

4 MARCH 2026

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Wednesday, 4 March 2026

Cllr Jill Cleary (Chairman)

* Cllr Steve Davies (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

- * Geoffrey Blunden
- * Jeremy Heron

*Present

Councillors:

- * Dan Poole
- * Derek Tipp

In attendance:

Councillors:

Peter Armstrong
Philip Dowd
Barry Dunning
David Hawkins
Alan O'Sullivan
Joe Reilly

Councillors:

Steve Rippon-Swaine
John Sleep
Neil Tungate
Christine Ward
Malcolm Wade

Officers Attending:

Kate Ryan, Keziah Askew-Jones, Alan Bethune, Brian Byrne, Kirsty Farmer, Jamie Hollis, Richard Knott, Peter Matthew, Chris Pope, Karen Wardle and Matt Wisdom

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Cleary.

The Vice-Chairman, Cllr S Davies in the Chair.

83 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

In the absence of the Leader, the Deputy Leader, Cllr S Davies reported that since the last meeting, work had continued preparing for the third and final phase of the new waste and recycling service. From next week, bins and food waste caddies would start to be delivered, and would reach the 36,000 homes in Hythe, Fawley, Lyndhurst, Marchwood, Totton and nearby areas for the start of the new service in May.

This would give one consistent system across the New Forest district, enabling food waste to be recycled, and reducing the amount of general waste sent for incineration.

Residents would receive a leaflet explaining what to do, key dates, and where to get help, if they need it. All councillors would be sent key information in order to be able to advise their residents.

Members were reminded that this was a major change for the district and thanks was expressed to residents, members, and staff for their support in the final stage of the waste rollout.

84 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 2026, be confirmed and signed.

85 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

86 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

87 DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY 2025-2028

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

1. Noted the findings of the public consultation conducted on the NFDC Domestic Abuse Strategy; and
2. Approved the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025-2028.

KEY DECISION:

Yes

PORTFOLIO:

Community, Safety and Wellbeing

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:

As set out in the report.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

None

DISCUSSION:

The Portfolio Holder for Community, Safety and Wellbeing introduced the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025-2028. He reflected that Domestic Abuse is one of the most harmful crimes in society with far reaching and long-lasting consequences for both adults and children. Growing up in a household with fear and intimidation can impact on health, wellbeing and development with lasting effects into adulthood.

In the New Forest there were both statutory and voluntary services working to support those affected by domestic abuse. In conjunction with the Domestic Abuse partnership, the approach strengthens and coordinates with commissioned services, to ensure that survivors of domestic abuse have access to the best and most appropriate support. This was whilst also delivering a range of perpetrator programmes aimed at encouraging healthy non abusive relationships.

It was highlighted that an estimated 2.3 million people aged 16 and over experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2023 in England and Wales. Domestic abuse could affect anyone regardless of age, disability, gender identity, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. The importance of home being a safe space to live and relax was recognised and that for too many, home was not like this due to domestic abuse.

The Portfolio Holder reported that no single organisation held the key to take effective action against domestic abuse and that domestic abuse was everyone's responsibility. The Strategy proposed to build on the work already undertaken in the district, through effective partnership arrangements, including New Forest Domestic Abuse Forum and the Hampshire Domestic Abuse Partnership,

The Service Manager – Community Safety & Support reported that the Strategy had undergone a public consultation exercise, and whilst it was recognised there had been a low response rate, it was highlighted that 33% of respondents were victims of domestic abuse. 94% of all respondents agreed with the priorities within the strategy.

Several non-Cabinet members expressed their support for the Domestic Abuse Strategy. It was recognised that domestic abuse was a national problem, often under reported and that there could be difficulty in victims trusting the reporting process. It was recognised that trust needed to be built at a grassroots level. Non-Cabinet members also highlighted the difficulties in engagement in the strategy and that 18 consultation responses had been received in relation to the draft Strategy. It was highlighted that the report stated there were 7,000 victims of domestic abuse in the New Forest and that the reasons and causes of domestic abuse should be considered and addressed.

The Service Manager – Community Safety and Support responded to the points made, highlighting that the district council was in a good position, with the Domestic Abuse Forum to consider this at a strategic level with representation from both the statutory and voluntary sector. A priority within the strategy was to raise awareness and this would include the provision of training both for staff and for partners which could lead to earlier intervention. It was further highlighted that on average victims suffered 34 incidents of domestic abuse before attempting to step away from the perpetrator. It was therefore necessary to ensure that victims had the right support to services at the right time, whilst recognising the need to tailor this to the individual.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate, highlighted that the telephone number to report domestic abuse had previously been on the waste and recycling sacks provided by the district council and questioned with the move to wheeled bins, how this key messaging was being made available. In response, it was highlighted that communication was a key area and that messaging was carried out in a variety of ways, including targeted SMS messaging in under reported areas, using posters in public conveniences, through council and partner services as well

as through the licensed trade with the 'Ask Angela' campaign. The approach to consider new opportunities to encourage victims to access support to services was continually reviewed.

Finally, a non-Cabinet Member raised the issue of training recognising that staff were to receive training on this matter, and it was suggested that members also receive training in order to help them raise awareness, identify domestic abuse and how to report it.

88 HOUSING LANDLORD ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) STRATEGY

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet approved the Housing Landlord Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2026-29.

KEY DECISION:

Yes

PORTFOLIO:

Housing and Homelessness

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:

As set out in the report.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

None

DISCUSSION:

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness introduced the report and the Housing Landlord Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Strategy, highlighting that it set out four key priorities; putting tenants first, prevention and early intervention, managing risk and supporting victims and work in partnership. This had been developed as the Regulator of Social Housing required all social housing landlords to have a policy on ASB.

The Service Manager Housing Resident Services reported that following a public consultation exercise on the draft Strategy and reviewing the comments received several changes had been made to the strategy. This was around a shift in the language used to reduce stigma, a commitment to share positive outcomes through mediation, community led improvements and enforcement action, working on strengthening interdepartmental collaboration, through agreed protocols with for example CCTV, enforcement and community safety. It also had clarified the direction of travel with the estates management team with specialist support in relation to neighbourhood and ASB issues and also working in partnership with the Safer New Forest Partnership in relation to youth service provision.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate, expressed his support on the Strategy and highlighted that reports of anti-social behaviour to him had been increasing and spoke of the importance of prevention and early intervention.

A few non-Cabinet members expressed their support to the Strategy. However, concerns were raised that the Strategy had been written as a housing landlord and putting tenants in first. It was recognised that often social housing tenants lived in a community in areas with a mix of privately owned properties as well as in properties from other social housing providers and therefore it was important to recognise this. Social housing tenants did not live in isolation and that it was a problem for the local community. It was felt that a more holistic approach be used and that this should be strengthened. It was also felt that the messaging on the strategy be considered. A priority of the strategy was putting tenants first and it was suggested that neighbourhoods be put first.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness confirmed that the strategy had been developed to meet the requirements of the social housing regulator. The Service Manager for Housing Resident Services further clarified that a key priority of the Strategy was working in partnership with others, in particular the community safety team which would look at the wider neighbourhood.

89 DRAFT REVISED ALLOCATIONS POLICY

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet approved the revised draft Housing Allocations Policy (Appendix 1) for statutory public consultation.

KEY DECISION:

Yes

PORTFOLIO:

Housing and Homelessness

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:

As set out in the report.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

None

DISCUSSION:

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness introduced the report and the revised draft Housing Allocations Policy. In doing so, he highlighted that the current policy had been previously adopted in 2020. This had introduced a significant change to the approach and priorities around housing, focusing on housing need, rather than want, combined with the length of time someone had been on the housing register. The allocations policy was a significant and statutory policy document for the council in terms of its effects on the community and approval was sought to commence consultation on the revision. No change was proposed to the four needs bands of housing priority.

90 DRAFT HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2026-2031**RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet approved the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for public consultation.

KEY DECISION:

Yes

PORTFOLIO:

Housing and Homelessness

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED/REJECTED:

As set out in the report.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

None

DISCUSSION:

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness introduced the report and the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy which was recommended for Cabinet approval for public consultation. He highlighted that the Strategy needed to be reviewed at least every five years.

The Service Manager Housing Options and Tenancy Accounts reported that the Strategy was a statutory requirement and had been drafted following a comprehensive review carried out last year. This included engagement with partners, service users and staff. The Strategy set out five priorities to prevent and relieve homelessness, end rough sleeping, invest in accommodation, provide support and to work in partnership. There was a greater focus on better awareness and reducing the reliance on emergency accommodation. It was highlighted that the strategy aligned to the current Corporate Plan, particularly in supporting vulnerable residents and improving housing outcomes.

Several non-Cabinet members expressed their support for the draft Strategy. These members recognised that often there were problems, prior to homelessness crisis and of the importance of homelessness prevention. It was recognised that it was a difficult and complex problem which required detailed local knowledge, working with landlords and partners. Early intervention was therefore important. Wider issues such as children living in poverty in the New Forest in receipt of free school meals were highlighted and the need for a more holistic approach to address the causes of social issues at source.

The Portfolio Holder responded to the points made, supporting the importance of preventing homelessness and of the positive efforts of the housing team. He also recognised with the prospect of LGR and a new unitary authority this gave an opportunity for more joined up working.

CHAIRMAN