

11 SEPTEMBER 2025

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLACE AND SUSTAINABILITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of a meeting of the Place and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on Thursday, 11 September 2025

* Cllr Steve Rippon-Swaine (Chairman)

* Cllr Alvin Reid (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

* Peter Armstrong
* Allan Glass
Matthew Hartmann
* Stephanie Osborne

Councillors:

* Adam Parker
Michael Thierry
* Malcolm Wade

*Present

In attendance:

Substitutes:

Kate Crisell (Substitute for Michael Thierry)

Councillors:

Geoffrey Blunden
Derek Tipp

Councillors:

Christine Ward

Officers Attending:

Liz Mockeridge, Dean Brunton, Steve Cook, Peter Ferguson, Tim Guymer, Roxanne King, Richard Knott, Karyn Punchard, Saqib Yasin, Chris Noble and Andy Rogers

Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Hartmann and Thierry. Cllr Crisell attended as Conservative substitute.

14 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 May and 19 June 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.

15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

16 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

17 STRATEGIC COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) PROGRAMME

The Panel considered the Programme for Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy projects (CIL).

The report provided an update on the 5 strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) projects approved by Cabinet in October 2024. The report set out the progress to date on each project, together with a direction of travel and an estimated budgets allocation from the £4.5m approved CIL funding.

The 5 strategic projects are:

Ringwood Town Centre,
Milford on Sea Seafront,
Bath Road, Lymington,
Totton Town Centre Regeneration,
Improved Walking Routes Between the National Park and Surrounding Communities.

A correction was noted on paragraph 30 where the figure of £950k should have read £850k. Also on paragraph 36 it was clarified that the £1m referred to was an approximate indicative value of extra works required which could be exceeded.

Concept designs would be presented to Cabinet in November 2025 and delivery was projected for 2027. Parish and Town councils were being consulted as well as District Members.

It was noted that if there were insufficient funds following tender returns, this would be reported to the Cabinet.

On a query concerning the remaining CIL funds and projected receipts by 2028, it was explained that a number of strategic sites were coming forward and CIL amounts are calculated when planning applications were granted. An infrastructure funding statement was published each year which set out funding available and monies forecasted to come forward, which would be available at the end of the year. Approximately £9m in unallocated funds was currently being held.

RESOLVED:

That the Panel supports the projects as set out in the report, together with the following recommendations intended for Cabinet:

1. That the progress of work to date and the direction of travel on the Strategic CIL projects as set out in paras 10 to 50 of this report be noted.
2. That the concept designs proceed to detailed design and tendering of full works.

18 RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND REVIEW 2023-2025 AND SHARED PROSPERITY FUND REVIEW 2023 - 2025

The Panel noted a summary of the delivery of the New Forest District Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) (focussing on communities and places, supporting local businesses, people and skills), and the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) (targeting business innovation and community infrastructure projects).

Together, the two programmes brought over £1.5m of Government funding into the District to support local priorities from 2022 – 2025.

The report outlined the principles of both funds, provided an overview of the projects delivered, confirms outputs and outcomes, and highlighted lessons learned that had shaped the 2025–2026 delivery programme.

The Panel was shown Powerpoint slides of examples of Rural England Prosperity Fund Projects in Ringwood, Beaulieu and Lymington. These illustrated how the funds were used to improve the financial or environmental sustainability of businesses or community facilities, by helping purchase equipment or machinery. These pictures are attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes.

Officers undertook to provide the costs of the schemes in Appendix 1 of the report to Panel members and clarify the locations of projects in both appendices.

RESOLVED:

That the success and lessons learned from the New Forest District Council UKSP and REPF Programmes 2022 – 2025 be noted.

19 WASTE STRATEGY UPDATE

The Panel received a presentation giving an update on progress with the roll out of the new Waste Service, including lessons learned from phase 1, to inform phases 2 and 3.

The slides from the Presentation are attached to these minutes as Appendix 2.

It covered the following areas:

- Background (legal and the NFDC approval timeline),
- Waste Programme and projects,
- Transformation and Change,
- Key Issues,
- Learnings/Actions for Phases 2 & 3,
- New Waste Service Timeline,
- Decision Timeline.

Main learnings from phase 1 included the need to improve methods and quality of address data for container deliveries, improved mechanisms for missed collections, new arrangements for collecting food waste containers (behind the gates and investigation of lockable containers), and enhanced website and customer and member communications. Any suggested improvements regarding Member communications going forward are welcome.

The presentation concluded that the project had dealt with huge visible and non-visible change, tangible benefits were already being seen with food waste tonnages (a recycling rate from Q1 was reported of 40.2% compared with a historical level of around 35%), health and safety and litter reduction. Household waste was down 6% on the same period. 130 tonnes of food waste had been collected in the current quarter.

There were challenging aspects to the project but improvement plans were in place to meet phase 2, which involved half the number of households of phase 1. Strong governance and oversight measures were in place.

Members highlighted concerns of Brockenhurst residents, though were pleased with progress and actions being taken, including the further planned meeting between officers and residents. Officers explained that a range of actions were being implemented. Resetting of narrow access rounds was progressing well and supervisor resource had been improved. Recruitment challenges were being addressed and market supplements offered to attract drivers.

It was explained that new routing technology in waste collection vehicle cabs generated real time live reporting from crews to the Customer Service team, and the customer portal on the Council's website. This allowed people to see the progress of local collections and to contact the Council about missed collections. It was acknowledged that not everyone chose or was able to use the Council's website.

As part of the switch to this new technology, a review of routes had been undertaken, as this had not been done for some time, in part pending guidance and clarity from the Government on the terms of the waste arrangements. The routes had to be changed to take account of the change to wheelie bin collections and make this as efficient as possible. Speed and accuracy of collections are improving all the time.

A request was made that all containers be kept behind gates because of animal interaction with waste. In response it was explained that because of the significant resource implications of this, an evidenced business case would be needed, and further work was required on whether this was the optimum overall solution. Consideration of any policy change would be reported on in due course.

In response to a point concerning the Pannage letter coverage being incomplete, it was explained that this letter was being hand delivered to 2200 households based on a new dataset. It was hoped all affected households would be contacted and would be completed within the next day, but officers would welcome any information where it was thought households may have been missed.

It was confirmed that phases 2 and 3 would continue as originally timetabled.

Officers explained that contract management on bin distribution had been tightened up and improved but feedback on this was welcomed.

In response to a question, it was reported there had been no manual handling incidents or injuries since the introduction of the new arrangements, underlining one of the positive benefits for staff involved.

In response to a question, officers confirmed that the Hythe and Dibden area are expected to receive waste sacks in the coming weeks. Officers also undertook to investigate problems in phase 3 areas and report back to the member who raised it.

Safety surveys were being undertaken with a view to avoiding the need for staff to cross a cattle grid on foot to collect waste, and to ascertain the safest place to collect from and as well as improved messaging for the 90 properties concerned.

Members acknowledged the unique challenges of operating a waste collection service in a rural area like the New Forest, with roaming animals and the associated issues.

In answer to a question, officers confirmed that the Government requirement on the timescale for the introduction of food waste collections was that all households must have the new arrangements in place by the end of March 2026.

Officers confirmed the recent decision made by Cabinet, which was that officers continued to work on a business case to extend the behind the gate policy beyond Pannage, and that an in-principle agreement to this longer term policy change was given, with the final decision being subject to a business case.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

20 CHRISTCHURCH BAY & HARBOUR FLOOD & COASTAL EROSION RISK MANAGEMENT (FCERM) STRATEGY

The Panel considered the readoption of the Christchurch Bay & Harbour Strategy, following amendments that were required as a result of the Environment Agency assurance process in May 2025.

These amendments focused on affordability and investment planning, along with some revisions to the adaption pathways for the management units within the NFDC area. This report only covers the areas of change that have been incorporated, while the full Strategy report from September 2024 can be viewed under the background papers.

The changes were considered to be sufficient enough to warrant the Strategy being taken through the Council adoption process again.

RESOLVED:

That it be a recommendation to the Cabinet:

- (i) That Cabinet recommend that Full Council approve and adopt the revised Strategy, with the recommended leading options identified in the Christchurch Bay & Harbour Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Strategy for the New Forest District Council area, subject to securing the necessary funding contributions.
- (ii) That In approving and adopting the revised Strategy, that NFDC commits to developing a Funding Strategy that will seek to identify and aim to secure the necessary funding contributions to enable the national or local leading options to be implemented via future capital schemes and maintenance of existing/new schemes, noting that the exact amount of contributions will need to be confirmed as schemes are developed.
- (iii) That Cabinet notes that there is no statutory duty upon NFDC as the Coast Protection Authority to undertake coast protection works, nor does the adoption of the Strategy bind NFDC to commit to the provision of any funding for the delivery of the identified options.

(iv) That Cabinet notes that throughout the development of the Strategy, extensive engagement and consultation was undertaken with:

1. Residents & wider communities (including landowners, community groups, organisations and individuals),
2. Key stakeholders,
3. Officers & members.

21 ANNUAL REPORT ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURE EMERGENCY

The Panel received an update on progress towards achieving the aims of the Climate Change and Nature Emergency declaration.

Updates within this report were aligned to the four adopted programmes of activity – Carbon Reduction, Climate Adaptation, Nature Recovery and Programme Management and covered projects and activities undertaken between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.

It was noted that emissions had reduced by approximately 2% both in respect of NFDC and in the New Forest area. For NFDC, fleet was the highest emissions area, and for the New Forest, transportation was the highest emissions area.

Delivery of the Climate Change and Nature Emergency Action Plan would continue, alongside the operation of the Member Task and Finish Group which would assess the climate projections, risk assessments and opportunities for improvement of the programme, to determine a clear and coordinated way forward. All strategic objectives and actions would be considered in the context of LGR and devolution, to ensure the New Forest District area was safeguarded.

A member raised a query regarding comparative emissions from new waste vehicles. In reply, it was explained that whilst more vehicles were needed to carry out the new service compared with the previous system, the new arrangements diverted materials away from incineration, and, with more efficient processing of recyclables, it was anticipated that lower emissions would result overall. Alternative fuels were also being examined. This data would be reflected in future reports.

The Panel noted examples where the Council had encouraged contractors to adopt practices that reduced emissions and this type of requirements and behaviours into procurement practices, and these can be reflected in future reports.

In response to a question, it was explained that engagement was underway with businesses, the public, and schools to help them reduce their carbon footprint. Members were invited to forward information on any further networks for this engagement.

RESOLVED:

That is be a recommendation to the Cabinet:

- a) That it acknowledges activities undertaken and efforts made by NFDC and its partners between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 in response to the declared Climate Change and Nature Emergency; and

- b) That it continues to support the development of longer-term Climate Change and Nature Emergency strategic objectives and an associated Action Plan, as informed by the Member Task and Finish Group, to ensure that the New Forest District is prepared for and resilient to the impacts of climate change now and in the future, especially in consideration on political and organisational changes expected as a result of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Devolution.

22 CORPORATE PLAN KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR DASHBOARD QUARTER 1 2025/26

The Panel received the Corporate Plan Key Performance indicator dashboard Q1 - 2025/26.

The report presented the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Quarter 1 (April to June 2025). Measure IDs 16 through to 33 only were for Place and Sustainability review.

Overall, Members were pleased to see general improvement in most areas, and in particular, that the Planning service was doing very well.

Further analysis was sought on the locations and types of fly tipping to be brought back to the Panel at a future meeting. It was recognised that with the new Waste arrangements, these were slightly atypical times, and officers would investigate and review the categorisation and methodology used for recording fly tipping. In reply to a question, it was confirmed that only incidents involving NFDC land were being recorded, rather than private land. Officers would review the intelligence gathering in this regard, with a view to gaining a full picture across the District.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and passed for onward consideration by Cabinet.

23 PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S UPDATE

The Panel received updates from the Portfolio holders.

Cllr Tipp, Portfolio Holder, Planning and Economy

Local Plan

The revised timetable proposed a further consultation on a draft local plan, known as a Regulation 18 plan in later in the year, focusing on spatial growth options (general indications of where development might take place) and emerging policy directions.

This will be followed by a full draft Local Plan (known as a Regulation 19 plan) consultation in Autumn 2026 (containing specific sites for development), with submission to the Secretary of State planned by the end of 2026. Officers were currently in the process of gathering all the necessary information to support the work.

There will also be reviews of Conservation Area Appraisals, starting with Eling and Breamore, to ensure alignment with current planning policy and heritage guidance.

These reviews were expected to take approximately eight months each and would be undertaken by the Council's conservation team.

This revised approach ensured the Council remained compliant with statutory duties, responsive to community priorities, and the work programme will continue to be kept under review as work progresses on Local Government Reorganisation.

We are currently working with our current Local Plan in place which only has an 18 month land supply instead of the five years required and so we are vulnerable to speculative development applications which planning inspectors would be more likely to allow, contrary to the wishes of the Council or local people. A new Local Plan would deal with these issues, once adopted.

Economic Development

Skills Action Plan 2025 - 2030.

A new Strategic Group was in place, with its first working group focusing on young people. It held its first meeting last week. Nearly £200,000 of UK Shared Prosperity Funding was backing new programmes — from start-up support and apprenticeships to digital skills and reaching out to young people who are not in education, employment or training.

The Council had also partnered with Maritime Solent to boost local careers in the marine sector - the first local authority to do so. By working with Maritime Solent (a hub organisation which connects the many different parts of the marine industry), the Council is ensuring that local training and apprenticeship programmes are aligned with real industry needs—helping businesses access a skilled workforce and helping residents into quality jobs and driving economic growth across the District.

To champion small business, we're sponsoring the Best Micro Business Award at the New Forest Business Partnership Brilliance in Business Awards — entries close 30 September.

This September, New Forest residents and businesses can access Skills Bootcamps— short, flexible courses offering job-ready skills in high-demand sectors. Open to anyone aged 19 and over in Hampshire, these bootcamps are ideal for career changers, business owners, and teams looking to upskill. They are supported by the Department for Education, Hampshire County Council, Fareport Training, and GetSet for Growth.

Lastly our relaunched business e-newsletter now reached over 3,000 subscribers, sharing opportunities and updates across the New Forest.

In response to a question relating to the number of sites across the Forest where planning permission had been obtained to build houses but no action had been taken, the Portfolio holder explained that this information was in a report to Cabinet and he would make this information available to the member.

In answer to a question, Officers reported that the future direction of the Fawley power station site was still being actively looked at, there were issues with viability and the Council was working with the promoters of the site in the context of the new local plan, and members would be kept informed of progress as appropriate.

Cllr Blunden, Portfolio Holder, Environment and Sustainability**Waste service**

The update earlier in the meeting had given a good picture of the progress on roll out of the new service. The team have also been analysing waste tonnages from the first quarter from April to June 2026. The new service only started at the end of the quarter but the improvement was already evident and the recycling rate in quarter one had just broken the 40% mark.

Public conveniences,

The Council would be investing in its valued public conveniences, there were 23 across the District and the Council was recruiting additional cleaning teams to maintain high standards across all facilities including new changing places facilities that had been rolled out at key locations. It was anticipated that the new team would be in place by the end of this year. Public conveniences improvements would be looked at as part of the Council's asset review and replacements considered.

It was requested that the Eling toilets near the cemetery needed attention, and the portfolio holder would follow this up. A similar point was raised regarding the facilities at Calshot.

Coastal

The Coastal team were continuing to progress planned works at Hurst Spit. Financial approval for the Government funding that this Council has secured is expected from the Environmental Agency in the coming weeks and in conjunction with this the team had tendered for the works to appoint a suitable contractor. Tenders had been received and were being evaluated, works were due to start in mid-October.

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that officers were investigating environmentally friendly cleaning products for use at public conveniences, while ensuring they were effective.

24 WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel considered its future work programme.

Following a query raised earlier in the meeting, it was agreed that a report would be brought to the Panel next year, reviewing the project for the introduction of the new Waste and Recycling arrangements.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme be approved.

25 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**RESOLVED:**

That the following dates for future meetings of the Panel in the 2026/27 municipal year be agreed:

(Thursdays at 6pm):

2026

18 June

10 September

2027

14 January

11 March

CHAIRMAN