																																													
Probability	4	4	8	##	##																																																																									
3	3	6	9	##	##																																																																									
2	2	4	6	8																																																																										
1	1	2	3	4																																																																										
	1	2	3	4																																																																										
	Impact																																																																													

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation
-----	------------	----------------------	------------	-------------	------------	-------------------------

Risk Rating

Risk Score	Risk Level
9-16	High Risk
4-8	Medium Risk
1-4	Low Risk

Risk Matrix

Probability					
Highly Likely	4	4	8	##	##
Likely	3	3	6	9	##
Unlikely	2	2	4	6	8
Highly Unlikely	1	1	2	3	4
		1	2	3	4
		Impact			
		Low	Moderate	Major	Significant

## CABINET 6 August 2025

### Update on Local Plan Review

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>This paper seeks approval for the revised Local Development Scheme and updates on the current work programme for the Local Plan Review. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of comments received on the Issues and Scope consultation</li> <li>• An update of the evidence-based studies</li> <li>• The key challenges facing the Local Plan</li> <li>• Update on work to review specific Conservation Area Appraisals</li> </ul>
Recommendation	<p><b>It is recommended that Cabinet:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>i. notes the summary of comments and endorses the recommended responses to the issues and scope consultation</b></li> <li><b>ii. approves the revised Local Development Scheme for preparing the Local Plan Review</b></li> <li><b>iii. approves the scope of the Conservation Area Appraisal reviews and</b></li> <li><b>iv. notes the updates on the associated evidence base work.</b></li> </ul>
Reasons for recommendation	<p>We are required by law to have a local plan in place. Continuing with the preparation ensures compliance with statutory duties and avoids delays in housing, infrastructure, and development, this involves having a robust evidence base in place.</p> <p>It is important that as the Local Plan progresses that the issues of residents and stakeholders are taken on board and addressed.</p>

	<p>Having an up-to-date Local Development Scheme is a key requirement of legislation when preparing the Local Plan Review.</p> <p>Under Section 71 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 the council has a duty to formulate and publish policies for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas within the Plan Area.</p>
Ward(s)	All wards outside the National Park
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Derek Tipp – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy
Strategic Director	James Carpenter – Strategic Director for Place, Operations and Sustainability
Officer Contact	<p>Tim Guymer Assistant Director for Place Development <a href="mailto:tim.guymer@nfdc.gov.uk">tim.guymer@nfdc.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Dean Brunton Service Manager - Planning Policy, Infrastructure and Delivery <a href="mailto:dean.brunton@nfdc.gov.uk">dean.brunton@nfdc.gov.uk</a></p> <p>James Smith Planning Policy Team Leader <a href="mailto:james.smith@nfdc.gov.uk">james.smith@nfdc.gov.uk</a></p>

## Introduction

1. Cabinet approved a revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) in October 2024 setting out the planned work programme for the preparation of the Local Plan Review. At the time, this programme included:
  - Call for sites: October – December 2024
  - Consultation on a Local Plan review Issues and Scope document: February – March 2025
  - Proposed consultation on the draft Local Plan review: Autumn 2025.
2. The agreed LDS did not provide details of the complete work programme beyond Winter 2025/26.

3. This report highlights the work undertaken to date against this programme and sets out the way forward to progress the Local Plan work.

## **Background**

4. As previously reported, the Local Plan review is a major corporate project and requires the council to act collectively to meet its statutory and legal responsibilities.
5. In respect of the wider discussion on potential devolution and local government review, the Government has made it clear that local authorities should continue to ensure local plans are kept up to-date, and progress reviews of their local plans where they are not. To this end, the council was awarded circa £200k to progress the Local Plan work with an ambition to submit this for examination by December 2026.

## **Issues and Scope consultation**

6. The Issues and Scope consultation ran from 24 February 2025 to 4 April 2025. As well as meetings in person with a number of town and parish councils, other engagement activities included seven public exhibitions which approximately 200 members of the public attended plus the use of social media including short concise videos summarising the issues.
7. In total 124 representations were received. This marks a significant increase from when the same exercise was undertaken on the previous local plan where only 34 responses were received. Of the responses, 38% were received from residents of the district.
8. The following key themes and issues were frequently raised by respondents:
  - **Housing:** concerns were raised over the need for housing, particularly affordable housing. Additionally, there was a strong emphasis on the need to provide housing for locals and young people, particularly in the context of an ageing demographic
  - **Green space:** highlighting importance of access to local green space via public transport and active travel. The need for increased sports provision catering for all ages and genders was referenced. Additional sports pitches/courts and play areas were frequently suggested, in addition to the need for an even distribution throughout the district

- **Transport:** need for a joined up public transport network, linking various modes of transport. Frequency and reliability, particularly in smaller settlements, was a common theme
  - **Infrastructure:** the need for improved infrastructure provisions within the transport, healthcare, utilities, and education sectors were commonly noted, in addition to a desire to see increased recreational greenspace
  - **Climate change:** responses noted the need for flood risk management and mitigation, and the value of nature-based approaches to this. Sustainable drainage and tree planting were also frequently mentioned
  - **High Streets:** reduced business rates were a common suggestion, in addition to reducing vehicle traffic on high streets and suggested improvements to public realm
  - **Protecting the unique context of the New Forest:** throughout responses, there was a common theme of protecting what makes the area special including the National Park, Cranborne Chase National Landscape, historical environment, and local communities
9. Overall, many respondents indicated that a focus on housing need and provision ought to be a priority for this review. Particularly, the need for a mix of affordable housing, under both the NPPF definition of affordable housing and ensuring that housing was generally affordable for those wishing to purchase. Representations also sought that new housing is provided near employment and services. Tied to this, many respondents felt that there was a need to improve infrastructure, services, and facilities to support new development.
  10. Another common priority raised was ensuring that our natural environment is suitably protected in the context of new development. In addition to this, the need to prepare for, and mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change was also frequently raised by respondents.
  11. There was also a common theme raised by many that the needs of current local people and communities should be prioritised in the Local Plan Review. There was a strong consensus for the Plan to focus on town centre regeneration and development on brownfield sites before looking to greenfield (and Green Belt) sites.
  12. A number of statutory bodies also responded to the consultation, and the responses are summarised in the table below. It is important that officers continue with duty to cooperate meetings and enter into Statements of Common Grounds with these bodies over the coming



months to it ensure that the council and others work together on strategic, cross-boundary issues to create effective and sustainable policies.

<b>Statutory Body</b>	<b>Main themes raised in comment</b>
Natural England	Biodiversity and nature recovery, and the need for a strategic approach to this
National Highways	Infrastructure preceding large-scale growth and cumulative impacts
Environment Agency	Key topics included flood risk, groundwater resources, river basin and coastal management.
Historic England	Protection of historic assets and responding to climate change.
New Forest National Park Authority	Environmental mitigation, responding to climate change, and development impacts on NP character.
Other neighbouring local planning authorities	Unmet need, the importance of strong and collaborative cross-boundary working, and consideration of higher density development.
Town and parish councils	Key topics raised included affordable housing, healthy communities, town centre regeneration and infrastructure and service provision.

13. A number of key landowners also made comments on the plan and are engaging with the council to bring sites forward. Over the coming months, officers will engage with landowners to understand site aspirations and ambitions, although at this stage any negotiations will not necessarily mean that this will lead to a site allocation.
14. A detailed summary of the consultation carried out to date is attached to this report as appendix 1. This includes a summary of the activities carried out, the responses received and the recommended response to those issues. As the Local Plan progresses it will be important that the responses received are considered and that the plan can show how they have been addressed.

## **Update on evidence base and technical work**

### Evidence base

15. As previously reported, a full up-to-date, technical, and robust evidence base will need to be produced to inform the preparation of the Local Plan Review and to demonstrate that future policies, targets, and requirements are justified and deliverable.
16. Alongside the Issues and Scope consultation officers have been progressing several evidence base studies, which will be finalised over the next year. Evidence based studies that are currently being produced include housing needs assessment, Green Belt study and a Sustainability Appraisal. As studies are completed, they will be published on the council's website as part of the evidence base document library.

## **Revised Local Development Scheme**

17. The current LDS, setting out the planned work programme for the preparation of the Local Plan Review, was agreed in October 2024 and states that the "Council intends to hold an early consultation in early 2025 on the issues the Local Plan review should cover and its scope. This will be followed by consultation on a full draft of the Local Plan review in Autumn 2025".
18. Since the publication of the LDS, there has been significant policy changes from the Government relation to the planning system, identifying and addressing housing need and wider devolution and local government reorganisation.
19. Given the above, it is considered necessary to prepare a revised work programme as set out below. This work programme will continue to be kept under review as work progresses on local government reorganisation.
20. This revised programme recommends a further consultation in late 2025) seeking views and feedback on different spatial growth and policy options. This high-level consultation, provided for under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012, would not be a full detailed local plan (which is not an absolute requirement at Regulation 18 stage). The consultation will be on a more general document, with areas of potential growth being illustrated on high level maps with limited, if any preference on any one area.
21. These spatial options will be formed based on the submissions to the call for sites in late 2024 and early 2025, further officer-led research and Sustainability Appraisal work.

22. In terms of the policy direction, this will focus on the emerging themes and principles that will shape the detailed planning policies in the Local Plan. At this stage, the council will not be finalising policies but rather seeking feedback on the direction they should take.
23. This revised programme still allows for a consultation on the Regulation 19 plan, which is the final draft of the plan that the council intends to submit to the Secretary of State for independent examination, in Autumn 2026 ready for submission by the end of 2026.

### **Options Appraisal**

24. Other options, including that of continuing with the currently approved Local Development Scheme, have been considered. However, but due to the significant amount of work that is required to respond to the challenges identified above, this is now considered unrealistic.

### **Conservation Area appraisal review**

25. **Heritage assets** are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner that is appropriate to their significance so that they can be used and enjoyed for future generations. Conservation area appraisals are a useful tool that can be used to understand and manage change within areas defined for their heritage assets.
26. There are 22 conservation areas in the New Forest Plan Area. They range from a small farmstead to larger areas of more than a square mile. Our conservation areas include historic town centres such as Lymington and Ringwood, and whole villages in the Avon Valley and Downland areas.
27. Some of the appraisals were prepared some time ago and need to be reviewed to ensure continued compliance with current national and local policies, plans, and guidance.
28. As assessment of the current conservation areas in the Plan Area has been carried out by officers and is set out in Appendix 3. The assessment considers the time since the area was last reviewed, recent and potential future development, and management pressures leading to possible changes to the character and appearance of the conservation areas and their setting.

29. Following this assessment, the two areas that scored the highest (and therefore most in need of review) are Eling and Breamore.
30. These initial reviews are proposed to be undertaken internally by the council's conservation team and are anticipated to take approximately 8 months to prepare.

### **Corporate plan priorities**

31. The Corporate Plan 2024-28 outlines the vision, values, and priorities for the council over the next three years.
32. The vision of the Corporate Plan is to secure a better future by supporting opportunities for the people and communities we serve, protecting our unique and special place and securing a vibrant and prosperous New Forest. This has been organised into the thematic areas of People, Place and Prosperity. The local plan aligns with all the objectives of the Corporate Plan and the recent Issues and Scope consultation document was drafted by grouping together the various topics under the headings of the Corporate Plan.

### **Consultation undertaken**

33. Within the council, the Local Plan Member Working group continues to meet and has actively engaged in discussions on the key issues and updates on the evidence base studies. An officer working group also meets to discuss key issues and emerging findings. Externally, there are also regular meetings with adjoining authorities and key partners to discuss planning matters relevant to plan making, including cross boundary issues such as development needs.

### **Financial and resource implications**

34. In February 2025, Cabinet approved an initial budget of £700k for the Local Plan Review which is being used for evidence-based studies. In early 2025, the council were additionally awarded £70k towards undertaking a Green Belt study and £227k towards progressing the Local Plan in the current system by December 2026.
35. The timetable for this submission is tight and the team are likely to rely on external consultants to undertake some of the background work and policy writing where possible.

### **Legal implications**

36. None. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004 provides the legislative framework which requires that councils should prepare a local plan and keep it up to date.

37. Under Section 71 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 the council has a duty to formulate and publish policies for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas within the district. Additionally, under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the council has a duty to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. Such proposals include conservation area appraisals and management plans. It is expected that the council will consult when the proposals are at a draft stage in line with best practice and as outlined in the 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' by Historic England.

### **Risk assessment**

38. None.

### **Environmental / Climate and nature implications**

39. An up-to-date Local Plan is essential if the council is to stay in control of the planning of its area and ensure a high-quality environment.

### **Equalities implications**

40. None directly from this report

### **Crime and disorder implications**

41. None directly from this report

### **Data protection/ Information governance/ ICT implications**

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

### **New Forest National Park/ Cranborne Chase National Landscape implications**

43. The New Forest National Park Authority are required to produce and review their own local plan. The timetable proposed by this council is broadly in line with that of the National Park Authority. Where possible the council is looking to maximise opportunities for joint working on evidence studies.
44. There were no specific implications identified in the recent Issues and Scope consultation document for the Cranborne Chase National Landscape. However, as part of the further preparation of the Local Plan, the council will need to consider how the Local Plan will further the purposes of the National Landscape.

## **Conclusion**

45. The Local Plan Review is being undertaken at a time of profound change for the planning system, particularly in relation to the provision of housing and devolution. However, the government is clear with its continued commitment to the plan-led system and expectation that plans will be delivered quickly.
46. The revised timetable enables the council to move forward quickly to ensure that it can maintain an up-to-date local plan, aligning with other projects and allowing more time later in the process to prepare a sound Plan.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Summary of responses from Statutory Consultees

Appendix 2 – Revised Local Development Scheme

Appendix 3 – Conservation area appraisal review

### **Background Papers:**

None



# Issues and Scope Regulation 18 Consultation Summary Statement

New Forest District Council

(outside the National Park)

August 2025

## Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
What we consulted on .....	3
How we consulted.....	3
Document distributions.....	3
Letters sent to.....	4
2. Consultation drop-in events .....	6
Overview of events .....	6
Summary of issues raised at events .....	6
3. Online Questionnaire.....	13
Introduction .....	13
Responses received.....	13
Response breakdown.....	13
Common themes and issues raised.....	14
Most commonly responded to questions .....	15
Main focus .....	16
Development strategy suggestions .....	17
Housing need and provision.....	17
Infrastructure.....	18
Health and wellbeing .....	19
Key transport issues.....	20
High Streets.....	20
Open spaces .....	21
Responding to climate change .....	22
New Forest National Park .....	23
Appendix 1: Responses from main Statutory Agencies, Neighbouring Authorities and Town and Parish Councils .....	24
Appendix 2: Responses from Infrastructure Providers.....	32
Appendix 3: Summary of Regulation 18 Issues & Scope Consultation Responses by Question .....	39



# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document outlines a summary of the consultation process undertaken by the Council for the Issues and Scope Consultation. It also sets out a summary of the consultation responses and how the Council will respond to the issues raised.

## What we consulted on

- 1.2. As part of its local plan review, the Council produced and consulted on an Issues and Scope consultation. This is the initial phase of a local plan review, where residents and stakeholders are invited to identify and discuss the key challenges and the scope of what will be in the local plan. It is a crucial step to ensure everyone is on the same page regarding the problems to be addressed and the extent of the project's focus.

## How we consulted

- 1.3. A public consultation ran from Monday 17 February 2025 until Friday 4 April 2025. The Issues and Scope Consultation Document and all consultation process information were published on the NFDC website, with an online survey being available through the GoVocal platform. Furthermore, the consultation was advertised extensively both online and in hardcopy forms such as local newspapers and posters in libraries. In accordance with our Statement of Community Involvement, all consultees listed in Appendix 1 as well as those signed up to our Local Plan contacts database were directly informed of the consultation period and process by email.

## Document distributions

- 1.4. Documents were sent to:
- local libraries:
    - Fordingbridge
    - Ringwood
    - New Milton

- Milford-on-sea
- Lymington
- Hythe
- Totton
- New Forest District Council **Community hubs**:
  - Calshot (St Georges Hall)
  - Fordingbridge (Avonway community Centre)
  - New Milton (Nedderman Centre)
  - Pennington (St Marks Community Hall)
  - Totton (Testwood Baptist Church)

## Letters sent to

- 1.5. Letters were sent in accordance with our Statement of Community Involvement to the consultees listed in appendix 1 of that document.
- 1.6. Separate letters were also sent to the main infrastructure providers on 20th February 2025 requesting information regarding the current provision and capacity of key infrastructure services they provide within the New Forest District. The infrastructure providers contacted were:
  - National Highways,
  - Hampshire County Council – Highways
  - National Grid
  - Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN)
  - National Gas
  - Southern Gas Networks (SGN)
  - Wessex Water
  - Southern Water
  - Bournemouth Water
  - British Telecoms (BT)
  - Cornerstone (Mobile and digital infrastructure provider)
  - Mobile UK

- Mobile Broadband Network Limited (MBNL)
- Go South Coast
- Network Rail
- South Western Railway (SWR)
- NHS Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- Hampshire County Council – Education

1.7. A summary of the key issues raised, and responses received can be seen in the 'Appendix 2: Responses from Infrastructure Providers' section.

## 2. Consultation drop-in events

### Overview of events

- 2.1. During the consultation a series of drop-in events were held at the following locations:

26 Feb	Fordingbridge	Avonway Community Centre, SP6 1JF
27 Feb	Lymington	Lymington Community Centre, SO41 9BQ
28 Feb	Hythe & Dibden	St Andrews Church, Dibden Purlieu, SO45 4PT
3 March	New Milton	New Milton Memorial Centre, BH25 6DE
4 March	Totton	West Totton Community Centre, SO40 8WU
5 March	Marchwood	Marchwood Hub – Lloyds Recreation Ground, SO40 4SX
7 March	Ringwood	Greyfriars Community Centre, BH24 1DW

- 2.2. Each event was represented by 4 members of the policy and plans team and consisted of 6 exhibition boards, leaflets with contact details and print outs of constraint maps. The events were advertised by a press release, articles in the Bournemouth and Southern Echo, social media and the Council's resident email newsletter. Social media posts were repeated during the period of drop in events.

### Summary of issues raised at events

#### Fordingbridge

- 2.3. The event was attended by approx. 65 people.
- 2.4. Comments were largely general relating to:
- Fordingbridge having had its share of development in recent years
  - the need for a supermarket

- need to improve roads in particular (some referred to the High Street and Station Road in particular)
- devolution / local government reorganisation, and the impact that will have on the local plan
- general concern regarding the quality of recent development surrounding Fordingbridge and desire to see high quality in any future development
- a recognition of education facilities and the catchment boundaries skewing a need figure (i.e. Fordingbridge schools with Wiltshire children)
- how the Neighbourhood Plan can work alongside the local plan
- the new homes being built in Fordingbridge are too expensive for young people – i.e. the need for more affordable homes.
- a need for rejuvenation of the High Street, and concerns surrounding the seemingly high turnover of retail space.
- a lack of spaces for teenagers and youth clubs.

## Lymington

2.5. The event was attended by approx. 75 people.

2.6. Comments were largely general relating to:

- devolution / local government reorganisation, and the impact that will have on the local plan
- new homes being built in Lymington are too expensive for young people – i.e. the need for more affordable homes.
- how policies (and supporting evidence on viability, etc.) can be robust enough to ensure new homes provided meet local needs (primarily younger first times buyers and family housing) and the appropriate amount of affordable housing can be delivered
- how plan-making can ensure developers do what they are required to (e.g., related to the bridge at Lymington Shores)

- a perception that too many retirement homes being built in the area
- a need to improve roads near the south coast towns
- concerns over a lack of cycling routes and footpaths, particularly adjacent to roads
- concerns surrounding second home ownership and the impact this is having on the community and local economy
- a recognition of the need to use brownfield sites and vacant buildings effectively/to their full potential
- The Solent Freeport and implications of it for the area
- curiosity about what is green belt and what is grey belt while understanding it is needed for new homes (particularly affordable homes).

## Hythe and Dibden

2.7. The event was attended by approx. 60 people.

2.8. Comments were largely general relating to:

- devolution / local government reorganisation, and the impact that will have on the local plan
- concerns over the Home Farm site and the impact that it would bring (including construction traffic and any country park) should a planning application be submitted and granted.
- concerns over the impact of the Rolleston Road application should it be granted permission
- queries over the next steps for the Fawley Waterside development
- the need to improve roads and uncertainty of success of A326 works.
- a desire to use brownfield sites and vacant buildings effectively/to their full potential
- curiosity about what is green belt and what is grey belt

- a desire to see Hythe Ferry continue
- clarification sought over the jurisdictions of National Park / NFDC areas
- concerns over the limited provisions for Active Travel and how NFDC can work with Hampshire County Council to improve safety and provision.

## New Milton

- 2.9. The event was attended by approx. 45 people.
- 2.10. Comments were largely general relating to:
- devolution / local government reorganisation, and the impact that will have on the local plan
  - the need to improve roads particularly around the Hordle area
  - reliance on new and existing development using the narrow roads in the New Forest National Park to the north of New Milton.
  - concern that further growth in the south coastal towns will lead to increased traffic north across the New Forest National Park
  - a desire to use brownfield sites over greenfield sites
  - a desire for NFDC to build more affordable homes (directly)
  - a need for more homes to be affordable for younger people in particular.
  - concerns surrounding the potential release of land from the Green Belt and whether this would affect designated habitat sites.

## Totton

- 2.11. The event was attended by approx. 30 people.
- 2.12. Comments were largely general relating to:
- discussion around surface water flooding after heavy rainfall and concern that the same issues will happen on new development

- devolution / local government reorganisation, and the impact that will have on the local plan, and also the role of Parish Councils
- how the Neighbourhood Plans can be developed alongside our Local Plan review
- a need for more homes to be affordable for younger people and families in particular.
- ensuring infrastructure provision such as Doctors' Surgeries and School Places is in step with housing development
- several attendees noted the need to be more ambitious in addressing climate change, specifically energy use in built development e.g. Photovoltaic energy and space heating requirements.
- the need for significant improvements to the A326 if new development is consented.
- general questions about the policies covering Dibden Bay and Fawley oil refinery, and the current situation/future regarding those areas.
- the future of the former Fawley Power Station site.

## Marchwood

- 2.13. The event was attended by approx. 25 people.
- 2.14. Comments were largely general relating to:
- discussion around a lack of public transport in the Marchwood area, notably a lack of regular buses.
  - devolution / local government reorganisation, and the impact that will have on the local plan.
  - concerns over a lack of infrastructure to support the new development, particularly an increase in vehicular traffic, and the current lack of a GP surgery in Marchwood.



- concerns over the success of the recent A326 works (including the 'bus gate'), which have not been felt to improve the traffic. Speed of traffic also a concern, especially HGVs.
- a need for a range of housing, including retirement housing in the area.
- general questions regarding the evidence base for the Local Plan, particularly with regards to the impact that new development may have on flooding, archaeology, and transport.

## Ringwood

2.15. The event was attended by approx. 45 people.

2.16. Comments were largely general relating to:

- support for consulting with the community at this stage of Local Plan review.
- concerns over a lack of infrastructure to support the new development, particularly an increase in vehicular traffic,
- concerns over the success of the recent Snails Lane and Moortown Lane planning applications and the appropriateness of those allocations.
- comments and concerns on the Bransgore strategic site development and how it will impact the existing village.
- a need for a range of housing to support the local economy and how the local plan can work with the Town Council to develop a new identity for the town for the future.
- general questions regarding the evidence base for the Local Plan, particularly with regards to the impact that new development may have on flooding, archaeology, and transport.
- concerns that the Ringwood Neighbourhood Plan isn't taken into account when making planning decisions, particularly around strategic sites.
- concerns as to the frequency of buses to and from the Bransgore area.

- questions about how to submit a site for inclusion in the local plan and how the overall local plan process works.
- general questions regarding the questions being asked and how to access the survey.
- how the Local Plan relates to the Community Infrastructure Levy and how it can support local infrastructure needs.

## 3. Online Questionnaire

### Introduction

- 3.1. A questionnaire was created comprising of 50 questions on topics discussed within the Issues & Scope Document. Respondents were encouraged to complete the questionnaire via GoVocal, the online platform used by the Council.
- 3.2. Several respondents completed the questionnaire offline and submitted this to the Council via email. All responses received across GoVocal and via email were collated and reviewed, and key issues raised within each response were summarised.
- 3.3. The Issues & Scope Document additionally contained a glossary of terms, which respondents could refer to whilst completing the questionnaire, where using technical language in the documents and corresponding questions was unavoidable.

### Responses received

- 3.4. In total, we received 134 responses via both GoVocal (79) and email (55). Of those received via email, 10 responses were either duplicates of submissions made on GoVocal; statements confirming that a GoVocal submission had been made; or providing additional detail to their submitted GoVocal responses (which were subsequently added to the original response). Therefore, a total of 124 unique responses were received.
- 3.5. Many, though not all, of the responses received via email were in the form of statements.

### Response breakdown

- 3.6. The following outlines a breakdown of the 124 responses received via both GoVocal and Email. Please note, percentages have been rounded and therefore may not total 100%:

- 38% of responses (47 out of 124 responses) were received from local residents;
- 25% of respondents were from developers, landowners, agents (31 out of 124 responses, of whom 27 were promoting land for development).
- almost 15% of respondents (18 out of 124 responses) were from representatives from the County Council, Planning Authorities, and Town & Parish Councils;
- around 9% of responses (11 out of 124 responses) were from representatives from Utilities / Infrastructure / Service providers;
- 8% of responses (10 out of 124 responses) were received from representatives from environmental interest organisations (both natural and historic environment)
- around 6% of responses (7 out of 124 responses) were from Local Interest / Community Groups.

## Common themes and issues raised

3.7. The following key themes and issues were frequently raised by both GoVocal and Email respondents:

- housing: concerns were raised over the need for housing, particularly affordable housing, both market and social. Additionally, there was a strong emphasis on the need to provide housing for locals and young people, particularly in the context of an aging demographic.
- green space: access to local green space via public transport and active travel. The need for increased sports provision catering for all ages and genders. Additional sports pitches/courts and play areas were frequently suggested, in addition to the need for an even distribution throughout the District.

- transport: need for a joined up public transport network, linking various modes of transport. Frequency and reliability, particularly in smaller settlements, was a common theme.
- infrastructure: the need for improved infrastructure provisions within the transport, healthcare, utilities and education sectors were commonly noted, in addition to a desire to see increased recreational greenspace.
- climate change: responses largely noted the need for flood risk management and mitigation, and the value of nature-based approaches to this. Sustainable drainage and tree planting were also frequently mentioned.
- High Streets: reduced business rates was a common suggestion, in addition to reducing vehicle traffic on high streets and the addition of benches and trees to improve overall aesthetic and attraction.
- protecting the unique context of the New Forest: throughout responses, there was a common theme of protecting what makes the area special including the National Park, Cranborne Chase National Landscape, historical environment, and local communities.

## Most commonly responded to questions

3.8. The following 6 questions were the most responded to on GoVocal, receiving 50 or more responses each:

- Q10: Do you have any comments on our housing need and how it can be met?
- Q1: What would you like to see as our main focus for our review?
- Q18: What are the key infrastructure priorities that need to be delivered and how can they best be delivered?
- Q5: In seeking to meet our identified development needs, what should our strategy be?

- Q25: How do you think we should work towards achieving net zero?
- Q49: How can our planning policies help make you, and our communities, travel by the sustainable modes of walking, cycling and public transport?

## Main focus

- 3.9. The majority of respondents indicated that a focus on housing need and provision ought to be a priority for this review. Particularly, the need for affordable housing of both market and social varieties was raised as well as the need to have housing in close proximity to employment and services. Tied to this, many respondents felt that there was a need to improve infrastructure, services and facilities to support new development.
- 3.10. Another common priority raised was the issue of environmental preservation and ensuring that our natural environment is protected in the context of new development. In addition to this, the need to prepare for, and mitigate and adapt to the effects of Climate Change was also frequently raised by respondents.
- 3.11. The quality of life and wellbeing of current residents was also proposed as being the main focus of the review. There was a strong consensus for the Plan to focus on town centre regeneration and development on brownfield sites before looking to greenfield and greenbelt sites.

## Development strategy suggestions

- 3.12. Many respondents felt that brownfield sites and infill sites should be prioritised for development, particularly those located in town centres. While there were some negative views of development on greenfield sites, respondents were broadly accepting of the need for it in some cases. A minority of respondents strongly advocated for developing greenfield sites. Respondents generally felt that any new development should be located where there was existing suitable infrastructure and transport, or where this would be provided.
- 3.13. There was a variety of suggestions as to what types of housing and development were best but common themes were the need for affordable housing as well as the need to provide homes accessible and desirable for young people.
- 3.14. Several respondents suggested a stronger policy framework in relation to the implementation of infrastructure, such that any agreed provision be implemented prior to occupation, particularly in larger developments that have a greater impact on existing services.

## Housing need and provision

- 3.15. Concerns were expressed regarding the government's housing need methodology, particularly for this area, with many respondents feeling that the target was unrealistic and would be detrimental to the area. Tied to this, several respondents advocated for calculating housing need on a local or community basis to ensure best provision for each individual area.

- 3.16. Diverse types of affordable housing were called for across the majority of respondents. There was an identified need among respondents for both forms of affordable social housing, including council housing and social rent, as well as cheaper market homes which could cater to young people and families. It was felt that there was a gap when it comes to affordable market homes with there being instances of only very expensive or social housing being offered. There was also general concern that local people were being priced out of the market and that the issue of second home ownership contributed to this problem.
- 3.17. Demographically, many respondents felt that there was a lack of housing provision for young people, including 1-2 bed houses and centrally located flats. They felt this contributed to people moving away and the aging demographic of many NFDC areas. Due to the aging population, many respondents also indicated that accessible accommodation for older residents should be provided. Respondents felt that mixed demographics would support the vibrancy of local communities.
- 3.18. Respondents differed on whether higher or lower density development was preferred. However, many agreed that it should be determined on a site-by-site basis and that the provision of green space was essential to all development, particularly that of higher density.

## Infrastructure

- 3.19. A large number of respondents expressed concerns over infrastructure capacity for existing settlements which would be stretched even further by future development. Key priorities were identified as follows:
- transport: improved road networks, public transport, cycleways and footpaths were identified as infrastructure needs. This was tied to a need to better integrate these transport modes.
  - healthcare: there was an overwhelming sentiment among respondents for more GPs and NHS local services including dentists.



- education: concerns regarding there being sufficient school places to support new development were raised.
- utilities: concerns over wastewater treatment and drainage were raised, particularly in relation to flooding and water quality concerns. Additionally, a minority of respondents expressed concerns relating to electricity provision.
- recreational facilities: many respondents expressed concern that there aren't sufficient sports, leisure centre, and swimming pool provisions. In some cases, this was also tied to accessibility, affordability and gender imbalance concerns.

## Health and wellbeing

- 3.20. Many respondents felt that health and wellbeing could be best supported by better active travel networks integrated with green spaces, as this not only improves health and wellbeing, but overall quality of life. This was tied to the provision of free outside gyms and undercover activities that were accessible for all ages, in addition to more affordable access to health and leisure centres. It was also noted by many respondents that enhanced provision of safe active travel infrastructure will have a positive impact on health and wellbeing across the District and reduce the pressures on existing healthcare services.
- 3.21. Some respondents suggested having frequent outside seating, particularly in town centres and coastal paths, which could encourage those with mobility challenges to try to walk more.
- 3.22. Another common theme was that of increased social interaction with respondents suggesting community hubs with good public transport access and community gardens.
- 3.23. There was also a general call for more doctors, NHS dentists, and minor injuries surgeries.

## Key transport issues

- 3.24. Many respondents noted the need for a reliable and frequent public transport network serving smaller settlements in addition to the larger towns. The need for a joined-up network was also raised by many respondents, particularly in relation to efficient links between different modes of public transport. A common suggestion amongst respondents was the introduction of minibuses to serve smaller settlements where traditional buses are not viable. Many suggested a 'dial-a-bus' type system could be beneficial to the area, particularly in the hard to reach areas.
- 3.25. Of particular note, were the transport challenges facing residents in the Waterside area, particularly the ceasing of the ferry service between Hythe and Southampton, in addition to the absence of railway services on the Waterside line. Respondents felt that reinstating these services would open up more opportunities for employment for Waterside residents and provide greater connectivity to larger towns and cities.
- 3.26. Active travel provision was highlighted by many respondents, emphasising the need for safe and efficient cycleways and safer pedestrian crossings. It was additionally flagged by respondents that provision for disabled residents and those using adapted cycles were not mentioned in relation to transport and active travel.
- 3.27. It was also questioned whether development should be considered where it is found that existing roads/pavements cannot be adapted to accommodate increased traffic. It was suggested that development proposals should be required to demonstrate from the offset as being able to provide sustainable transport solutions to the nearest facilities such as shops and schools.

## High Streets

- 3.28. In relation to High Streets and the ways in which these can be rejuvenated, a large proportion of respondents believe that business rates are too high, and this is driving small and independent businesses away.

- 3.29. It was suggested by many respondents that tree-lining High Streets would make them more attractive to visitors, in addition to having widely accepted benefits for health and wellbeing, and also for the environment. Improvement to the street scene and general feel of High Streets could also be achieved by introducing additional benches and seating areas, and by increased attention to maintenance and upkeep.
- 3.30. It was also suggested by several respondents that reducing traffic travelling down High Streets during peak hours, or even pedestrianising in some areas, would encourage more people to spend time in these centres.
- 3.31. Conversely, many respondents have indicated that a lack of free parking in town centres has discouraged residents from visiting and spending time there.
- 3.32. Some respondents have suggested introducing a limit on the number of shops serving similar purposes, e.g. multiple charity shops or barbers. Suggestion to identify gaps in provision and encourage businesses accordingly to better shape what the High Street has to offer.
- 3.33. Town centre regeneration was another key issue raised by respondents.

## Open spaces

- 3.34. The provision of green and open space was considered an important factor of development by the majority of respondents, with many supporting the Council's suggestion in the Corporate Plan for a new Country Park. The need for open space to be accessible by public transport and active travel opportunities was also highlighted, with many noting that green spaces are currently not accessible for all people. It was suggested by many respondents that safe open spaces be provided within all new development, with their size being proportionate to the development, to ensure that everyone has access to open space without the need to travel long distances.

- 3.35. The need for increased provision for sports activities was highlighted by many respondents, in particular sports pitches, sports courts and play areas to appeal to all ages and genders. The creation of 4G sports pitches was also suggested to allow sports to continue in wet weather, which is ever-increasing in frequency in the face of climate change.
- 3.36. Accessibility and connectivity of green spaces was also of particular importance to respondents, particularly via active travel modes.
- 3.37. Provision of greenspace was also raised as a means through which the National Park could be protected and recreational impacts on sensitive habitats be mitigated, particularly from dog-walking. Several respondents suggested the provision of secure dog parks throughout the District, in addition to dog-free areas.

## Responding to climate change

- 3.38. The majority of respondents acknowledged the need to respond to climate change and raised several key issues for the Council's consideration.
- 3.39. Flood mitigation and adaptation were common themes throughout the responses, with many respondents concerned with development on flood plains. The need for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) was highlighted by many respondents, in addition to nature-based solutions for flood risk mitigation. Additional green space in new developments to enable sufficient natural drainage of rain and surface water has also been suggested. In coastal areas, coastline management and protection of existing floodplains was noted.
- 3.40. Building design was a common thread in the responses, with many suggestions for increased insulation and solar panels on all suitable roofs. Further to this, it was suggested by many that solar panels become a mandated requirement on all new developments coming forward.
- 3.41. Tree planting was also frequently suggested, with mutual benefits for both climate change and human health.

- 3.42. It was considered by some respondents that the current adopted Local Plan does not reflect the Climate Emergency declared by the Council, and that the new Local Plan should seek to address this. It was suggested that the Council develop a Climate Change policy that goes beyond the national requirement.

## New Forest National Park

- 3.43. Respondents were largely in agreement that the National Park should be protected and enhanced as far as possible, with stronger policies within the Local Plan to facilitate this. It was felt by some respondents that a more joined-up approach is needed between NFDC and the National Park Authority to ensure that the potentially extensive development required within NFDC's Plan Area does not adversely impact the National Park or its sensitive habitats and wildlife.
- 3.44. Suggestions were made for a physical buffer between the National Park boundary and new development, greater emphasis on the protection of the Green Belt, and the introduction of wildlife corridors. Provision of sufficient, accessible alternative greenspace of varying sizes within NFDC's Plan Area was frequently suggested as a means through which to protect the National Park and mitigate recreational impact on sensitive habitats.
- 3.45. It was noted by some respondents that the National Park is outside the Plan Area and therefore should not be viewed as a direct constraint, however there is a need to be considerate when allocating development to prevent a decline in the character of the National Park.

## Appendix 1: Responses from main Statutory Agencies, Neighbouring Authorities and Town and Parish Councils

- 1.1. The following table presents a summary of the responses received from main statutory consultees. Whilst the below is not a comprehensive summary, it outlines the key issues raised.
- 1.2. It is noted that, of New Forest District Council's neighbouring local planning authorities, responses were received from Southampton City Council, Test Valley Borough Council, Dorset Council and New Forest National Park Authority. The neighbouring local planning authorities who did not provide a formal response to the Regulation 18 Issues and Scope consultation are Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, Wiltshire Council, Eastleigh Borough Council and Isle of Wight Council.

Organisation	Key issues raised
Natural England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Natural England (NE) is of the view that a strategic approach to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment be outlined within the Local Plan, including providing a net gain for biodiversity, and considering opportunities to enhance and improve connectivity.</li> <li>- NE believes that the Local Plan should be underpinned by up-to-date evidence including an assessment of existing and potential components of local ecological networks, in addition to a consideration of the roles performed by the area's soils.</li> </ul>

Organisation	Key issues raised
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NE considers that green space is fundamental for health and wellbeing and as such nature-based interventions should be considered, noting mutual benefits for the environment and the wellbeing of communities.</li> <li>- Biodiversity and nature recovery are key priorities raised throughout NE's response, and a strategic approach for networks of biodiversity is encouraged, akin to the approach taken for Green Infrastructure.</li> <li>- NE expects the Plan to identify a coastal change management area, noting inevitable sea level rise and coastal change, which will bring challenges for both society and the environment.</li> </ul>
Environment Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Environment Agency (EA) has emphasised the need to have conversations with water companies who provide water supply and wastewater services as part of the Plan process, and prior to allocating sites for development. The EA also recommends that River Basin Management Plans be recognised within the Plan and used as part of the evidence base.</li> <li>- The EA was pleased to see that Flood Risk is acknowledged as a key issue within the Issues &amp; Scope Document, and recommends that appropriate flood protection, resilience and resistance measures could form part of a policy requirement.</li> <li>- The EA has noted a preference for development within Flood Zone 1.</li> </ul>

Organisation	Key issues raised
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The EA notes that protection of groundwater resources is not mentioned within the Issues &amp; Scope Document, and recommends that suitable assessments of contamination risks from historic land uses be a policy requirement for new allocations. The EA would also like to see the Hurst Spit to Lymington Flood and Coastal Risk Management Strategy mentioned within the Plan.</li> <li>- On policy development, the EA has recommended that Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) policies should encompass explicit reference to the aquatic environment and the role BNG can play in improving water quality, water resources, flood protection and other benefits by management of rivers and wetlands. The EA also recommends a consideration of whether to include a specific policy seeking conservation and enhancement of rivers and watercourses.</li> </ul>
Historic England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Historic England (HE) believes that historic assets should be protected, and that the Local Plan should clearly specify natural environment from historic environment to ensure clarity.</li> <li>- HE has recommended that the Council should consider preparing a high-level characterisation study for areas earmarked for growth.</li> <li>- HE believes that re-use of existing buildings should be considered as this can make an important contribution to the District's carbon emissions.</li> <li>- HE encourages a proportionate heritage impact assessment be carried out when determining whether a site is suitable for development.</li> </ul>



Organisation	Key issues raised
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HE provided comments in relation to addressing risks to coastal heritage including accounting for coastal erosion.</li> </ul>
New Forest National Park Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA) urged the Council to consider the setting of any new developments and the impact this may have on the National Park. The proximity of new development to the National Park boundary was raised as a concern.</li> <li>- NFNPA encouraged the Council to fully assess higher density development in the District's more urban settlements.</li> <li>- NFNPA encouraged the Council to develop a climate change policy that goes beyond the statutory requirement.</li> <li>- The NFNPA highlighted the opportunities to expand the relationship between the Plan Area and the National Park, noting the benefits of the natural environment in fostering health and wellbeing.</li> <li>- The NFNPA strongly encourages the Council to deliver additional mitigation within the New Forest's designated sites.</li> <li>- The need for joint working and continued cooperation was noted by NFNPA, particularly in relation to the former Fawley Power Station site.</li> </ul>
Southampton City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Southampton City Council (SCC) agrees that the housing need is great and therefore recommends that the Local Plan should seek to address as much of the housing target as possible.</li> <li>- SCC welcomes the updated Green Belt study and notes that a Grey Belt approach will need to be considered.</li> </ul>

Organisation	Key issues raised
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SCC recommends that opportunities for higher density housing delivery should be sought, such as in town centres, near train stations, and along other key transport routes.</li> <li>- SCC states that collaborative working between the two councils should continue to help address cross-boundary issues.</li> </ul>
Winchester City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Winchester City Council (WCC) has advised the Council of the need to demonstrate to the Inspector that a 'no stone left unturned' approach has been taken in regard to meeting housing need.</li> <li>- WCC notes that options for restricting second home ownership will need to be fully explored before the Council ask neighbouring authorities to help with their unmet need.</li> <li>- WCC notes that in their experience, increasing Biodiversity Net Gain above the statutory 10% is likely to be challenging.</li> </ul>
Dorset Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dorset Council (DC) believes that greater recognition of some cross-boundary issues is needed, noting that identification of areas adjacent to or across boundaries offer opportunities for strategic approaches that can help improve the sustainability of both communities.</li> <li>- DC is eager to resume Duty to Cooperate meetings as both councils work to prepare their new Local Plans.</li> <li>- DC notes the importance of ensuring any new development sited on the edges of the New Forest District and on the border with Dorset are well-connected and served by both public and active travel provisions.</li> </ul>

Organisation	Key issues raised
Test Valley Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Test Valley has encouraged the Council to assess all opportunities to maximise housing supply from all sources including Green Belt and high-density housing to meet as much of the identified need as possible.</li> </ul>
Hampshire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A 'Health into All Policies (HiAP) approach to Local Plans in Hampshire is recommended.</li> <li>- HCC supports a joined-up approach between land use and transport planning to help create opportunities to provide development in locations that are, or can be, supported by sustainable transport connections.</li> <li>- HCC considers that increased densification of existing built-up areas should be prioritised for development.</li> <li>- HCC encourages NFDC to include a greater link to climate change and health within policy and consider the co-benefits of policies that tackle health and climate ambitions.</li> <li>- HCC advocates for active travel though notes investment will likely be largely through s106 and CIL contributions.</li> <li>- HCC notes the absence of reference to waste prevention and minimisation and/or material re-use within the Issues &amp; Scope document.</li> <li>- HCC notes that the value of public transport and in particular bus transport should not be underrepresented in potential solutions to connectivity across the District and policies to support this infrastructure would be encouraged.</li> </ul>
Ringwood Town Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ringwood Town Council notes that the housing target is unrealistic and there is a need for provision of cheaper market housing.</li> </ul>

Organisation	Key issues raised
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Town Council wishes to see the Green Belt protected.</li> <li>- Ringwood-specific issues were raised, including concerns surrounding the impact on the Ringwood Neighbourhood Plan.</li> </ul>
New Milton Town Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New Milton Town Council (NMTC) considers that brownfield development and town centre regeneration should be prioritised, and have suggested that the Council consider compulsory purchase of brownfield sites where proportionate.</li> <li>- NMTC has suggested that housing sites use quick-build systems to remedy the housing issues more efficiently. Further, NMTC believes that affordable housing should prioritise modern, modular buildings on specifically earmarked sites, for 1 and/or 2-bedroom properties.</li> <li>- NMTC advocated for greater emphasis to be placed on actively planting an abundance of native species on every new development, from residential extensions to strategic sites.</li> <li>- NMTC has suggested that the Council map and protect backup grazing land to prevent further loss of this resource.</li> <li>- NMTC believes that green space should be easy to access by active travel modes and, where appropriate, benches and bins should be provided. NMTC further considers that a new country park and/or larger play destination is needed in the south coast sub-area.</li> </ul>

Organisation	Key issues raised
Fordingbridge Town Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It was considered by Fordingbridge Town Council (FTC) that the adopted Local Plan lacks consideration for the overall future vision for Fordingbridge and that the new Local Plan should seek to address this, taking account of current and future development, and development that is permitted but not yet commenced.</li> <li>- FTC notes that a proportionate increase in infrastructure and services is needed to align with increased development.</li> <li>- FTC notes that brownfield and grey belt sites should play an increased role, particularly for higher density development.</li> <li>- FTC notes the need for affordable homes for young people.</li> <li>- FTC's neighbourhood plan is being prepared with a similar timeline to the Local Plan.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2: Responses from Infrastructure Providers

- 2.1 Responses were received from infrastructure providers in two ways. Providers responded formally via the Regulation 18 Issues and Scope Consultation, and/or provided a response following the letters sent on 20th February 2025. Summaries of the key issues raised by infrastructure providers are provided below. For ease of interpretation, the type of response provided by each provider has been indicated.
- 2.2 **National Highways** provided a statement of comments on the Regulation 18 Issues & Scope document. They consider that the Local Plan must provide the policy framework to ensure development cannot progress without appropriate infrastructure being in place. They have also advised that as infrastructure improvements on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) should be a last resort, proposed growth will need to be considered in the context of the cumulative impact from background growth on the SRN, and that any development close to the SRN will require further consultation with National Highways regarding impacts on the road network and potential mitigation for this.
- 2.3 National Highways have stated that whilst they would like to see a focus on large shifts to active travel, they appreciate that large sections of the District are separated by the National Park, and therefore a broad focus on increasing accessibility via other modes such as public transport is a solution that aligns with the interest of National Highways of ensuring the function of the SRN.
- 2.4 National Grid provided a written response to the Regulation 18 consultation, which was sent to the Council via email. National Grid have confirmed there are no known new infrastructure interactions within the area, though National Grid acknowledge that demand for electricity is likely to increase as the way in which they power our homes, businesses and transport changes.

- 2.5 **National Gas** have provided a written response to the Regulation 18 consultation, which was sent to the Council via email. National Gas Transmission advocates for the high standards of design and sustainable development forms promoted through national planning policy and understands that contemporary planning and urban design require a creative approach to new development around underground gas transmission pipelines and other National Gas Transmission assets. National Gas have encouraged the Council to engage with them if it is felt necessary.
- 2.6 **Southern Water** (SW) responded to both the Regulation 18 consultation and the letter sent on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025. Via GoVocal, responding to the Regulation 18 consultation, SW have encouraged the Council to engage early with SW on any new site allocations such that the impact on infrastructure can be assessed. The requirement for phased occupation of development where capacity constraints have been identified was also noted. SW detailed concerns regarding the impact of climate change on service provision, noting that climate change is expected to impact flood risk in wastewater systems in the wider area. SW note their support for the use of SuDS in new development, and advocate for more ambitious target setting for personal water use. SW have also provided suggested policy wording in relation to surface water and SuDS.
- 2.7 In response to the letter sent to SW on 20th February 2025, SW have directed the Council to review their Drainage Water Management Plans for a comprehensive summary of the current capacity across the New Forest River Basin Catchment, as well as known existing issues and details of any planned or committed improvements. Regarding their capacity to accommodate further growth, SW have stated that they would need an understanding of what the additional growth entails in terms of locations and numbers of dwellings, in order for them to undertake a credible assessment of the likely impact of this upon current infrastructure.

- 2.8 **Sport England** provided a response to the Council's Regulation 18 Issues and Scope consultation. Sport England have welcomed the Council's decision to undertake a Playing Pitch Strategy, however, consider that the Council's description of wellbeing could place more emphasis on the importance of movement, physical activity and sport in supporting physical and mental wellbeing. Sport England have directed the Council to refer to their Active Design Guidance for the creation of healthy and active communities.
- 2.9 **Go South Coast** operate bus services throughout the District. Go South Coast have provided a comprehensive response to the Regulation 18 consultation and have noted that high car ownership across the District has impacts on public transport offer, as the absence of sufficient volume of demand has implications on network density, frequency, and hours of operation. Go South Coast have provided comments pertaining to the location of new development from an operational perspective, and advocate for a Plan that encourages a modal shift away from private car use and towards more sustainable forms of transport.
- 2.10 The importance of mindful expansion of tourism was also considered by Go South Coast, and it was noted that aggravation of existing congestion should be avoided. Go South Coast further consider that a strategic approach should be adopted for town centres in terms of public transport services, in addition to providing enhanced connection between settlements. Responding to the letter sent on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025, Go South Coast have indicated that a relative lack of public demand at peak times has contributed to the limited or absent morning peak facility, even on core routes. Go South Coast have also cited an ageing and declining population, and a declining workforce, as additional contributing factors to this.



- 2.11 Go South Coast have acknowledged the lack of network coverage across certain parts of the larger settlements of Lymington, New Milton, Ringwood and Fordingbridge in addition to the lack of peak-time facilities impacting those of working age. Go South Coast have further acknowledged the lack of a daily service in some substantial settlements such as Bransgore and Everton, noting that these settlements are at risk of being entirely without public transport if Hampshire funding ceases. The issues of routing and delays in Totton and the Waterside were also noted. With regard to committed and planned improvements, Go South Coast have outlined their short- medium- and long-term planned improvements to services across the District, though citing that capacity to accommodate future growth is majorly constrained by the current limitation on Operating Centre capacity.
- 2.12 **Wessex Water** (WW) have provided a response to the Issues & Scope consultation via the online platform where they have considered their capacity to accommodate future growth. WW are of the view that locating development in established settlements is preferable, and that development should be located near existing infrastructure for ease of connection to the network. WW also noted the importance of providing sustainable drainage for new development. WW have suggested a policy be introduced to prevent a net increase in rainwater flow to existing combined sewers and further note that planning policies should ensure that new development minimises its water footprint and impact on the environment.
- 2.13 WW have also responded to the Council's letter sent on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025 and have directed the Council to their Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans (DWMP) for information on current capacity, known existing issues and committed and planned improvements.

- 2.14 **NHS Hampshire & Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board** responded to the Regulation 18 Issues and Scope consultation, noting that across the district as a whole, GPs are oversubscribed by a total of approximately 2,000 patients. The ICB note that the capacity of existing facilities and services needs to be considered within the settlement hierarchy and have recommended that health and wellbeing policy should adopt a preventative approach, working to reduce pressure on NHS services which are already oversubscribed. Further, the ICB believe that they should be part of the consultation process, noting that the NHS is not funded for additional infrastructure required to meet new housing need.
- 2.15 **NHS Estates** provided a response to the Council's Regulation 18 Issues and Scope consultation, noting a need for affordable housing for healthcare workers and recommends that where sites become available near to healthcare facilities, these should be prioritised for healthcare workers. NHS Estates are of the view that policies should allow flexibility in NHS estates to enable the NHS to deliver its core objectives. Further, a comprehensive policy on health and wellbeing is encouraged by NHS Estates, containing requirements for developments to incorporate active travel provisions, healthy food (allotments etc), consideration of impacts of pollution, high quality green and blue spaces. It is also recommended that a Health Impact Assessment be carried out, with the NHS noting that the Council should engage with the NHS prior to the Regulation 19 stage. The NHS also believes that planning policies should enable the delivery of essential healthcare infrastructure and be prepared in consultation with the NHS to ensure they help deliver estate transformation.
- 2.16 **Hampshire County Council (HCC) Services for Young Children** welcomed the opportunity to consult on the Local Plan, and in response to the letter sent to them on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025, they have directed the Council to their Guidance on Planning Obligations and Developer Infrastructure Contributions. With regard to the Early Years need, the Council have been signposted to HCC's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, which is based upon a measurement of the supply and demand for childcare using both local and national statistics.

- 2.17 In response to the letter sent on 20th February 2025, Southern Gas Network (SGN) have confirmed that the New Forest District is well served by medium pressure infrastructure and, under current demand conditions, pressure across the medium pressure tier is generally very robust. SGN acknowledge that localised capacity limitations may exist on the low-pressure infrastructure. SGN have indicated that any requirement for new infrastructure will be designed reactively upon acceptance of a connection request, and that any new infrastructure would be determined by the available capacity of the network at the time of the request. Any reinforcement costs may be covered by SGN or met in part or fully by the developer. SGN have stated that there is planned mains replacement along Milford Road on B3058, in addition to some replacement works North of Lymington.
- 2.18 **Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks** (SSEN) responded to the Council's letter sent on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025 and have directed the Council to their Network Capacity Map, which provides an overview of the network and its status and have recommended this be viewed alongside their Network Development Report, which provides further detail. The latter document also contains information in relation to known existing issues. SSEN's Distribution Network Options Assessment (DNOA) reports provide additional information on committed and planned improvements.
- 2.19 **Cornerstone**, in their capacity as a mobile telecommunications infrastructure provider, responded to the Council's letter dated 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025. Cornerstone have emphasised the importance of mobile connectivity and have noted the Council's comment in the Issues and Scope document regarding connectivity in rural areas by securing efficient broadband. However Cornerstone are of the view that mobile connectivity is perhaps of equal or higher importance and should not be overlooked.

-

- 2.20 Cornerstone have provided Crowdsourcing data indicating that the EE, Vodafone, O2 and 3 network providers all have significant levels of poor 4G and 5G coverage across the New Forest Area including the National Park, explaining that as demand on the system increases this is likely to get worse if the network is not upgraded or new/additional sites acquired and is likely to move into the poor experience category in times to come. Cornerstone is in the early stages of upgrading the majority of its estate, and this will be phased over the coming years, following a commitment to significantly upgrade the network over the next 10 years. They have also explained the difficulties and constraints they are required to consider when determining the design and location of a mast.
- 2.21 **South West Water** (SWW), in their response to the Council's letter, have highlighted that instilling water efficiency principles into all modes and scales of development is critical to the Undertaker for securing efficient use of water resources within the long-term. SWW did not highlight any current infrastructure or capacity issues, though focussed their response on current allocated sites.

## Appendix 3: Summary of Regulation 18 Issues & Scope Consultation Responses by Question

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
1	What would you like to see as our main focus for our review?	70	Respondents largely felt that a key focus of the Local Plan Review should be housing delivery, specifically all types of affordable housing. It was also felt that the protection and enhancement of the natural environment be given greater priority in the Local Plan, particularly given the Council's declaration of a climate emergency, in addition to enhancing quality of life and general wellbeing of residents and communities across the district. A need for infrastructure improvements was also frequently noted, particularly in the context of future growth and the perceived inability of existing infrastructure to cope with demand. A desire to see regeneration of the	Noted. Housing, the natural environment, adapting to climate change, infrastructure planning and our town and local centres are all key issues for the Local Plan review and evidence base studies are being progressed (e.g., Housing Needs study, Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment, Infrastructure Delivery Plan) that will inform the policy approaches (and potential sites and projects) in the Local Plan to address these issues.

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			district's high streets and town centres was noted by many, and the district's ageing population was an issue raised by several respondents in the context of ensuring service and housing provision for all ages.	
2	What do you think the key issues will be to deliver a new vision and why?	61	Many respondents felt that meeting the housing target will be a key issue, largely due to the absence of sufficient available land for development. The distribution and mix of housing required was also frequently noted as a key issue. Many respondents had strong views regarding the location of new development, with concerns raised surrounding the implications this will have on the quality and character of the natural environment and National Park. Some respondents noted the balancing act between providing for new residents with the least impact on existing residents, and the need for a sustainable approach. A	Noted. These will all be key issues to delivering the vision and the Local Plan review will seek to address these in an appropriate way - as supported by the evidence studies that are being prepared.

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			further frequently raised issue is that of the need to ensure sufficient provision of infrastructure and services to residents.	
3	How should our Plan look to address the 'duty to seek to further the purposes' of the New Forest National Park and the Cranborne Chase National Landscape?	48	Respondents were largely agreeable to the duty to further the purposes of the New Forest National Park, Suggestions included a physical buffer between the National Park and new development, eco-tourism initiatives, increased green connectivity between the National Park and settlements, to reduce car usage, and joint working with the National Park Authority to develop policies. In terms of the location of new development, respondents considered that the Council should resist pressures to develop greenfield land, and that brownfield and urban infill sites should be prioritised and utilised first, thereby keeping development away from the National Park boundaries. Some respondents also considered that a focus should be on providing and	Noted, achieving the right balance between providing for development needs whilst meeting our statutory duty to further the purposes of the National Park is delicate balancing act that the Local Plan review will need to seek to achieve. The balance between development growth and protecting the National Park / Cranborne Chase National Landscape is being tested through the Sustainability Appraisal. In both cases the Council will look to further explore options with the bodies representing the National Park and National Landscape respectively.

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			maintaining open spaces in towns and villages. A smaller number of respondents felt that the National Park shouldn't be a reason to avoid meeting growth needs, and that sustainable development is possible around the fringes. Whilst the National Park and National Landscape should be a consideration, the Plan should not be restricted by these designations.	
4	How long ahead should we plan for in the new Plan, and why?	56	The most suggested plan period was 15 years, though responses ranged from 3 years to 100 years. It was also suggested that the Council plan for 20 years to align with the New Forest National Park. Many respondents noted the need to regularly review the Plan, with a frequent suggestion of every 5 years.	Noted that the majority of responses reflect National policy that advises that local plans should look forward a minimum of 15 years from the point of adoption so that will be important in determining the final end date. National policy already requires adopted local plans to be reviewed every 5 years.
5	In seeking to meet our identified development needs, what should our strategy be?	66	Respondents frequently noted the need for an increased provision of affordable housing, and suggestions were made for a policy to mandate	Noted. The Local Plan review will test a full range of spatial options through the Sustainability Appraisal to ensure all potential options are



No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			<p>increased proportions of such housing. There was a general call for brownfield and infill sites to be prioritised for development. The need for the settlement hierarchy to inform growth distribution was also noted, in addition to the need to reach a balance between growth in larger towns and also allowing expansion of smaller settlements. Concerns were raised regarding overdevelopment, with some respondents noting the need to maintain clear separation between distinct communities.</p> <p>Higher density development in larger towns was also suggested, though limited to ensure the character of towns is not diminished.</p> <p>Ensuring adequate infrastructure and service provision was also suggested as a primary focus.</p>	<p>fully considered/evaluated and an appropriate spatial strategy approach is taken - including the contribution brownfield and infill sites can make. This will be informed by the settlement hierarchy which will be reviewed through an up-to-date Settlement Hierarchy assessment. A Housing Needs study is being undertaken which will provide evidence on the types/mix/tenure of housing needed in the Plan Area. This will need to be balanced with viability analysis to ensure housing policies and development sites are viable and achievable.</p>
6	Is the existing settlement hierarchy appropriate, or are	55	The majority of respondents were broadly in agreement with the existing settlement hierarchy,	Welcome that a majority of respondents are broadly in agreement with the existing

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
	there changes that should be included?		<p>though the possibility of review was welcomed. It was felt by some that whilst the hierarchy as is, was appropriate, this should not be used to determine the location of new development.</p> <p>It was noted by some that as settlements expand, their status should be reviewed. Concerns were raised by a small number of respondents that some settlements have previously been wrongly assigned their status as the infrastructure available in such areas does not reflect the status given. Of those respondents who felt that the settlement hierarchy is not appropriate, some felt that further categories were needed, whereas others felt that it needed to be reviewed in the context of the capacity of local facilities, services and infrastructure.</p>	settlement hierarchy. As part of the Local Plan review an Settlement Hierarchy Assessment is being undertaken which will score each settlement in terms on current availability of, or accessibility to, a range of facilities, services and opportunities. The settlement hierarchy will be reviewed (and updated where appropriate) based on the findings of this assessment. The scope for new development at each settlement / settlement tier will be tested as options through the Sustainability Appraisal process.
7	Do you think it's appropriate for us to	41	Around half of respondents did not feel it was appropriate to consider	Comments noted. The benefits / harms of new development in the

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
	consider new development within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape?		new development within the National Landscape. Of those that felt it would be an appropriate consideration, almost all felt that this should be limited, sensitively placed, and thoughtfully designed to align with the character of the National Landscape.	National Landscape are being robustly tested through the Sustainability Appraisal and the outcomes of this assessment will inform the policy choices for the Local Plan review.
8	Are there other strategic options that could help meet the need for development that we should also consider?	40	Affordable homes for young people was a frequently raised issue amongst respondents, in addition to the need for sufficient infrastructure improvements. It was suggested that the Council review all current and historic allocations in recent and past Local Plans to ascertain whether any previously allocated strategic sites have not yet been developed. A review of the brownfield register was also suggested, with a view to prioritise these sites for development. There was also suggestion to utilise unused greenfield sites. The Council were also asked to consider compulsory	The Council is undertaking a Housing Needs study which will provide evidence-based conclusions on what the mix/type/tenure of housing is that is needed across the Plan Area. The Council is engaging with infrastructure providers and will prepare an Infrastructure Delivery Plan which will set out the main infrastructure requirements needed to sustainably support new development. Current allocated sites and the brownfield land register will be reviewed during the course of the Local Plan preparation process. The Council is preparing a Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA)

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			purchase orders where appropriate. It was also suggested that the Council consider prefabricated homes that are quick to erect and can be easily dismantled in future should the need arise. It was further suggested that the Council seek to obtain first refusal on used sites from other public sectors, for example former police stations. Some respondents noted the district's ageing population, suggesting the development of affordable smaller units close to amenities to enable elderly residents to downsize without losing the sense of community.	which will be a comprehensive assessment of suitable, available and achievable land supply in the Plan Area. The Council will also consider whether other planning tools can realistically be used to encourage housing delivery.
9	Are our Corporate Plan priorities of 'People', 'Place' and 'Prosperity' appropriate to also be used within the Local Plan?	50	The majority of respondents were satisfied with the aims of the corporate plan; however, it was felt by several respondents that the aims lacked clarity and detail, and that the priorities were poorly defined. Some respondents were disappointed that the Corporate Plan is heavily weighted towards	Mixed response comments noted.

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			people and growth with little focus on the natural environment, and others suggested that 'wellbeing' may be a better priority than prosperity.	
10	Do you have any comments on our housing need and how it can be met?	72	<p>A common theme throughout responses was the need for affordable housing, particularly for the younger generations, though also for the elderly. Many respondents noted the ageing population and considered that this is partly due to younger people being forced to move out of the district to find affordable housing. The recent increase in age-restricted development was also noted by respondents, who stated that these are often too expensive for many elderly residents. It was widely suggested that the Council consider increased densities in developments, particularly in larger towns, for a combination of end-users (young, elderly).</p>	These are issues which are being considered through the Local Plan review process. The Council is undertaking a Housing Needs study which will provide evidence-based conclusions on what the mix/type/tenure of housing is that is needed across the Plan Area. The housing policies / housing policy options of this Local Plan review will be informed by this housing evidence base study. The Council is preparing a Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) which will be a comprehensive assessment of suitable, available and achievable housing land supply in the Plan Area and will be an important piece of evidence to establishing an appropriate and deliverable housing

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			<p>A number of respondents noted the proportion of vacant properties across the District and encouraged the Council to consider this as an option to address the need.</p> <p>Location-specific policies were also suggested in terms of affordable housing, whereby the areas with the greatest identified need are given higher affordable housing targets.</p> <p>The need to balance housing delivery with nature recovery was also noted.</p>	<p>target. Identifying sufficient suitable/available/achievable land supply to address the housing need in a sustainable way will be very challenging in a Plan Area that is significantly affected by physical and environmental constraints.</p>
11	Are there any specific sites not currently allocated in existing local plans or otherwise permitted for development that should be considered for their development potential?	49	<p>A number of sites were noted here together with sites that merit protection, in all areas of the district, many of which were submitted through the Call for Sites.</p>	<p>Sites submitted are being appraised for their development potential in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) which will evaluate whether they are suitable and available to be considered for selection as potential allocations in the New Forest District (outside the National Park) Local Plan review. Site and spatial options sites will also be put through a comprehensive</p>

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
				Sustainability Appraisal (SA) assessment as part of the Local Plan review process. When completed the HELAA and the SA will be important parts of the evidence base informing the Local Plan.
12	What role can town and parish councils have in addressing the development needs of the area, such as through preparing neighbourhood plans?	45	It was felt amongst respondents that town and parish councils could play a role in allocating sites at a local level, whereas the District Council should focus on strategic allocations, though others felt that the District Council should not become reliant on town and parish councils to source housing land supply. Many felt that a more collaborative way of working is required between town and parish councils, and the District Council, and that early engagement with the District Council in the Local Plan process is essential. It was also felt by respondents that residents' comments taken to town and parish	There are currently three adopted neighbourhood plans within the plan area (Hythe & Dibden, New Milton, and Ringwood). In addition, five other parish and town councils have commenced the production of a neighbourhood plan (Lymington & Pennington, Sandleheath, Totton & Eling, Fordingbridge, and Fawley). This presents an opportunity for those councils to work with NFDC in deciding whether to allocate sites for local development in their area. NFDC has a duty to engage with, and advise, parish councils on the drafting of their plans, and assist them in the process of seeing the draft plans through examination

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			councils need to be taken on board and fed up the chain to the District Council.	and referenda. NFDC therefore will continue to have regular dialogue with those neighbourhood groups on an ongoing basis.
13	Should we consider a policy to restrict second home ownership within the area?	45	The majority of respondents were in support of a policy restricting second home ownership within the district, however the Council were encouraged to take a balanced view in this regard. Some respondents felt that such a policy would harm the community, particularly given the number of second homes that are used for Air BnB-type holiday rentals, which brings in tourists and helps boost the local economy. Overall, the majority of respondents felt that this option should be explored.	Comments noted. This will be considered through the Local Plan review and whether sufficient evidence exists (include that contained in the Housing Needs Study) to be able to justifiably include such a policy in the Local Plan which would pass the Local Plan examination process.
14	Are there any specific forms of affordable housing that we should aim to prioritise to provide for those most in need locally?	51	All types and tenures of affordable housing are needed; however, respondents noted a lack of affordable housing particularly smaller homes for the younger generation. There was a general call	These are issues which are being considered through the Local Plan review process. The Council is undertaking a Housing Needs study which will provide evidence-based conclusions on what the



No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			for more non-age restricted flats suitable for both young people and the elderly.	mix/type/tenure of housing is that is needed across the Plan Area. The housing policies / housing policy options of this Local Plan review will be informed by this housing evidence base study.
15	How should we aim to meet the housing needs of our population and the current population trends?	48	Respondents had mixed views on how the housing needs could be met, however there was a general call for more affordable housing across the district, of all types, sizes and tenures. It was noted by some that the housing need figure is a national figure, whereas the need should be determined at a local level. Several respondents noted the need to enable young people to stay within the district through the provision of smaller and more affordable housing, both for renting and for purchase. It was considered by some respondents that there is currently a surplus of retirement properties, whereas	These are issues which are being considered through the Local Plan review process. The Council is undertaking a Housing Needs study which will provide evidence-based conclusions on what the mix/type/tenure of housing is that is needed across the Plan Area. The housing policies / housing policy options of this Local Plan review will be informed by this housing evidence base study. The Council is preparing a Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) which will be a comprehensive assessment of suitable, available and achievable land supply in the Plan Area and will consider sites from a variety of

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			there is an increasing need for council housing. Some one-off suggestions included condensing retail areas in town centres to 'free up' space for residential use; repurposing vacant retirement properties for families and young people; build on brownfield sites; and prioritise smaller developments over larger developments unless infrastructure is provided to support larger developments.	sources, including urban area and brownfield sites (and potential regeneration opportunities) as well as greenfield sites outside of the existing defined built-up areas.
16	Do you have any comments on the range of densities that should be sought on new development sites?	51	Many respondents encouraged the consideration of higher densities, though noted that this should be in keeping with the character of the local area and still comprise sufficient green / open space to ensure wellbeing and prevent overcrowding. It was suggested that densities be assessed on a site-by-site basis and that the community should be consulted on the design of such developments. It was also considered by some	These are issues which are being considered through the Local Plan review process. The Council is undertaking a Housing Needs Study which will provide evidence-based conclusions on what the mix/type/tenure of housing is needed across the Plan Area. A Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment is being prepared by the Council and will comprehensively assess the suitable, available, and achievable

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			<p>respondents that 1-bedroom homes should be considered for those who do not wish to reside in a flat, however do not need a property with multiple bedrooms.</p> <p>It was widely accepted that a range of densities will likely be required, however not at the expense of the environment, local character, or community wellbeing.</p>	<p>housing land supply in the Plan Area, including accounting for environmental concerns. The Council is also undertaking Landscape Character, Sensitivity, and Capacity studies which will provide evidence-based assessments of individual sites and growth areas to help ensure densities are appropriate for the local context.</p>
17	How should we aim to meet the identified accommodation need of the Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople community?	26	<p>Respondents felt that the Council should consult members of these communities to ensure provision is suitable and appropriate for those who will use it. A flexible approach was encouraged, and respondents encouraged the Council to work with landowners and consult the relevant groups prior to any development taking place. It was considered that a targeted site with sufficient facilities (e.g. water, waste disposal) may help to</p>	<p>The Council is undertaking a Gypsy and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) which will set out the need for gypsy and traveller pitches and travelling show people plots. A key part of this study is engaging with the travelling community to help understand the need. The GTAA will inform the policies of the Local Plan review - e.g., whether a site allocation(s) is required or whether a criteria-based policy approach is more appropriate. The Council will</p>

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			overcome illegal encampment on public land.	work with key stakeholders in order to produce an appropriate approach to addressing the issue in the Local Plan.
18	What are the key infrastructure priorities that need to be delivered and how can they best be delivered?	63	Many respondents called for a more reliable and joined up public transport network, particularly for the Waterside, and more regular services to Lymington and the General Hospital. Greater active travel provision was also noted, and it was commonly put forward that communities should be connected by cycle routes and footpaths, not just by public transport. Road improvements were frequently suggested, particularly the A326. In terms of healthcare and education, there was a call by many respondents for more SEND provision, and many respondents also noted the need for more local healthcare services including GPs and dentists.	The Council is engaging proactively with infrastructure providers (e.g., National Highways, utilities infrastructure providers, NHS, Hampshire County Council, telecommunications infrastructure providers) and will work with them to prepare an Infrastructure Delivery Plan which will sit alongside the Local Plan and set out the main infrastructure requirements needed to sustainably support new proposed development in the Local Plan review.

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			Many respondents also called for greater provision of sports facilities, such as swimming pools and leisure centres, in addition to green space and ANRG. It was also raised that investment should be made in nature restoration and green infrastructure.	
19	What do you think are the key considerations for increased electricity generation from renewable sources in the New Forest (outside the national park), such as onshore wind or solar power?	48	Respondents advocated for solar panels on public buildings, car parks and new industrial and residential developments. It was also felt by several respondents that land should be allocated for renewable energy generation, with a suggestion to utilise the former Fawley Power Station site for renewable energy generation. Some respondents expressed concerns regarding the balancing act between renewable energy generation and food production. There were also suggestions for community energy initiatives, incentivisation of renewable energy generation, and district heating	Feedback is noted and will be considered as the Council move forward with the development of the local plan. It is encouraging to see support for exploring renewable energy opportunities across the district, provided they are appropriately scaled and sensitively located. The Council will review policy options for renewable energy proposals, EV chargers, rooftop solar panels, and community led renewable energy initiatives where appropriate as required by National Policy. Any renewable energy policy or allocation will be informed by evidence-based studies of the potential impact on landscape,

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			and/or energy as part of new developments. Whilst largely advocating for renewable energy generation, some respondents felt that renewable energy is unreliable and that it should not be considered. There was a general consensus that all types of energy generation be considered, but only where this would not adversely impact the landscape character, environment or nature recovery.	nature recovery and infrastructure capacity.
20	Do you have any suggestions for incorporating art and culture into our Local Plan?	34	Numerous suggestions were made by respondents on how to incorporate art and culture, suggestions for public artworks in town centres, sculpture parks, multi-use art venues, and additional support for local museums and art galleries. Several respondents felt that funding for art and culture is lacking and is frequently cut. A small number of respondents felt that art and culture should not be a priority for the Council to address,	The suggestions made are noted and consideration will be given as to what extent the Local Plan is able to address these whilst being consistent with national policy, including the protection of existing facilities and provision of new.

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			and that their focus should be on addressing the housing need and other essential services. Suggestions were made for the inclusion of a policy to support and protect valued cultural facilities within the district, as well as community facilities.	
21	Do you agree with the description of issues regarding health and wellbeing, and are there other issues to consider?	45	The issues noted within this section of the Issues and Scope document were widely accepted by respondents, though suggestions were also made of additional issues for the Council's consideration. Social isolation of elderly residents was a noted concern, as was the limited provision of active travel opportunities throughout the District. It was noted that health and wellbeing policies should be preventative in nature, and that policies should have a greater focus on the importance of movement and physical activity. It was also suggested that policies could be	The Council note the broad acceptance by respondents of the issues raised within the Issues and Scope document. Health and wellbeing is an important issue that the Local Plan will need to address in a contextually appropriate way. The suggestions and additional issues raised by respondents are also noted and will be considered throughout the Local Plan process as appropriate.

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			jointly developed with the National Park Authority. Additional suggestions included the establishment of community hubs, protection of existing greenspaces from development, and increased connectivity to services.	
22	What options do you think should be followed for addressing health and wellbeing?	50	Respondents typically felt that this was an important issue to address, and suggestions made by respondents were varied. Several respondents suggested provision of additional free outdoor gyms or sheltered activities for all ages, and others suggested more affordable access to the Council's existing health and leisure centres. Respondents also suggested incorporating nature features into new development, such as through nesting boxes, swift bricks and hedgehog highways, thereby encouraging nature into residential areas. Community gardens, active travel provision and increased space for recreational activities	This is an important issue to address. The suggestions made are noted and consideration will be given as to what extent the Local Plan is able to address these. There are limits to what the Local Plan reasonably and justifiably to do whilst remaining in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.



No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			<p>were also suggested by respondents, and provision of seating on footpaths, high streets and coastal paths was also suggested as a way of encouraging those who are less mobile.</p> <p>Increased tree cover in town centre areas and the importance of clean air were also noted. It was also felt by some respondents that community engagement should be at the heart of this, as different communities have different needs.</p>	
23	Are we identifying the correct principles for creating a place people want to live and work, or are there any others that need to be considered?	46	<p>Whilst the principles noted by the Council were largely considered acceptable by respondents, a small number of respondents felt that the principles did not prioritise local people and that such principles should be defined at a more local scale, i.e. on a settlement-by-settlement basis.</p> <p>A small number of comments were made in relation to crime and antisocial behaviour, and the need for safe community spaces. The</p>	The Council acknowledges that many respondents felt the identified principles were appropriate. Other suggestions and comments are noted, and the Local Plan Review process will continue to streamline and finalise these principles.

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			importance of integrating new development into existing communities was also noted, in addition to comments on ensuring futureproofing and accessibility of communities.	
24	Should we seek to set a policy for the size of houses and gardens that are different from those set nationally?	47	<p>Responses to this question were mixed, with a generally even split between those in favour of a new policy on garden size, and those who oppose the idea. The general feeling amongst respondents was that such a policy would likely need to be done on a settlement-by-settlement basis, or at the very least separate policies for urban and rural communities.</p> <p>It was felt by some respondents that national standards are too rigid and a more flexible approach be taken to suit the Districts unique character, whereas other respondents felt that no additional policy is needed and that adherence to building regulations and national standards is sufficient.</p>	The suggestions made are noted and consideration will be given as to what extent the Local Plan is able to address these. There are limits to what the Local Plan reasonably and justifiably to do whilst remaining in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
25	How do you think we should work towards achieving net zero?	62	<p>Respondents had mixed views on how the District could work to achieve net zero by 2050. Suggestions were wide-ranging, with the majority of suggestions falling into the categories of renewable energy generation; education; building efficiency; public transport and reduced reliance on the private car; environmental protection and enhancement; and waste and recycling.</p> <p>A small number of respondents did not feel it was necessary to do so or felt that efforts to work towards the goal of net zero by 2050 would not make a tangible impact.</p>	<p>Comments have been noted and will be considered as we continue to develop the new local plan. The Council has declared a climate and nature emergency and, like all local authorities, is legally required under the Climate Change Act (2008) to work towards achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The Local Plan will therefore include policies to help meet this goal. The Local Plan will consider a range of technical options to reduce emissions particularly where they are recommended by national guidance, whilst also ensuring the overall development viability is considered. Examples include Passivhaus building standards, expanded EV charging infrastructure, renewable energy generation, and active travel policies. Options for nature-based solutions such as enhanced green infrastructure will also be considered and will be informed by</p>

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
				evidence based work such as the GBI strategy.
26	What measures do you think we should take to ensure appropriate climate change adaptation, mitigation, and resilience?	48	The most common theme raised among respondents were concerns surrounding flood risk and the need for appropriate drainage to mitigate this. Several respondents were concerned about coastal erosion and sea level rise. Another common issue was the need to have more sustainable housing with better environmental standards, materials, and practices. Many respondents felt that a focus on nature-based solutions would be best, using and supporting the natural ecosystem to best tackle issues of climate change.	The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires planning authorities to adopt a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to flood risk. This includes ensuring that new developments avoid areas at high risk of flooding whenever possible and incorporating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to manage surface water. NFDC has also conducted a strategic flood risk assessment to inform local plan and ensure that any development in flood-prone areas is resilient and does not increase flood risk elsewhere. The existing Local Plan already addresses the need to restrict development in those areas prone to coastal erosion and this will likely be rolled forward into the next Local Plan. The new Local Plan will also seek a more robust

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
				approach to addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation - new policies are one option to address this.
27	Should we seek more ambitious targets and measures to address climate change?	44	The majority of respondents felt that more ambitious targets and measures to tackle climate change would be positive. However, there were others that were opposed largely due to wishing to see consistency or more realistic targets over those that were more ambitious.	Comments noted. The Council has declared a climate and nature emergency, and Local Plan policies will need to contribute to legally binding targets including net-zero by 2050. This is an important issue that will be considered as Local Plan policies are developed but there are limits to what the local plan can do while still remaining in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.
28	Other than the private car, what other form of transport (including buses, walking, cycling, rail and water transport) would you use more if you could?	55	Respondents most frequently stated that a reliable and frequent bus service is lacking in much of the District, with many specifically noting the limited public transport options in the Waterside area. Greater provision for active travel modes was also frequently noted, particularly cycling. A general	Comments noted. The Council will be undertaking a Strategic Transport Assessment which will provide evidence-based conclusions regarding transport needs in different parts of the Plan Area. Additionally, the Council is involved in ongoing engagement with infrastructure providers and is

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			consensus was that sustainable transport should be affordable, accessible and reliable, whatever the mode, and that a joined-up network needs to be created.	working towards an Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The Local Plan Review process will seek to integrate both the Waterside and the New Forest Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) to support active travel provision.
29	What approach should we take to large-scale renewable energy generation?	36	Respondents typically felt that solar panels should be utilised across the district, particularly on residential roofs. It was suggested by several respondents that solar panels be fitted on NFDC assets. Many respondents felt that smaller-scale solar schemes would be more appropriate so as not to disrupt the character of the district. It was proposed that agricultural land is not used for energy generation, though conversely agrivoltaics schemes were also advocated. A small number of respondents suggested small modular nuclear energy generation.	Comments are noted. Any proposals or policies guiding larger scale renewable energy generation will ensure that it is not developed in locations where it will have detrimental impact on landscape character, amenities, or the natural environment. These policies will be informed by evidence-based work on landscape character and green infrastructure. The Local Plan is limited in what it can control in terms of large-scale renewable energy, large-scale projects are promoted at a national level if they are above a certain threshold of energy output.

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			<p>Harnessing tidal energy was also suggested, as was biogas.</p> <p>Wind turbines were a controversial topic for respondents, with some in favour of both on- and off-shore wind turbines, and others opposing them.</p>	
30	<p>What should be our approach to ensuring that people do not harm the particularly environmentally sensitive parts of the New Forest? For example, additional rangers, considering providing a new country park or new more local areas of accessible green space.</p>	59	<p>Several respondents advocated for specific dog-walking fields and / or dog parks, which are secure and with adequate provision for disposal of dog waste.</p> <p>A suggestion was made for a rolling closure of popular sites to allow nature recovery, and many respondents advocated for additional rangers with the power to give fines for littering / touching or feeding grazing animals etc.</p> <p>Many respondents were in favour of a new country park, which is free to access and well served by active travel opportunities, and suggestions were also made for a better and more connected network of footpaths and cycleways outside</p>	<p>The New Forest is a very special area with easy access to the National Park and the coast. These unique and special places are recognised internationally as rare and precious habitats that require the highest level of protection. With an ever-growing local population and large numbers of summer visitors the pressure on the New Forest National Park is increasing. To help relieve the pressure on these sensitive areas the Councils "GreenWay" project is providing alternative, local facilities for dog walking and other activities. GreenWay is the collective name for on-site and off-site mitigation schemes, comprising of public open</p>

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			<p>of the national park, with respondents noting that if residents are required to travel to go out in nature, then they will likely choose the most desirable locations.</p> <p>Littering and fly tipping were also raised by some respondents, with suggestions for additional rangers with the power to fine those who litter, and enhanced CCTV coverage in fly tipping hotspots.</p> <p>Other one-off suggestions included education for residents on wildfire mitigation, in addition to tourist-focussed campaigns, more accessible SANG / ANRG provision, and protection of farmland and back-up grazing land.</p> <p>Several respondents also noted the sensitive habitats outside of the National Park, including road verges of ecological importance and other designated habitats.</p>	<p>spaces and walking routes, promoted by us to provide year-round walking and recreational opportunities for visitors and residents. The Council has commissioned studies to better understand the effectiveness of this mitigation, to inform decisions on how to mitigate impacts for future development. Country parks could be one option that NFDC to help address the demand for accessible public spaces. NFDC is also undertaking studies to provide potential new green infrastructure that provides multi-functional benefits (for nature recovery, for public access, and natural mitigation for water quality and flood risk).</p>
31	What are the key mechanisms we should use to achieve benefits	35	Respondents advocated for enhanced provision of green space near residential developments, in	As part of the work on identifying new growth points for new development NFDC is undertaking a



No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
	for the environment? How can this be measured?		<p>addition to an enhanced green infrastructure network across the District.</p> <p>There were several suggested mechanisms for reducing emissions, namely EV infrastructure, reducing traffic and encouraging walking and other active travel. A suggestion for low emission zones was also made. Suggestions were made for BNG including wildlife corridors and swift brick / bat boxes on new developments. It was felt by a smaller number of respondents that BNG targets should apply to all new development, including, for example, residential extensions to existing properties.</p> <p>Suggestions were also made for increased legal powers when it comes to the environment.</p>	<p>number of studies to identify green infrastructure (GI) schemes that enhance the GI network in the district. Measures being considered include (but are not limited to) provision of new / enhancement of recreational facilities; projects that will effectively divert recreational pressures away from sensitive European sites; the creation and enhancement of a network of green recreational routes (such as pedestrian and cycle); creation of undisturbed refuge habitat for priority species; river corridor enhancements; and greener urban design initiatives.</p>
32	Should we look to introduce biodiversity net gain targets above the mandated 10%?	47	<p>The number of responses was fairly balanced between those that felt higher targets for BNG should be introduced and those that didn't. Those that thought higher targets</p>	<p>Local authorities can mandate a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirement above the mandatory 10%. However, this must be justified with evidence and set out</p>

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			were better were generally motivated by a desire to protect the environment. Those that were opposed generally felt that proper care of the environment in other ways was more beneficial, with current approaches not delivering genuine environmental benefit and mainly only benefitting those selling mitigation credits.	in the Local Plan, including how it interacts with development viability.
33	How can we make greenspaces more accessible? Should we include minimum standards of access to green space (for example, by size and type)?	40	Several respondents suggested that green space be well signposted and that they be accessible via multiple signposted footpaths. Many felt that green space should be incorporated in new developments. Connectivity between different green spaces was emphasised. Some respondents emphasised working with Town/Parish councils to provide appropriate green space and play areas. Some respondents suggested that minimum space standards be implemented for green space, while others felt that quality should be emphasised over space standards.	Comments are noted. The Council is undertaking a review of the quality, quantity and accessibility of its formal and informal open space across the district. Policies on where and what kind of open space is developed will be based on this evidence and will continue to consider wider affects such as the impact on the National Park. All policies that are developed will be limited by their need to accord with National Planning Policy and practical considerations like land availability.

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
34	Should we look to address the issue of backup grazing land? If so, what evidence is there to inform future considerations?	27	Many respondents felt that back-up grazing land should be addressed as commoning is an integral part of the character and management of the New Forest. However, some respondents felt that this was not an issue needing to be addressed by the Council, and that additional land should be sourced by the commoners themselves if they require it.	One of the strategic objectives of the existing Local Plan (SO8) promotes a positive future for rural areas and to help secure their economic prosperity and social well-being by supporting farming and traditional commoning practices including backup grazing, agricultural and rural enterprise. While many Commoners have their homes or holdings in the core parishes of the New Forest, many also rely on back-up land in the surrounding parishes. Whilst information is still limited on the location of backup grazing land, NFDC is aware of the need for grassland sites for grazing land and will continue to seek views on how the Local Plan can take account of this aspect.
35	How should our previous Green Belt study be updated and	46	Respondents felt that the Green Belt study should be updated to reflect the current context of the district. Many respondents felt that	The comments to update the study are noted, and the Council is now undertaking a Green Belt review. This review will be consistent with

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
	what factors should be considered?		strategic gaps were important to maintain. Some felt that Green Belt should be released for small development whilst others felt that it should be protected. Some respondents felt that the damage caused by loss of Green Belt and active agricultural land should be taken into account.	the requirements of national policy and will be a key evidence base study informing the Local Plan review.
36	Are there current Green Belt sites that you feel have the potential for more positive uses?	32	Many respondents suggested specific sites, the majority of which have been submitted to the Call for Sites. Others indicated that they felt Green Belt sites could be used for parks, wildlife, agriculture and other creative uses.	Sites submitted are being appraised for their development potential in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) which will evaluate whether they are suitable and available to be considered for selection as potential allocations in the New Forest District (outside the National Park) Local Plan review. Site and spatial options sites will also be put through a comprehensive Sustainability Appraisal (SA) assessment as part of the Local Plan review process. When completed the HELAA and the SA will be important parts of the

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
				evidence base informing the Local Plan. The Local Plan review evidence base will also consider the potential of sites to be used for other uses such as community uses, open space, and land suitable for nature recovery or offsetting the environmental impacts of development.
37	Do you have any views on what the approach should be to existing site allocations that have not yet come forward or where progress has stalled?	51	Many respondents felt that developers should be penalised or forced to sell land if development was unnecessarily delayed on allocated sites. Some suggested that the Council should use compulsory purchase in these cases. Respondents felt that old allocations should be developed before making new allocations. Additionally, some felt that developments should be more strongly controlled in relation to design and zoning and that developer concerns surrounding viability shouldn't be taken into	The suggestions made are noted and consideration will be given as to what extent the Local Plan is able to address these whilst being consistent with national policy. As part of the preparation of the new Local Plan, work will be undertaken on existing site allocations that are yet to come forward will to ensure they remain suitable, available and achievable for the allocated use. The Council will work proactively with site owners / promoters / developers, infrastructure providers and other key stakeholders to seek to facilitate the successful delivery

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			account. Other respondents also made reference to specific allocated sites.	of strategic site allocations, major sites with planning permission and other allocated/identified housing sites. The Council will consider what incentives and powers are available to facilitate the delivery of housing.
38	Are there further sites for any type of development that we should consider?	42	Several sites across the district were suggested here, some of which have come forward in the Call for Sites.	Sites submitted are being appraised for their development potential in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) which will evaluate whether they are suitable and available to be considered for selection as potential allocations in the New Forest District (outside the National Park) Local Plan review. Site and spatial options sites will also be put through a comprehensive Sustainability Appraisal (SA) assessment as part of the Local Plan review process. When completed the HELAA and the SA will be important parts of the evidence base informing the Local Plan.

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
39	What should we do to ensure there is sufficient provision of open space, which is also functional and attractive to our residents?	45	Several respondents suggested that green space and parks be a part of all new residential developments. Many felt that open spaces should be easily accessible via active travel and public transport, with some suggesting an emphasis on signposting local walking routes. There was a theme that open space should be well cared for and maintained and should be prevented from becoming 'no go' zones due to residents not feeling safe in open space areas. Many respondents felt that developers should be responsible for funding the provision and maintenance of open space and, particularly, that any money raised from development should be spent in its local area. There was also a general theme that local people and communities should be consulted to best identify the open space needs in the locality.	Comments are noted. The Council is undertaking evidence-based work to better understand the quality and quantity of our open space to ensure residents needs are met. Policies to develop new spaces and enhance existing open space will be informed by this work. While the Local Plan can provide some support through policies for the proper maintenance and safety conscious design of open spaces a lot of this work sits outside the remit of the local plan. Furthermore, the ability of the Local Plan to promote new open space will be constrained by National Planning Policy requirements.

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
40	What do you believe should be our approach to providing open space? This could be either creating a few new larger sized destinations for play areas, sports pitches, smaller scale areas as part of new developments or a new country park?	56	Many respondents advocated for the provision of small parks/green spaces in all residential development. Many also suggested larger parks for a diversity of community uses. The idea of a new country park was also popular amongst residents, though some expressed concern that this would encourage car use. Some respondents felt that all green spaces should be connected by green links. In general, respondents felt that a mix of sporting facilities was needed to ensure the needs of different demographics were met. Some also suggested that sporting facilities should have areas alongside which were appropriate for those not participating in the sporting activity.	Comments are noted. The Council is undertaking evidenced base work on open spaces and has commissioned a playing pitch strategy which will inform policies on the provision of playing pitches and sports facilities. This should identify where certain sports, activities and types of recreational open space are not sufficiently provided for. The Council will look to encourage inclusive design in its open spaces and sports facilities for all demographics wherever possible.
41	What should our approach be in relation to the historic environment?	41	There was a strong theme throughout most responses that the historical environment should be protected, preserved, maintained, and enhanced. Many felt that	The Council note that the majority of comments received are accepting of the protection of the historic environment. The Council are proactively engaging with Historic



No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			heritage asset locations should be enhanced, and that development should be sympathetic. Many respondents felt that sympathetic development close to heritage assets was appropriate, though others felt that no development affecting heritage assets was appropriate. Some respondents felt that heritage assets should only be preserved where they were of benefit to the community and funding was available.	England and specialist colleagues as part of the Local Plan process in relation to the historic environment. The Local Plan review will consider how best to address this issue and will need to ensure that policies are in place to ensure the historic environment is protected in line with national policy. Further, the historic environment is a consideration in site selection and allocation and therefore will be appropriately addressed during this process.
42	How can we secure the sustainable long-term use of our heritage assets, and help to protect archaeological features as part of new development?	35	Many respondents felt that heritage assets should be protected, preserved, and maintained. Some suggested greater advertisement and education with there being historical maps of the forest available. Some respondents suggested heritage assets be made into 'destinations' with more facilities whilst others felt that heritage should not be	The Council note that the majority of comments received are accepting of the protection of the historic environment. The Council are proactively engaging with Historic England and specialist colleagues as part of the Local Plan process in relation to the historic environment. The Local Plan review will consider how best to address this issue and will need to ensure that policies are

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			overcommercialised. The majority of respondents felt that development should be sympathetic to heritage assets. Some respondents suggested that archaeological sites should not be allocated for development or that developers be responsible for the costs of archaeological surveys and display any notable finds. However, there were other respondents that felt that archaeological sites should not be prioritised for protection.	in place to ensure the historic environment is protected in line with national policy. Further, the historic environment is a consideration in site selection and allocation and therefore will be appropriately addressed during this process. Additional comments and suggestions as to how the Council can sustainably secure long-term use of such assets are also noted.
43	How can we make our high streets more vibrant?	49	The most common suggestion among respondents was to reduce business rates (and rents to a lesser extent) so that the cost of running a business wasn't prohibitive. There was a general agreement amongst respondents that a proactive approach to town centres and high streets should be taken to reduce the number of vacant units and make them attractive places to be. Suggestions	Comments noted. The Council is undertaking an Economic Needs Assessment as well as a Retail/Town and Local Centre Needs Study to provide evidence-based conclusions as to how to support high streets and other centres.

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
			including pedestrianising areas, improving communal areas/meeting places/squares, encouraging activity, and improving seating and access to green areas. Several respondents also emphasised a desire for local businesses as well as traditional shops such as greengrocers and butchers.	
44	How can we ensure that the opportunities from the Solent Freeport designation are made available to all New Forest residents?	30	Many respondents were unaware of what the Freeport was or what opportunities it presented. In line with this, many suggested the need for more information, education, and training related to this. Some suggested ensuring that funds are redistributed to support small business hubs and that employment opportunities should benefit the local area, possibly by mandating a certain percentage of local employees.	The comments made are noted and consideration will be given as to what extent the Local Plan is able to address these whilst being consistent with national policy. The Council is undertaking a Port and Marine Business Needs Assessment which will provide evidence-based conclusions on port business needs. Separate to the Local Plan, the Council is also preparing a New Forest Freeport Delivery Plan which will seek to establish the outcomes that a successful Freeport would deliver in the New Forest in relation to the priorities for the New Forest of: transport/wider infrastructure.

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
				employment and skills, prosperous communities, and environmental sustainability.
45	Are there any existing business/employment sites that are no longer appropriate, or fit for purpose for that use and should be considered for alternative development?	22	A number of sites across the district were suggested here, some of which have come forward in the Call for Sites.	Sites submitted are being appraised for their development potential in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) which will evaluate whether they are suitable and available to be considered for selection as potential allocations in the New Forest District (outside the National Park) Local Plan review. Site and spatial options sites will also be put through a comprehensive Sustainability Appraisal (SA) assessment as part of the Local Plan review process. When completed the HELAA and the SA will be important parts of the evidence base informing the Local Plan.
46	What should be our approach towards town centres and primary,	24	Respondents to this question mainly focused on how to uplift economic offerings as a whole with	Comments noted. The Council is undertaking an Economic Needs Assessment as well as a

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
	secondary, and local shopping frontages? Do the boundaries that appear on our policies map need to be changed and if so, how?		suggestions including free parking and better public transport, and affordable rates for business owners. Additionally, it was suggested that town centres have a strong New Forest brand with local businesses. It was also suggested that retail/commercial uses be condensed, and vacant units converted into dwellings.	Retail/Town and Local Centre Needs Study to provide evidence-based conclusions as to how to support high streets and other centres.
47	In relation to tourism, should we consider allocating new, or protecting existing, land or sites for tourist attractions or accommodation?	29	There was a wide range of varying responses to this question. Overall, the majority of respondents appeared to believe that the level of tourist provision was adequate though elements of it could be enhanced, with a handful respondents noting that more could be made of the history of the area. There was a theme throughout of a desire to protect the New Forest as well as prevent second homes and Airbnb's from dominating communities.	Comments are noted. Evidenced based assessments will be undertaken to ensure provision of tourist attractions and accommodation are able to adequately meet the need. The Council will consider the impact of tourism policies on the local economy, amenities and housing provision. Local Plan policies will need to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework and can only work to control short term lets such as Airbnb's and second homes

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
				within the existing use class system.
48	What are the key transport issues to be addressed to help new development come forward?	54	The majority of respondents felt that road networks, public transport, and active travel provision all needed improvements. Concerns were expressed over the quality of road services as well as the need to improve specifically the A326 to better handle the traffic flow and improve safety. Buses were strongly advocated for, with some suggesting they be free for children. Additionally, many wished to see the reinstatement of the Hythe Ferry as well as better rail links, particular down the Waterside and between Ringwood and Bournemouth. Many respondents felt that cycleways, footpaths, and pavements needed improvement to increase pedestrian and cyclist safety as well as make these modes of transport more viable.	The wide range of transport issues, covering all modes of transport, as well as both at the strategic and very local level are all noted. The Council will work with HCC and other public transport operators as it progresses the Local Plan, as a clearer picture of the locations of growth is gained, to in turn understand where deficiencies and opportunities for improvement will exist. A Strategic Transport Assessment is also being undertaken to understand the wider network and the impacts future development may have on it.

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
49	How can our planning policies help make you, and our communities, travel by the sustainable modes of walking, cycling and public transport?	60	Responses to this question focused on a need to have well-integrated and connected sustainable transport network. There was a strong emphasis on the need for more frequent and reliable public transport - this was particularly linked to buses, but mentions were also made of a desire to see the Hythe Ferry in operation again as well as for train connections. The absence of reliable and frequent buses in rural areas was particularly highlighted. There was also a common theme of ensuring cycle and walking routes are integrated into new development, preventing them from becoming too car dominant. Additionally, there was a frequent desire to see PROWs, cycleways, and footpaths better maintained and integrated with one another.	The Council is engaging proactively with public transport operators and will work with them to prepare an Infrastructure Delivery Plan which will set out the main infrastructure requirements needed to sustainably support new proposed development in the Local Plan review. Further, the Council is working with Hampshire County Council to deliver their Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) for the New Forest. A Green Infrastructure Study has also been commissioned by the Council as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan, which will seek to identify further opportunities for active travel.
50	Are there any other issues that you feel we	42	Responses to this question were wide-ranging, highlighting a variety of issues. There was a repeated	The suggestions made are noted and consideration will be given as to what extent the Local Plan is able

No.	Question	No. of Responses	Summary of Issues Raised	Response to issue
	have missed and should be addressed?		<p>thread that the Local Plan should be all-encompassing in focus and not prioritise housing numbers above all else, particularly good design. There was an emphasis that housing should be affordable for locals, well-located to reduce the need for commuting, and appropriately supported by infrastructure, utilities and education/health services. Additionally, there were several one-off suggestions including the idea of 'deposits' on large-scale developments to accelerate build-out rates, the proposal to mandate energy efficiency requirements for new builds exceeding UK Building Regs minimums and that events which both support locals and bring visitors to the area should be supported. Additionally, there were some questions raised as to what the impact of LGR and devolution would be.</p>	to address these whilst being consistent with national policy.





# Local Development Scheme

Work programme for the Local Plan Review

New Forest District (outside the National Park)

Version for Cabinet Approval

August 2025

## Contents

1	Introduction .....	3
2	Context for the Local Development Scheme (LDS) update .....	6
3	Local Plan review approach and programme .....	7
	Approach.....	7
	Programme.....	8
4	Documents supporting the Local Plan .....	11
	Annex 1: programme for the preparation of the Local Plan review.....	12

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) provides information about the production of the New Forest District Local Plan for the area outside the New Forest National Park (Figure 1) hereafter referred to as the ‘plan area’. The New Forest National Park Authority is responsible for producing the Local Plan for the National Park area.

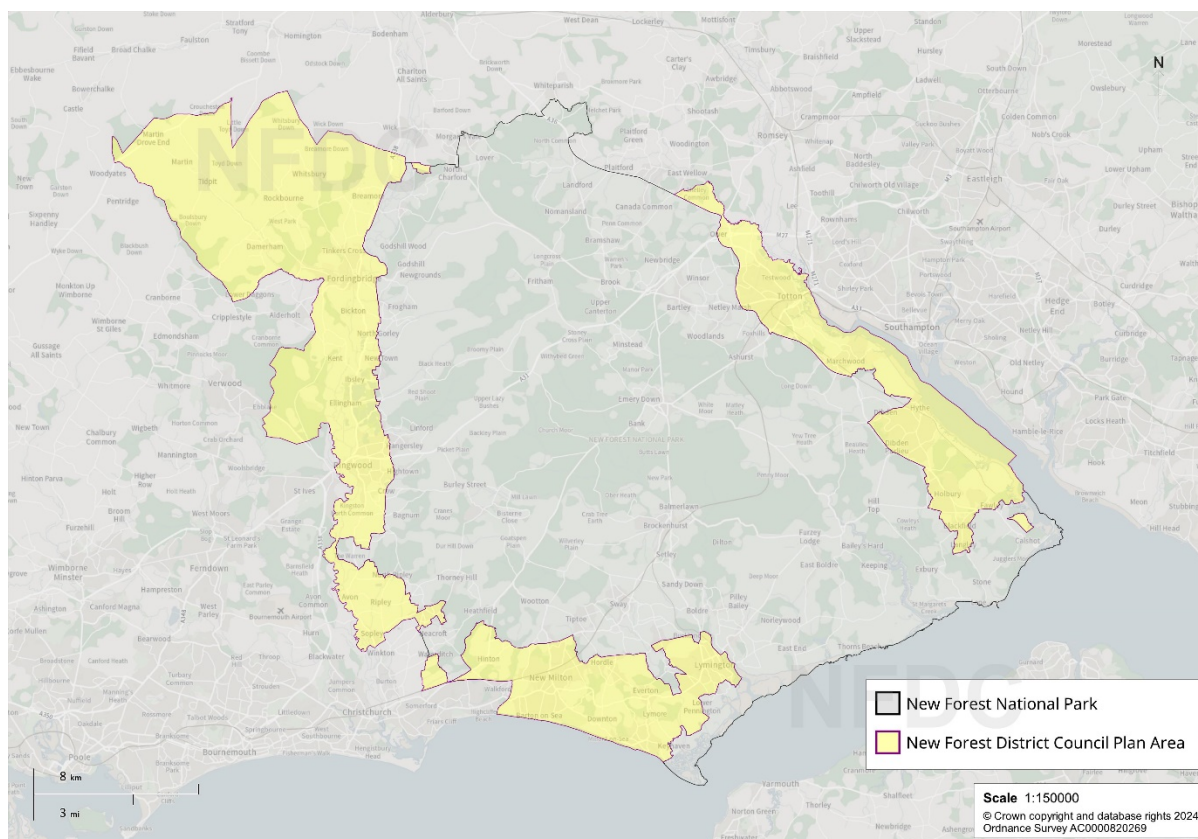


Figure 1: Map of the New Forest District Council Local Planning Authority Area

- 1.2 The LDS sets out the work programme for the Local Plan review and identifies when the public and other interested parties can get involved in the process of plan-making. It includes information about the content and production timetable for the Local Plan review, superseding the previous 2021 version which addressed preparation of the Local Plan Part 2 2016-2036. The Local Plan Part 2 is no longer being progressed; work undertaken so far will be included within the full Local Plan review.

1.3 The Local Plan is the most important part of the Development Plan for the plan area. The Development Plan is the statutory basis for deciding planning applications, provided that it is up to date. As of August 2025, the Development Plan for New Forest District (outside the National Park) comprises the following:

- the Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1: Planning Strategy adopted July 2020
- Saved policies from the following earlier Local Plans as listed in Appendix A of the Local Plan Part 1: Planning Strategy (2020)
- the Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy adopted in October 2009
- the Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management adopted in April 2014
- Policy DW-E12: Protection of Landscape Features - saved from the Local Plan First Review (2005).
- the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan adopted by the Hampshire Minerals and Waste authorities in October 2013.
- 'Made' (Adopted by a supportive local referendum, after review by an independent examiner) Neighbourhood Development Plans - as at August 2025 these are for the Hythe & Dibden, New Milton and Ringwood neighbourhood areas.

1.4 As of August 2025, the following Neighbourhood Plans are being prepared or being considered for modification:

- Totton and Eling Town Council, Fawley Parish Council and Fordingbridge Town Council are all currently preparing a neighbourhood plan with consultation expected later in 2025.
- Lymington and Pennington Neighbourhood Plan – the Lymington and Pennington Neighbourhood Plan was submitted by Lymington and Pennington Town Council on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and subsequently underwent the final (Regulation 16) public consultation from Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2025 to Friday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2025. The Lymington and Pennington Neighbourhood Plan is now awaiting examination; an examiner has been appointed and the timetable for examination is awaited.

- Sandleheath Neighbourhood Plan Parish Council – Sandleheath Parish Council published the pre-submission (Regulation 14) draft Sandleheath Neighbourhood Plan for consultation on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025. Consultation will remain open until Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2025.
- New Milton Neighbourhood Plan – New Milton Town Council are currently reviewing their Neighbourhood Plan and is at the pre-submission stage of the modified New Milton Neighbourhood Plan, with consultation on the modifications running from Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June until Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

1.5 If 'made' these Neighbourhood Plans would also become part of the Local Development Plan. Fordingbridge is designated as a Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. As yet, no plan has been drafted or published for Fordingbridge, though the Town Council intends to undertake public consultation and engagement events during 2025.

## 2 Context for the Local Development Scheme (LDS) update

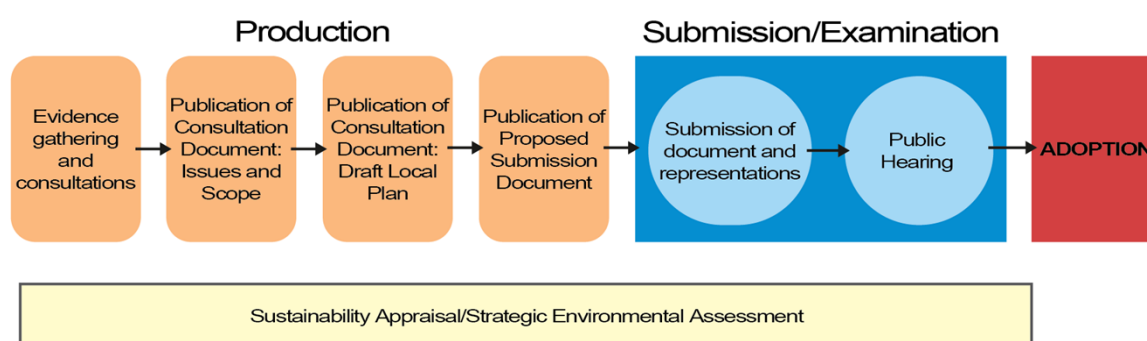
- 2.1 **The Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1** was adopted in July 2020. It was prepared in a period of national planning policy transition, notably in respect of calculating housing need and the setting of housing targets. The Plan was found sound (subject to agreed modifications) with no requirement for early review in the light of the new planning guidance in place at the time of Local Plan examination.
- 2.2 Shortly after the adoption of the Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1 in 2020 the government consulted on wide-ranging changes to the planning system and the plan-making process. The Council paused work on the Local Plan Part 2 until it became clearer whether further work on it would be overtaken by events.
- 2.3 Significant changes were made to the **National Planning Policy Framework** (NPPF) in December 2024 which included a new methodology for calculating housing need.
- 2.4 An LDS for a Local Plan Review was originally published in March 2024 and then revised in October 2024. However, following publication of the revised NPPF, and wider planning reforms, there has been a need to revise this.

## 3 Local Plan review approach and programme

### Approach

#### 3.1 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England)

**Regulations 2012** set out the main requirements for preparing a local plan. The general process followed is shown in (Figure 2), this may evolve as further planning reforms details are introduced.



**Figure 2: Local Plan Preparation stages**

- 3.2 The next Local Plan review will comprise a single document, replacing the Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1 and all policies 'saved' from earlier Local Plans.
- 3.3 There can be more than one public consultation before the Local Plan review is published in final 'submission' form (when it is open for further public consultation to inform the examination process).
- 3.4 The council held an early 'Issues & Scope' consultation in early 2025 on the issues the Local Plan review should cover and its scope. This consultation ran from 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025 to 4<sup>th</sup> April 2025, during which officers held 7 'drop-in' sessions around the plan area for members of the public to attend and ask questions about the Local Plan Review. An online survey of 50 questions accompanied the consultation. A spatial options 'Regulation 18' plan consultation will be held in late 2025.

## Programme

3.5 This LDS introduces a further high-level consultation, provided for under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012, in late 2025.

3.6 The programme still allows for a consultation on the Regulation 19 plan, which is the final draft of the plan that the council intends to submit to the Secretary of State for independent examination, in Autumn 2026 ready for submission by the end of 2026.

3.7 The programme for the Local Plan Review will follow the following steps:

### Initial Evidence Base Scoping and Commissioning (Completed Spring 2024)

3.8 This initial stage involved identifying and commissioning the necessary studies and data to inform the Local Plan Review.

### Preparation of Issues and Scope Public Consultation Document (Completed February 2025)

3.9 The Issues and Scope document outlined the key planning issues and the scope of the Local Plan that the council considered important and sought the public views. The public were invited to comment on the identified issues and scope of the plan. This stage also included a “Call for Sites,” where landowners and developers could propose sites for potential development.

### Consultation Review, Evidence Base Development, Option Testing, and Drafting of Regulation 18 Local Plan Document

3.10 Feedback from the initial Issues and Scope consultation will be reviewed, alongside further evidence. Additional evidence was gathered, and various development options will be tested to inform the drafting of the Regulation 18 Local Plan.

3.11 This plan will focus on areas of potential growth being illustrated on high level maps with limited, if any, preference on any one area.



3.12 In terms of the policy direction, this will focus on the emerging themes and principles that will shape the detailed planning policies in the Local Plan. At this stage, the council will not be finalising policies but rather seeking feedback on the direction they should take.

3.13 The consultation of this plan will take place towards the end of 2025.

#### Consultation Review, Further Testing, and Preparation of Pre-Submission Plan

3.14 Responses from the second consultation will be reviewed alongside further technical evidence gathering. This work will then inform the preparation of the pre-submission version of the plan.

#### Public Consultation on Published Plan ('Regulation 19')

3.15 A draft Local Plan will be formally published for public consultation under Regulation 19. This will be the final opportunity for public comment before submission for examination.

#### Examination Period

3.16 The plan will be submitted for submission for Independent Examination (under Regulation 22) by the end of 2026. The dates for this will be set as part of the independent examination and cannot be defined as yet.

However, this stage will include:

- Examination Hearing: Public hearings are held where the inspector examines the plan's soundness.
- In-Examination Modifications and Consultation (if recommended): If the inspector suggests changes, these are made and publicly consulted on.
- Inspector's Report: The inspector issues a report with conclusions and any final required modifications.

#### Adoption of the Local Plan

3.17 Once the inspector's report is received and any final changes are made, the Local Plan will be formally adopted by the local authority. This is expected to be around the end of 2027.

3.18 For areas where a Neighbourhood Plan is being actively prepared the council will proactively work with that neighbourhood planning group to include any community-led planning objectives within the scope of the plan. The aim will be to ensure the timely progression of a sufficient and consistent planning framework for the plan area as a whole, whilst avoiding unnecessary duplication.

## 4 Documents supporting the Local Plan

- 4.1 A full evidence base will be prepared to support the exploration and testing of key issues and feasible policy options for the Local Plan review.
- 4.2 A range of existing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and other supplementary guidance supports the adopted Local Plan 2016-2036, although these are expected to cease to apply from 2027 under the provisions of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023). Further details on supplementary guidance can be found on our [Planning Policy guidance page](#).
- 4.3 The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (December 2024) sets out that all local planning authorities should prepare design guides or codes. In response to this, a plan area-wide Design Code will be prepared alongside the Local Plan. Further Design Codes for specific communities, sites or types of development will be considered.

# Annex 1: programme for the preparation of the Local Plan review

Local Plan Review		2025				2026				2027				
		Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter	
Initial evidence base scoping and commissioning (completed Spring 2024)														
Preparation of an Issues and Scope public consultation document (completed February 2025)														
Public consultation on the Local Plan Issues and Scope ('Regulation 18') (including a 'call for sites') (Completed April 2025)														
Consultation review, evidence base development, option testing, drafting of Regulation 18 Local Plan Document														
Public Consultation on 'Spatial Options and Policy Direction' ('Regulation 18')														
Consultation review, further testing and preparation of pre-submission Plan														
Public Consultation on <b>Published Plan</b> (Regulation 19)														
Examination period <sup>1</sup>	Submit published local plan for independent examination (Regulation 22)													
	Examination hearing													
	In-examination Modifications and consultation, if recommended by the Inspector													
	Inspector's report													
Adoption														

1. The timing and duration of the examination period is at the discretion of the Planning Inspectorate. Modifications of some form may be required. These may affect the final Local Plan adoption date and as such the examination period timeline is indicative.

## Conservation Area Appraisal Review

### Introduction

1. The council is required by Section 69 (2) of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act, 1990 to periodically review Conservation Areas. Section 71 of the same requires councils to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of said Conservation Areas (i.e. appraisals and management plans). If the Conservation Area boundaries are not reviewed the Local Planning Authority could be criticised by Historic England, Stakeholders, members of the public etc. for failing to comply with the requirements of the Act or for relying on outdated Conservation Area policy documents, making it difficult to defend conservation policies effectively at appeal.
2. The NPPF at Para 185 also sets out how Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation of the Historic Environment. 1.3 Para 186 of the NPPF directs that Local Planning Authorities should ensure an area justifies its status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation should not be devalued through inclusion of areas which lack special interest. It is taken that this should also apply to the retention of previously included parts of the Conservation Area which no longer met the criteria for designation.

### Background

3. Heritage assets are defined in the National Planning Policy Framework as: a building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)
4. There are 22 conservation areas in the district, some share a boundary with the National Park Authority. The larger settlements of Hythe; Ringwood; Lymington; Fordingbridge and Milford-on-Sea have Conservation Area Appraisals dating from 2000 and 2001, the remaining conservation areas have brief Character Statements dating from 2015-19.
5. The conservation areas in the district are:
  - Ashlett Creek
  - Bickton
  - Breamore

- Buckland (Lymington)
- Damerham
- Eling
- Fordingbridge
- Hanger Farm
- Hazel Farm
- Harbridge
- Hythe
- Ibsley
- Kings Saltern (Lymington)
- Lymington
- Martin
- Milford-on-sea
- Old Milton Green
- Ringwood
- Rockbourne
- Royal Naval Armaments Depot (Marchwood)
- Sopley
- Whitsbury

6. The council has 1.8 FTE Conservation Officers who propose to conduct a review of the Conservation Areas.

## **Process**

### **Stage 1**

7. The first stage will involve a full survey of the pilot conservation areas, checking the boundaries to see if there are any anomalies or changes to the area which no longer merit designation.

### **Stage 2**

8. The second stage will prepare the Appraisal which sets out what is significant about the Conservation Area and the reasons for designation. This includes an analysis of buildings or features within the Conservation Area which make a positive contribution. Positive features include listed buildings, non-designated heritage assets, historic parks, public realm, green and open space. Character areas, landmark features and views within the conservation area may also be mapped. The Management Plan sets out how and why change in the Conservation Area is controlled, advice on alterations and extensions and good practice advice on repair and maintenance.
9. A draft Conservation Area Appraisal, Management Plan and boundary map will be sent to the relevant parish/town council and Ward Members for their comments prior to a public consultation. This is early-stage stakeholder engagement.

10. Public consultation will be promoted on social media. An in-person public meeting/exhibition will be held in the conservation area, as per Section 71 of The Act (see above) as well as face-to-face meetings for Ward Members and Stakeholders. Following the public consultation representations will be recorded.

### **Stage 3**

11. If there is support for the conclusions of the Appraisal a Portfolio Holder Report will be prepared recommending the updated Appraisal is adopted as a Technical Guidance Note.
12. Any amendments to the boundary of a Conservation Area will require designation in accordance with the legislation.

This page is intentionally left blank