New Forest
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Meeting
Agenda

15 September 2025

SUMMONS

To All Members of the Council

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the District Council to be held in Council Chamber - Appletree Court, Beaulieu Road, Lyndhurst, SO43 7PA on Monday, 15 September 2025, at 6.30 pm

Kate Ryan
Chief Executive

Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, Hampshire. SO43 7PA
www.newforest.gov.uk

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.

Anyone wishing to attend the meeting should contact the name and number shown below.

Enquiries to: Karen Wardle
Email: democratic@nfdc.gov.uk
Tel: 023 8028 5071

AGENDA

Apologies

1. MINUTES (Pages 7 - 34)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2025 as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

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

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

4. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

5. REPORT OF CABINET - 6 AUGUST 2025 (Pages 35 - 94)

6. REPORT OF CABINET - 3 SEPTEMBER 2025 (Pages 95 - 148)

7. QUESTIONS

To ask questions under Standing Order 22. Questions received will be published ahead of the meeting. (Members are reminded that questions must be submitted to Democratic Services by no later than 12.00 noon, Wednesday 10 September 2025).

8. NOTICE OF MOTION

In accordance with Standing Order 21, Cllr J Davies will move the following motion: -

Re-instating the one-hour free parking period on Lymington High Street

Council notes:

- That Hampshire County Council is responsible for on-street parking across the county, including in the New Forest.
- That the free on-street parking period in Lymington has been reduced from one hour to just twenty minutes.
- That local shopkeepers and residents have raised concerns that twenty minutes is not long enough for people to use multiple shops, visit cafés, or support local services on the high street.
- That Lymington and Pennington Town Council recently voted to support the campaign by shopkeepers for the reinstatement of the one-hour free parking period on Lymington High Street.

Council believes:

- That the reduction from one hour to twenty minutes free parking is damaging to the vitality of Lymington High Street.
- That a reasonable period of free parking supports both residents during a cost-of-living crisis and our small businesses who rely on local footfall.
- That the council should support the campaign by local shopkeepers in pressing for fairer parking policy.

Council recommends:

- That the Leader of the Council writes formally to Hampshire County Council requesting the reinstatement of at least one hour of free on-street parking in Lymington (with correspondence to be made available to all councillors).
- That the council engages with local business groups, chambers of

commerce, and residents' associations to gather evidence on the impact of parking policy on high streets across the district, to strengthen the case for fairer parking provision.

Cllr McCarthy will second the motion.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 42, the above motion, after being proposed and seconded (without speeches), should stand referred to the body within whose terms of reference the subject matter of the motions comes, or the Cabinet or such Committees or Panels that the Council may determine.

The Chairman may allow the motion to be dealt with at this meeting if they consider it urgent, convenient or conducive to the despatch of business.

9. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS

To consider any changes to the membership of Committees or Panels that might be proposed by the political groups.

10. FUTURE MEETING DATES FOR 2026/2027

Meeting Dates to be agreed (to be held on Mondays at 6.30pm).

2026
18 May – AGM (Already Agreed)
13 July
14 September
12 October
14 December

2027 DATES
22 February
12 April
17 May - AGM

11. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

This page is intentionally left blank

14 JULY 2025

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held on Monday, 14 July 2025

* Cllr John Sleep (Chairman)
Cllr Dave Penny (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:	**Councillors:**
* John Adams	* Patrick Mballa
* Alan Alvey	* Colm McCarthy
* Peter Armstrong	* David Millar
* Geoffrey Blunden	* Ian Murray
Hilary Brand	* Stephanie Osborne
* Mark Clark	* Alan O'Sullivan
* Steve Clarke	* Adam Parker
* Jill Cleary	* Neville Penman
* Kate Crisell	* Dan Poole
* Sean Cullen	* Caroline Rackham
* Jack Davies	* Alvin Reid
* Steve Davies	* Joe Reilly
* Philip Dowd	* Janet Richards
* Barry Dunning	* Barry Rickman
* Jacqui England	* Steve Rippon-Swaine
* Richard Frampton	* Michael Thierry
* Allan Glass	* Derek Tipp
* David Harrison	* Neil Tungate
Matthew Hartmann	* Alex Wade
* David Hawkins	* Malcolm Wade
* John Haywood	* Christine Ward
* Jeremy Heron	* Phil Woods
* Nigel Linford	* Richard Young

*Present

Officers Attending:

Alan Bethune, James Carpenter, Lee Ellis, Daniel Reynafarje, Paul Thomas and Matt Wisdom

Apologies
Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Brand, Penny and Hartmann.

13 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2025, be confirmed.

14 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

15 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reported that since taking office in May, that he had represented the Council at various events across the district and the wider Hampshire area. Those included Mayor Making ceremonies and Civic Services. He highlighted the following engagements:

Meet and Greet Session and Armed Forces Day

The Chairman attended the meet and greet session for new employees at Appletree Court as well as raising the flag for Armed Forces Day on 23 June, alongside Cllr Alvin Reid, the Armed Forces Champion and representatives from the Armed Forces based at Marchwood. Cllr Reid and the Chairman also attended the Armed Forces Day event hosted by Fawley Parish Council on 21 June.

South East Reserves Forces and Cadets Association

The Chairman was pleased to attend the South East Reserves Forces' and Cadets' Association Armed Forces Briefing on 26 June.

Hampshire Scouts AGM

On 29 June, the Chairman had the pleasure of attending the Hampshire Scouts AGM at Ferny Crofts, which was a very informative and interesting event. The Chairman also met fellow civic heads, team leaders and volunteers.

HM Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire

The Chairman had the pleasure of meeting HM Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire, Nigel Atkinson, on two occasions this month, firstly at the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award Holders' Reception and then at the annual reception for incoming Mayors and Chairmen.

Recruitment and Learning

The Chairman was accompanied at the event by Zoe Ormerod, Lead Officer for recruitment and learning. Across the Council there was now 18 apprenticeships underway – in diverse areas from grounds maintenance and project management to team leader and fire safety. The Chairman felt that it was a pleasure to attend the event, to present the award and to witness first hand some of the budding stars of the future.

Brockenhurst College Gala

The final highlight was the Chairman's attendance at the Brockenhurst College Gala awards on Thursday evening, last week. The Chairman was delighted to present the award for 'Apprentice of the Year', which the Council proudly sponsored.

To conclude, the Chairman was looking forward to representing the Council at the New Forest Show later in July and encouraged everyone to go along and visit the Council's marquee, where Council staff would be sharing information about recycling and our new waste service, with a variety of activities and games for the whole family.

16 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Local Government Reorganisation

The Leader reported she had been representing the Council in its work with Councils across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. The Leader felt that the District Council position had been made very clear and she was pleased to have the support of Group Leaders to back the Council's campaign. Members had access to materials and members were asked to encourage their residents to take part in the survey. This, alongside the Council's deliberative engagement, demonstrated its commitment to listen to residents voices in making the case for the future of the Forest.

The Leader reported she had recently met many of the Council's partners which included Andrew Parry-Norton Chairman, Commoners' Defence Association and Brice Stratford. The importance of securing a strong future for commoning was discussed. At their request, on behalf of the Council, the Leader had sent them a letter which noted that the New Forest Commoners had self-identified as a national minority, in the context of the "Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities" and that they had a distinct cultural heritage and identity, with a continuity that was tied to, and defined by, the specific territory of the New Forest. This was, of course, something that the Council was keen to preserve and ensure was protected through local government reorganisation.

CIL Grant Funding

The Leader was also keen that all members were aware that in readiness for 2026 to 2027, the Council had opened applications to local organisations, community groups, and businesses for grants of up to £100,000 towards funding local infrastructure projects. This funding was available through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), and the application window was open until 8 August. Over the last two years, the Council had awarded funds towards nearly 60 projects around the district.

Defence Employer Recognition Scheme

The Leader was proud to let members know that the Council had been awarded silver in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme, which celebrated UK employers who demonstrated exceptional support to those who serve, or had served in the Armed Forces, as well as their families. This reflected a journey of continued progression and partnership working.

17 REPORT OF CABINET - 7 MAY 2025

There were no speakers on the item considered by Cabinet on 7 May 2025.

18 REPORT OF CABINET - 2 JULY 2025

PART I – ITEMS RESOLVED BY CABINET

Item 1 – Corporate Plan: Key Performance Data for Quarter 4 2024-2025 and Target Refresh April 2025 to March 2026

A Member raised that it was important to have KPI's relevant to the Council's priorities, recognising that the residents survey would not be undertaken. It was suggested that this be removed as a performance indicators and instead areas such as the asset review, waste service performance, customer service feedback, housing tenancy and staff feedback (relevant to transformation) be looked at, and ongoing projects which would be relevant for the next couple of years, with targets which were positive and achievable. In response, the Leader confirmed that the comments were noted.

PART II – RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

Item 7 - Financial Monitoring Report (Provisional Budget Outturn 2024/25)

Part I – Items Resolved by Cabinet

A member stated that over the years the Council had consistently underspent and although they supported the recommendations, they requested that excess monies, along with CIL, be spent on residents of the New Forest before the new Council was established. It was also felt that on the Waterside there would be projects where those monies would help enhance residents lives and would show that the Council was serious in its statement that it was one authority. In response, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate reported the Council was investing significant sums in the regeneration of Totton and Eling Tide Mill, alongside supporting the whole of the New Forest.

A question was raised on what was felt to be a significant underspend on disabled facilities grants of £500,000 and therefore, should the availability of the grant be further advertised or had the Council over-budgeted. In response, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness clarified that the sum had been set aside for private sector housing and had been no demand for the grant, although the HRA was always overspent.

Another Member agreed with £2.5m being moved to Capital Reserves and that this should provide an opportunity for Councillors to consider how it could be used in the next budget.

It was felt that the Council's, along with central government and Hampshire County Council's finances were being used for local government reorganisation with little being spent on residents who wanted good services and low council tax. There was also concern that historically local government reorganisation hadn't proceeded and that a plan B should be considered. In response, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate confirmed that the Council carried prudent reserves and that local government reorganisation had traditionally been a bumpy ride. As the Council was both prudent and prepared, £350,000 had been allocated to the local government reorganisation reserve. When the new Council was formed, the Council reserves would be transferred.

Part II – Recommendations to Council

Cllr Heron introduced the item and moved the recommendation, from the Cabinet meeting held on 2 July 2025. Cllr S Davies seconded the motion.

Members were asked to approve the addition of £500,000 to the Capital Programme to facilitate improvements across the Council's depot estate.

RESOLVED:

That £500,000 be added to the Capital Programme to facilitate improvements to the Council's depot estate.

Item 8 – Strategic Asset Management Plan

Cllr Heron, introduced the report and recommendation for Council. Cllr S Davies seconded the motion.

RESOLVED:

That the Strategic Asset Management Plan be adopted.

19 QUESTIONS

Questions were put and answered under Standing Order 22, as follows:-

From Cllr Parker to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Blunden, on whether lockable bins were considered as part of the waste collection rollout.

From Cllr J Davies to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Blunden requesting information on missed bin collections.

From Cllr C McCarthy to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Blunden on the number of complaints had been made by residents regarding the rollout of the new waste collection system.

From Cllr Millar to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Blunden asking what changes the Council was considering ahead of phase 2 of the rollout of wheelie bins.

From Cllr Clark to the Leader of Council, Cllr Cleary regarding a detailed, evidence based financial model that proved New Forest residents would not be forced to cross – subsidise services in other parts of the new Council.

From Cllr Dowd to the Leader of Council, Cllr Cleary regarding if the constitution of the new authority would ensure the voices of the towns and villages were not drowned out.

From Cllr Osborne to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Blunden, regarding whether it would be possible to produce a leaflet to help residents deal with fly tipping issues they faced on what was deemed private land.

From Cllr Cullen to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Cleary, regarding what thresholds would cause the Council to withhold support for devolution and local government reorganisation.

From Cllr Haywood to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness, Cllr S Davies, regarding home electric vehicle chargers and home charger installations in Council properties in the New Forest.

From Cllr Parker to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Blunden, regarding the lack of guidance and advice for Councillors in pre-empting some of the issues that had arisen and the amount of confusion on new expectations out there regarding the new waste collection roll out.

From Cllr Parker to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Blunden, regarding the idea to fill out postcards with pleasantries and praise to give to the collection teams.

Note: A copy of the full questions and replies are attached to these minutes.

20 NOTICE OF MOTION

In accordance with Standing Order 21, Cllr Tipp moved the following motion:-

This Council resolves that:-

The Leader of the Council write directly to the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government and our Members of Parliament for New Forest East and West to reiterate our opposition to the proposed changes. This is in addition to the detailed response that will be drafted in response to the consultation itself, and that will have been informed by engagement with Members, our current planning committee, our Place and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Panel and our Agents Panel.

Cllr Ward seconded the motion.

A significant number of members spoke in support of the motion. Those who supported the motion raised concern in relation to the erosion of powers for both Councillors and the Planning Committee, loss of local knowledge, target driven planning, the quality of future housing and the difficulty in refusing a planning application if it didn't provide affordable housing.

It was also recognised that Town and Parish Councils had an important role in the planning process and this would be even more important following local government reorganisation.

Members were pleased to see agreement across the Council on the motion as it showed that the concerns were strongly felt by everyone in the New Forest, as well as everyone in the country. Cllr Tipp was thanked for bringing the motion to Council.

RESOLVED:

That the motion was supported.

Council noted that:

Angela Rayner (the Deputy Prime Minister) has published a planning and infrastructure bill designed to liberalise planning rules. The Local Government Association has written to ministers to express reservations about this plan.

Council believed that:

The proposed changes will lead to the vast majority of planning decisions being made with no input from Councillors. It is the democratic role of councillors to be involved in the decision making process of planning applications. Removing the ability for councillors to discuss, debate or vote on key developments in their localities could erode public trust in the planning system and local government itself.

Council resolved:

That the Leader of the Council writes to Angela Rayner (the Deputy Prime Minister), outlining its opposition to this plan. That the Place and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Panel prepares mechanisms for Councillors to express views on planning applications related to their ward.

Note: the letter to the Secretary of State and the response from the Secretary of State are attached to these minutes.

21 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS

There were no changes.

CHAIRMAN

This page is intentionally left blank

Council – 14 July 2025 – Questions Under Standing Order 22

First Questions

Question 1

From Cllr Adam Parker to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Geoffrey Blunden

On the 'donkeys raiding bins' issue that made the national press: in parts of Scotland, residents have their bins under lock and key due to tourists seeing fit to dump their waste (usually in the incorrect type of bin). We've already had cases of this happening in Brockenhurst. Were lockable bins considered as part of the initial evaluation of this project? Can they be added to bins retrospectively? If the answer is no, why weren't they considered in what is a £5.6M scheme? And the common sense solution to what's been happening in Brockenhurst is surely to disregard the 'one size fits all' policy - and let people leave their bins behind their gates and fences if they're at risk of donkeys. So, can we make that policy?

REPLY

Thank you for your question regarding the supply of lockable bins to our residents.

The council is implementing its collection policy as based on previous engagement and consultation, including with stakeholders such as the Verderers and Forestry England, and since the inception of the Waste Strategy by this Council in 2021.

Due to the nature of our collection system and the number of properties in areas accessible to free roaming animals, the use of lockable bins, even if only adding a minute to each individual collection, would add an excessive amount of total time to each round. Substantial changes, would increase the cost of the collection and require additional staff and vehicles to complete the collection rounds.

We are however continuing to monitor the animal strikes on bins and caddies and have set up a form for residents to report any incidents, and we will consider if any changes to our operation are needed.

At present, we know that the scale of this issue is still small, but to deter animals, we ask residents to ensure that the food waste caddy is presented with the handle in the locked position, and that no food is added to the general waste bin.

We will continue to engage with residents, commoners and verderers on initiatives to reduce animals accessing waste.

I'm sure you will agree our new bins are an improvement against the plastic sacks which were so easily ripped open by animals.

Note: In response to a supplementary question regarding how much longer the disruption would continue the Portfolio Holder referred to the recent open letter that had been sent to all residents outlining the position that the Council was in at the moment.

Question 2

From Cllr Jack Davies to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Geoffrey Blunden

Since the start of June, I have been inundated with hundreds of queries from residents about missed waste collections, new bins not being delivered, and animals getting into the new food waste caddies. I know that our customer services staff have also been inundated.

Could the Portfolio Holder please provide the following information: How many people have used the form for reporting missed bin collections since June 9th? How many have reported a missed collection over the phone and how many have reported a missed collection by emailing the Waste Changes or Customer Services email address?

Reply

In the first 4 weeks of the new service, there were 2,606 missed collections of the new wheeled bins and food waste caddies reported to NFDC by residents. With 31,000 households in the phase 1 area, there were 248,000 collections due in the first 4 weeks, meaning that the number of reports received equates to just 1% of scheduled collections. In the first 4 weeks we have successfully collected over 150 tonnes of food waste.

This administration is investing in a new service with modern vehicles, ICT systems, new and improved working practices and more efficient routes. This huge level of vital change will result in some disruption to a small proportion of residents, which we are working hard to address. I do understand this disruption is frustrating to those affected and for that my apologies. There are things we will learn from as we move forwards to phases 2 and 3.

Do not judge this service rollout on this disruption in the early days of the scheme, judge it on the positive outcomes we expected when this waste strategy was approved, which we are now seeing - reducing waste sent to incineration, reducing the carbon impact of waste disposal, increasing our recycling rate, improving the range of materials we collect from residents, complying with government legislation on food waste, improving working conditions for our staff, reducing litter spilling from sacks on collection day, and many, many other benefits that will deliver us a modern, fit-for-purpose service.

Note: In response to a supplementary question regarding whether the Council will start offering refunds on Council Tax for the properties affected by missed bin collections, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that would not happen and requested that the context of the numbers in relation to mixed bins against the overall service that is provided and has not been disrupted.

Question 3

From Cllr Colm McCarthy to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Geoffrey Blunden

How many complaints have been made by Residents regarding the rollout of the new waste collection system?

Reply

We fully expected there to be some initial issues in the first weeks and months of service change. We didn't shy away from that fact in our briefings or communications in the lead up to service change, and as all members will be aware, we are delivering what can quite reasonably be described as, as the best part of thirty years worth of change to our first phase residents in the last six weeks, in line with our new collection policy.

For anyone still unclear what that involves... it is moving from weekly to fortnightly collections, it is about adding new crews on updated vehicles and technology, it is about delivering revised and more efficient routings and introducing food waste services. It is change that is complex, and affects all households involved, and which comes with ahigh level of expectation.

Talking of expectation, many of the issues we have had raised are as expected, and various predicted issues have come to fruition. This includes the uncovering of residential properties disposing of trade waste, or in some excessive cases 20-30 bags at a time, we have uncovered holiday accommodation operations that require trade collections not residential collections, we have seen a spike in the amount of trade related waste deposited at our bring sites, and various efforts at presenting side waste that will not be collected.

We continue to work with residents to ensure their waste is presented as required, provide support those who need access to our accessible collection service, advise those who are actually required to engage private waste services, and those who have an evidenced need for additional, or in some cases reduced capacity.

We deal with most contact through our contact centre, or most directly our online forms to report missed collections and the like.

Across all of the various contact channels, the Corporate Complaints team has only recorded 26 stage 1 corporate complaints relating to the service change up until Friday of last week, with all other matters being dealt with at an operational service level.

Personally, I would like to place on record my thanks to all of our operational teams, and the council staff working tirelessly in the background to iron out the kinks and issues, deal with matters as they arise and continue to deliver waste collection services for the absolute vast majority of our residents, and 88,000 households without issue.

Note: In response to a supplementary question whether a full review of the Phase One rollout, led by Councillors be conducted before the next rollout to Phases 2 and 3 to prevent errors and it was confirmed by the Portfolio Holder that this was ongoing and we made note of any improvements which were needed.

Question 4

From Cllr David Millar to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Geoffrey Blunden

Ahead of the phase 2 roll out of wheelie bins, what changes are the Council considering to reduce complaints by residents, minimise pressure on our front line staff, and improve communication between the implementation team and the ward councillors?

Reply

Thank you for your question, I appreciate that you are a phase two Councillor and will be keen to benefit from the experience of those of us in phase one. For this kind of major service change a comprehensive lessons learned review of our phase one rollout was always part of our programme to enable us to apply any necessary actions or learnings to ensure the best possible outcomes for our residents in all 3 phased areas.

With regards to specific communication between officers and ward councillors, at the end of December and at the end of January, and again in April, all councillors were invited to either face-to-face or Teams briefings to set out the approach to the rollout. Recordings of these sessions are available on the Councillors areas of Forestnet.

Direct email communication was sent to all Cllrs just ahead of the service change, which included comprehensive information. This included copies of our leaflets, key links and information to help signpost and answer resident questions, and officers have continued to be available to support member queries.

We anticipate offering the same support to Councillors for phases two and three, and also plan to offer a specific area on Forestnet where information will be updated, we are also keen to hear any feedback on how Members feel they can be best supported.

Note: In response to a supplementary question regarding whether the review would involve Councillors from across the parties, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that it was essential that all Members had input into any feedback.

Question 5

From Cllr Mark Clark to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Jill Cleary

In regards to our LGR consultation - Option 1 would merge the New Forest with three other districts, creating a vast and varied authority. Our district has unique and costly service demands, from coastal protection to managing the impacts of tourism on a world-renowned National Park. Can the leadership provide a detailed, evidence-based financial model that proves New Forest residents will not be forced to cross-subsidise services in other parts of this new council? Furthermore, how can you guarantee that our specialised, locally-attuned services will not be diluted or centralised under a 'one-size-fits-all' model, leading to a decline in service quality for our residents?

Reply:

Thank you for your question, which rightly highlights the unique and complex service demands of the New Forest – ranging from coastal protection to the stewardship of protected landscapes such as our National Park.

Option 1, which proposes a rural-focused unitary authority, is built on the principle of place-based service delivery. This means services can be designed around the specific needs of our communities, not imposed from a distant, urban-centric centre. We are actively resisting any model that would dilute our locally-attuned services or force the New Forest into a structure that does not reflect our identity, geography, or priorities.

This administration will not support any reorganisation that risks turning the New Forest into a peripheral outpost of a larger, urban-led authority. Our commitment is to a model that protects our environment, respects our communities, and delivers services that are tailored, not templated.

Finally, let me be clear, financial modelling is not an after thought in this process, it is a fundamental element. Our officers , in collaboration with partners across Hampshire and the Solent, are developing robust, evidence-based financial models to ensure that any proposed structure is both sustainable and equitable. These financial models will be an integral part of the proposal that we will submit to the government in September.

Note: In response to a supplementary question regarding SEND provision, Adult social care and the Council subsiding higher need areas, elsewhere, the Leader assured the Council that this would not be absent for the

proposals and that the Council was working with an experienced Director of Adults and Children's Services to advise our work.

Question 6

From Cllr Philip Dowd to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Jill Cleary

NFDC's LGR proposal would create one of the largest unitary authorities in the country by area, stretching from the Solent to the North Wessex Downs. Such a super-sized council risks creating a significant democratic deficit, where decisions are made by a remote administration that is out of touch with our local communities. What specific and robust mechanisms will be embedded in the constitution of this new authority to ensure the voices of our towns and villages, from Totton and the Waterside to Ringwood and Fordingbridge, are not drowned out? How will you defend this proposal against the charge that it fundamentally weakens local democracy and erodes the distinct identity of the New Forest?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. The preservation of local democracy and the distinct identity of the New Forest is at the heart of our approach to Local Government Reorganisation.

We fully recognise the risks of creating a geographically large authority. That's why our preferred option is not simply about size, it's about structure, service design, representation, and accountability. The model we are advocating for is rooted in strong representation from our existing network of active Town and Parish Councils, ensuring that local voices continue to shape local outcomes. Something we share with Test Valley, Winchester and East Hampshire.

Further to our priorities, the Government has made it clear that effective neighbourhood governance is a key part of Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation. The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill will set the landscape for all local authorities to establish effective neighbourhood governance. It means that there is a debate for us to take forward on how we create the space for a new unitary authority's towns, villages, and communities to have a stronger voice in shaping local decisions.

As for the New Forest's distinctiveness, the Bill and the LGR process both emphasise place-based governance. This means that any new authority must reflect and respect the unique character of its communities. The

Government will expect any reorganisation proposal to demonstrate how it will preserve local identity, ensure democratic accountability, and deliver better outcomes for residents and we believe that Option 1 gives us the best chance of doing that.

Note: In response to a supplementary question regarding our chosen model's unique selling point in achieving conflicting demands, the Leader confirmed that we did not support LGR but were making the best we can and our USP was local, responsiveness and would work day and night to make sure that happens.

Question 7

From Cllr Steph Osborne to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Geoffrey Blunden

Fly tipping is increasing in local roads which are not seen as the responsibility of NFDC to collect. This leads to further fly tipping and is almost impossible for the residents to solve when it cannot be disposed of at the local recycling centres.

Would it be possible for NFDC to produce a leaflet to help residents deal with the fly tipping issues they face on what is deemed private land and cannot be disposed of at the tip? What advice or signposting regarding how to prevent further fly tipping in these areas can NFDC support our Residents with?

Reply

Fly tipping is a known problem within the district and something that both our Streetscene and Enforcement Teams work extremely hard to manage.

NFDC responds to, removes and investigates fly tipping on our own land as quickly as possible to reduce the environmental and visual impact of waste, however the clearance of material or waste disposed of on privately owned land is the responsibility of the landowner or persons in control.

Officers from the Environmental Enforcement team seek opportunities to work with landowners and to identify perpetrators or persons responsible and where identified, proceed with enforcement action. The organisation

of waste collection and the associated costs are the responsibility of the landowner. Following the transition of environmental enforcement services to the Service Manager for Community Safety, CCTV and Support Services, we are considering opportunities for providing further advice to residents and businesses in areas of fly-tipping and will consider your suggestion.

Information can also be found on the council's website.

Note: In response to a supplementary question would it be possible to arrange a suspension of recycling centres fees for residents who are trying to clear their area of fly tipping, the Portfolio Holder wasn't sure what help could be given directly but would ask Officers to advise as it could be quite complex on responsibilities.

Question 8

From Cllr Caroline Rackham to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Jill Cleary

The Local Government Review seems to be guiding us towards joining with Southampton. What is the leadership doing to put the case for our area being of a very different economic character and to ensure that our local economy is protected from a 'big business comes first' attitude?

Reply

Thank you for your question. Let me be absolutely clear: the leadership of New Forest District Council is working tirelessly to rebut the notion that our area should be absorbed into a Southampton-led model. The New Forest is not an extension of a city, it is a unique rural district with a distinct economy, identity, and set of challenges that demand a tailored approach.

We are undertaking significant, evidence-based work to make this case to Government and our partners. This includes:

- *A comprehensive place-shaping exercise, capturing the economic, environmental, and social character of the New Forest and the Waterside.*

- *Targeted engagement through workshops and focus groups, to ensure that local voices are shaping the future of local governance.*
- *A wider programme of research, drawing together data, lived experience, case studies and insight to build a compelling and credible case for a rural-focused authority.*

Option 1, our preferred model, would create a rural unitary authority that brings together like-minded areas such as Test Valley, Winchester, and East Hampshire. This model is not about size; it's about fit. It allows us to design place-based services that are rooted in the needs of rural communities, not dictated by the priorities of an urban centre.

We reject the idea that economic growth must come at the expense of local character. Our economy is built on a blend of sustainable tourism, small businesses, agriculture, and environmental stewardship, as well as the larger industries along the Waterside. Option 1 supports this by enabling local economic strategies that reflect our values and protect our assets, including the National Park and our coastline.

We are not standing still. We are actively shaping the future, and we will not support any proposal that compromises the identity, economy, or democratic voice of the New Forest.

Note: In response to a supplementary question regarding if the Council didn't get option 1 what would was the Council intending to do with its LGR research, the Leader confirmed that they would use the research I the best possible way to support what the New Forest and its residents want, which was option 1, joining with like minded councils it was not under any circumstances being led by a city organisation.

Question 9

From Cllr Sean Cullen to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Jill Cleary

Your consultation response asks for clarity on funding scale, timing, and district council roles. What thresholds would cause you to withhold support—for example, if devolution funding is insufficient or district representation on the new Mayor's board is only 'observer' level?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. At the heart of the Government's devolution agenda is a promise: that powers and funding will be brought closer to communities, not further away.

For that promise to be kept, the governance structures must be credible, inclusive, and locally grounded.

That's why I was clear in my consultation response, that clarity on funding scale, timing, and governance is essential. If Devolution fails to deliver meaningful investment, or if the knowledge, skills and expertise currently held by district councils are not tapped into, then it risks becoming devolution in name only.

We are working to actively promote that any new governance model includes:

- *Formal roles for district leaders during transition, to safeguard service continuity.*
- *Protections for local representation, ensuring that rural voices are not drowned out.*
- *A clear pathway for local knowledge to shape the design of new services, not just during transition, but long after.*

Our residents deserve a devolution deal that empowers them, not one that centralises power under the guise of reform.

However, to manage Cllr Cullen's expectations – it is only the Upper Tier Local Authorities who are asked by Government to take forward the establishment of the Mayoral Strategic Authority and as such it will be these councils who are taking the decision to proceed, whether the deal delivers for local residents now and in the future.

Question 10

From Cllr John Haywood to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness Portfolio Holder, Cllr Steve Davies

Home Electric Vehicle chargers have been an important part of our green infrastructure for many years now. Notwithstanding the convenience of

home chargers, in Ringwood electricity from the public chargers in our Furlong car park costs 56p / kWh, whilst from home chargers it costs a little as 6p / kWh, so there is a clear need for home chargers to support the economics of driving an Electric Vehicle. A welcome enabler for drivers of Electric Vehicles who do not have a drive is that Hampshire Highways have approved cross-pavement charging with appropriate cable protectors.

New Forest District Council should be actively enabling our council tenants who wish to reduce their carbon footprint and save money by driving Electric Vehicles, and this means supporting home charger installations as widely as possible. Can the portfolio holder advise how many Electric Vehicle charger installations have been approved for our council tenants this year, how many have been rejected, and how many of the approvals were for properties without a drive where the charging cable must cross a public footway?

Reply

Thank you for your question, you raise an important point in regarding Hampshire County Council permitting cross pavement charging from home chargers with suitable protectors. However, this is not a blanket acceptance by Hampshire or us. We both need to take account of the individual risks and the nature of our rural areas, such as places with no street lighting or cars parked a long distance away from charging points requiring extra - long cables. Each tenant alteration request is looked at on a case-by-case basis.

This council is committed to help tenants reduce their carbon footprint where possible, that's why we are making significant investments in our council housing stock towards achieving better energy efficiency in our homes.

In answer to your question, the Housing service has received 22 alteration requests for home EV chargers in the last 12 months:

We have approved 14
We have 1 pending decision and declined 7

Reasons for decline are:

- *The charging cable would go over a walkway, and there were no allocated parking spaces – 4 cases*
- *Not eligible due to tenancy type and term – 2 cases*
- *The car would need to charge on a main road with no allocated parking space - 1 case*

Housing will continue to assist tenants to install electric vehicle chargers where it is able to do so both legally and safely.

Second questions

Question 11

From Cllr Adam Parker to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Geoffrey Blunden

Corporations are known to employ 'change management' departments. People instinctively don't like changes and need to be told why changes are (or can be) positive. Sorry if I've missed some memos, or if some of these calls pre-date my election, but I wonder how much consideration the 'change' aspect was given for this roll-out - not least in the total lack of guidance and advice for councillors in pre-empting some of the issues that have arisen and the amount of confusion on new expectations out there. Did we expect it to be perfect? Here's a classic, and lower priority, example: a residents' glass collection is missed. Should they leave the glass out for another ad hoc collection, or should it be assumed they need to wait a month for the next one?

Cllr Parker has apologised if he has missed memos. I would refer him to the Cllr briefings held so far, most recently in April, which are still available for him to view on our intranet should he wish to do so. I also refer him to the very detailed written briefing, already referred to in a previous answer this evening, sent to all Members in May.
We did not expect such a complex and significant service change to be perfect, and ALL of our conversations with other councils who have already made such changes suggested there would be some disruption in the early days. As already explained this evening, the service change has gone well for the vast majority of residents and any teething problems will be resolved.

Third questions

Question 12

From Cllr Adam Parker to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, Cllr Geoffrey Blunden

Whose idea was it that we should fill out postcards with pleasantries and praise to give to collection teams, should we encounter them? What was the genesis of this idea? And, opening the floor, has any councillor done this and what was the response?

Reply

As members will be aware, the implementation of a service of this scale, affecting 80,000 households and introducing significant operational change, has placed considerable additional pressure on our frontline crews. In recognition of that, officers brought forward a range of ideas to the Waste Project Board. The purpose of those proposals was to ensure that we appropriately acknowledge the hard work, adaptability, and commitment of our staff throughout this transition.

The idea of thank you postcards was one of a number of suggestions presented by the communications team as part of a wider package of informal staff recognition measures. Other suggestions included visits to depots by councillors and senior officers, internal communications to highlight positive resident feedback, and small low-cost tokens of appreciation.

The thank you postcard concept was a simple and cost-effective gesture designed to allow managers and councillors to provide personalised recognition to individual crew members or teams.

I understand that so far take-up has been limited. Nonetheless, where they have been used, the intention was to provide a genuine, human note of appreciation.

It is important to emphasise that the postcards were never presented or intended as a standalone measure. They formed part of a wider internal recognition approach that included direct visits to depots by myself and other councillors, senior leadership engagement with staff, and ongoing

efforts to ensure that staff morale and wellbeing are supported throughout this complex operational change.

We are continuing to review all aspects of the rollout, including staff support and internal communication. I am grateful to all our crews for their ongoing professionalism and dedication, and I am confident that members across the chamber will join me in recognising the vital role they play in delivering this frontline service for our residents.

This page is intentionally left blank

New Forest DISTRICT COUNCIL

Leader of the Council

Cllr Jill Cleary

Telephone: 023 8028 5456
My Ref: JC/MS/07
Your Ref:

Date: 22nd July 2025

The Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP
Deputy Prime Minister & Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Deputy Prime Minister

Consultation on Planning Committee Reforms

I am writing on behalf of New Forest District Council in response to the Government's current consultation on proposed reforms to planning committees, as published in the Technical Consultation paper on 28 May 2025.

The Council notes the Government's wider intention to accelerate the delivery of critical infrastructure and housing through changes to planning procedures, including the removal of certain statutory consultation requirements and the streamlining of decision-making processes.

While we recognise the importance of ensuring we continue to have an efficient planning system, we share the concerns previously expressed by the Local Government Association regarding the implications of these reforms for local democratic accountability.

The Council is particularly concerned about the proposed changes to the role and remit of local planning committees. These changes, if implemented, would significantly reduce the ability of elected Councillors to scrutinise, debate, and vote on planning applications that directly affect their communities. We believe this would represent an unacceptable erosion of democratic oversight and risk undermining public trust in both the planning system and local government more broadly.

Local Councillors are elected to represent the interests of their constituents, and their involvement in planning decisions is a vital part of ensuring that development is appropriate, sustainable, and reflective of local needs. Removing or diminishing this role would not only weaken local accountability but could also lead to poorer planning outcomes and increased community opposition to development.

Accordingly, the Council has unanimously resolved to oppose the proposed changes to the role and remit of planning committees. In addition to submitting a detailed response to the consultation—developed through engagement with our Members, Planning Committee, Place and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Panel, and Agents Panel—we are writing directly to you, the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government, and our Members of Parliament for New Forest East and West to reiterate our position.

We urge the Government to reconsider these proposals and to work collaboratively with Local Authorities to ensure that planning reforms enhance, rather than diminish, democratic engagement and community trust.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Jill Cleary
Leader of the Council

cc: Sir Julian Lewis MP New Forest East
Sir Desmond Swayne MP New Forest West

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Matthew Pennycook MP
Minister of State for Housing and Planning
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Our reference: PO2025/21133

Cllr Jill Cleary
Leader of New Forest District Council
Amanda.Smith@NFDC.GOV.UK

18 August 2025

Dear Jill,

Thank you for your correspondence of 22 July regarding the consultation on planning committee reforms.

I appreciate how important this matter is to you and I am grateful to you for taking the time to write. I have asked my officials to address your concerns in the letter appended.

Please be assured that I am conscious of the matters you have raised, and I appreciate the insight your correspondence provides.

I hope the attached response suitably addresses your enquiry. If that is not the case, please don't hesitate to let me know.

Best wishes,

MATTHEW PENNYCOOK MP
Minister of State for Housing and Planning

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Our reference: PO2025/21133

Cllr Jill Cleary
Leader of New Forest District Council
Amanda.Smith@NFDC.GOV.UK

18 August 2025

Dear Cllr Cleary,

Thank you for your correspondence, to which the Housing Minister has asked me to reply.

Thank you for your comments on the technical consultation on the reform of planning committees. The Department will analyse all consultation responses before developing the regulations in more detail. However, I can provide the following general information on the matter, which I hope will be of use.

Planning is principally a local activity, because decisions about what to build and where should be shaped by local communities and reflect the views of local residents. That is why the Government is determined to ensure every area has an up-to-date local plan developed through significant resident engagement, and it is why the Government believes that planning committees have an integral role in providing local democratic oversight of planning decisions. It is vital, however, that in exercising that democratic oversight, planning committees operate as effectively as possible, focusing on those applications which require member input and not revisiting the same decisions.

Currently, each local planning authority has their own scheme of delegation which sets out which types of planning application should be determined by planning officers, and which should be determined by committee.

The measures in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill to reform planning committees are enabling powers and the detailed provisions will be set out in regulations to be brought forward following Royal Assent of the Bill.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely,

HOLLY HARPER
Deputy Principal Private Secretary

Council– 15 September 2025

Report of Cabinet – 6 August 2025

Part I – Items Resolved by Cabinet

1. Proposed draft Housing Landlord Strategy (2025-2030) with Reference to the HRA Business Plan

Portfolio – Housing and Homelessness

Cabinet Resolution:

That the draft Housing Landlord Strategy be approved for public consultation.

Cabinet Discussion:

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness introduced the report welcoming the draft Housing Landlord Strategy to help the Council in meeting the regulator's consumer standards and addressing the regulatory changes in the housing sector. The Portfolio Holder recognised the consultation that had taken place on the strategy, in particular with the Tenant Involvement Group (TIG), ensuring tenants had a voice and the value of the tenant representative on the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The Assistant Director – Housing reported that the Housing Landlord Strategy was not a legal requirement for the Council. However, the Strategy encapsulated the ambitions of the housing service to achieve a high compliance score with the housing regulator for the benefit of tenants. The Strategy also detailed the offer to tenants and stakeholders, which was broader than bricks and mortar, and included partnership working in order to meet the needs of vulnerable tenants. In addition, the strategy reflected on the HRA and business approach, which was the largest income source for the council, and it was recognised that this income came from tenants' rents which needed to be spent in a responsible way. It was essential to improve existing housing and to make homes more energy efficient as well as being able to provide more affordable housing. The draft strategy had reviewed all the work carried out to date and detailed what the Council would do in the future.

A non-Cabinet member broadly welcomed the Strategy but felt that the reference to the HRA being a long-term capital business should be

reviewed due to how it could resonate with tenants. It was also felt that the requirement for housing to meet a minimum EPC level should be featured within the Strategy. The engagement exercises were welcomed, in particular in relation to the Hythe area of the district, recognising that this was one of the largest areas of rental accommodation. It was suggested that the spread of available accommodation be reviewed across the district.

The Strategic Director of Housing and Communities addressed the points raised, recognising that the council had a fiscal responsibility to manage £35m of income and £50m of expenditure on service delivery. Therefore, the Council must act business like and offer value for money for the service. Housing tenants were able to hold the council as housing landlord to account. This approach however, did not take away the empathetic and listening approach through engagement with tenants, the TIG, complaint learning, learning on a day-to-day basis as well as the Tenancy Sustainment Team to support housing tenants.

The Strategic Director highlighted that the council was working under the Government guidance in relation to the EPC C target by 2030. Consultation was currently being carried out on the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards within the social housing sector and that this will formalise the legal requirement for all social housing homes to meet EPC C standard. Regarding, accommodation, it highlighted the council had a key strategic aim for the provision of accommodation across all areas the district. In particular, one area has been overlooked as it was felt there was now sufficient accommodation there already. The forthcoming development at Hythe hospital would provide more accommodation and further accommodation opportunities were arising in the Waterside and the council was bidding for this accommodation.

The Chairman of the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel further highlighted the tenant representative who had been co-opted onto the Panel and recognised the importance of this member to help engagement with tenants. This representative had also attended a successful community engagement event recognising that their involvement was greater than that of the Scrutiny Panel and that there had been a good level of engagement with tenants at this event.

2. Housing Annual Compliance Report

Portfolio – Housing and Homelessness

Cabinet Resolution:

That the Housing Annual Compliance report be noted.

Cabinet Discussion:

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness presented the Housing Compliance report which covered a full financial year. The report had been considered by the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel at its meeting in June. It detailed the statutory compliance measures to demonstrate effective scrutiny of the housing function. Work would continue to ensure that damp and mould awareness and prevention would remain a priority.

The Service Manager, Housing Maintenance, Programmes and Servicing highlighted that there had been a positive level of housing compliance across council owned housing stock as well as transparency of reporting through governance structures. The efforts the team supported the readiness for Awaab's Law which would come into effect in October 2025 as well as any future inspections by the Social Housing Regulator.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate was pleased to see the positive compliance rates and that the team continued to strive to improve the housing compliance rate year on year.

A non-Cabinet Member reported he would welcome the reporting of equalities information, in particular those with disabilities to be collated separately, recognising that this group of people were more likely to spend a greater amount of time in their homes and could be more impacted with, for example, delays to repairs and maintenance.

The Assistant Director of Housing recognised that this was at the heart of what the housing service was trying to achieve. There had been criticism of the housing sector in general with a one size fits all approach often being taken. The housing service improvement plan would consider a more individualised approach. It was essential to get to know the housing tenants and their households better to greater understand what things might impact them and it was recognised that more vulnerable people were more likely to be living in social housing.

3. Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2024/25

Portfolio – Housing and Homelessness

Cabinet Resolution:

That the TSM results be reviewed and the performance reported for 2024/25 be noted.

Cabinet Discussion:

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness was pleased to present the report which demonstrated continued improvement against key measures. The tables detailed in paragraphs 7 and 10 of the report illustrated areas which had been improved as well as those which required further improvement. The Portfolio Holder was delighted that there was an 84% overall satisfaction level amongst housing tenants. He was confident that the team would continue to put in place further improvement measures.

The Assistant Director of Housing reported that the survey had been carried out by an independent agency with 500-600 housing tenants. There was a high level of consistency overall but there were some variances in relation to matters such as housing repairs, which was not unexpected. The council as a housing landlord was performing well and within the top 25% of all social housing landlords. The District Council was one of the few authorities which had achieved a 3% rise in satisfaction rates since the previous year, which was very positive news.

4. Update on Local Plan Review and revised Local Development Scheme

Portfolio – Planning and Economy

Cabinet Resolution:

That Cabinet:

1. Noted the summary of comments and endorsed the recommended responses to the issues and scope consultation;

2. Approved the revised Local Development Scheme for preparing the Local Plan review;

3. Approved the scope of the Conservation Area Appraisal reviews; and

4. Noted the updates on the associated evidence base work.

Cabinet Discussion:

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economy introduced the report which provided an update on the Local Plan Review and sought Cabinet approval for a revised Local Development Scheme. The report set out the updated timetable and the approach for the Local Plan review. Since the last report, a call for sites consultation had been undertaken as well as an issues and scope consultation, which included public exhibitions. This saw an increase in the number of comments received and they had been summarised in the report. The key themes resulting from the consultation included the urgent need for affordable housing, improved infrastructure, climate resilience and protection of the unique character of the New Forest. The respondents to the consultation had also emphasised the importance of town centre regeneration, prioritising brownfield development and ensuring new housing was well connected to employment and services.

The Portfolio Holder reported that the revised programme proposed a consultation on a draft Local Plan in late 2025, focusing on spatial growth options and emerging policies. This would be followed by a full Local Plan consultation in Autumn 2026, with submission to the Secretary of State by the end of 2026. The report also proposed reviews of Conservation Areas to ensure alignment with current policy and guidance and this work would take approximately eight months to complete. The work programme would be kept under review in light of the LGR context.

Finally, the Portfolio Holder congratulated the planning team on the comprehensive report presented and the wide range of consultation responses which had been received. It was recognised that conflicting views had been expressed and that it would not be possible to please everyone. It was important to produce a plan which was right for the district, looking at all sites, seeking the views of all members, in particular the member working group. Some compromises would need to be made in order to balance the many policies coming from central government.

The Service Manager – Planning Policy, Infrastructure and Delivery expressed thanks to those who had engaged in the consultation and to members through the working group for their input in work to date.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate highlighted that when a new Local Plan was being produced there were constraints from national government and that this was not always in line with the

views of local residents. However, the council would look to deliver a plan with the best outcomes for residents within those constraints. It was recognised, that in the context of LGR, it would the last chance to influence planning policy for local residents. The Portfolio Holder was very supportive of a new Local Plan and was pleased to see a good level of engagement in the consultation. The team were congratulated on the work carried out on the plan development to date.

A non-Cabinet Member spoke about the member task and finish group involved in this work and thanks was expressed to all officers who were involved in this extensive piece of work. The challenges were recognised, and in particular the large volume of information and evidence being produced for analysis. Any future plan would need to be evidence based

Part II – Recommendations to Council

5. **Revised Transformation Strategy**

Portfolio – Leaders

Recommended:

That Council:

1. note the revised business case position; and

2. approve the revised transformation strategy

Cabinet Discussion:

The Leader reported she was happy to support the direction of the report and the new revised Transformation Strategy. The council was committed to delivering services to meet the needs of residents and make it as easy as possible for them to engage with the council, in a way that suited their needs. It was necessary to invest in the right systems to do this. The Leader reported she was passionate about supporting staff and that it was more important than ever to support staff, ensuring they had the right skills and capability to navigate the next few years and to thrive in any new authority. The revised strategy would deliver this.

The Leader reported it was also appropriate to reflect on the scope of the transformation programme to ensure it delivered meaningful benefits and to support the key objectives. Investment in systems and staff was required to improve the delivery of services to customers as well as the ability of the authority to respond to the uncertainty of LGR by positioning itself well in any transition to a new unitary authority.

The Transformation and Improvement Manager reported that LGR had significantly changed the context for the way the council approached transformation, and it was appropriate in this context to revise the transformation objectives and revisit the business case approved in 2024. The report presented a revised transformation strategy, and it considered the impact on the approved business case. The revised Transformation Strategy (Appendix 1) evaluated the original drivers for transformation in light of LGR and updated the Strategic Objectives. It also considered the scope of transformation activities, excluding those no longer feasible or practical in a shorter timeframe, considering the long-term future of the council. Whilst the original transformation strategy had aimed to deliver financial savings and modernised services, the focus for the revised strategy had a shift in approach to non-financial

benefits, including ensuring a smooth transition to a new authority, maintaining service quality and preparing staff and systems for future integration. Most importantly the new strategy had removed changes to staff roles, responsibilities and staffing structures but sought to continue to deliver improvements in the digital capability and support to customers and staff.

The three main digital projects being undertaken was the implementation of a new Customer Relationship Management system, replacement of the Housing Maintenance system and the replacement of the existing Regulatory Services software. These were necessary for the continuity and quality of service delivery.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate spoke in support of the review in light of LGR, recognising that the responsibility of the council did not end with LGR. It was important to continue to deliver services in the best way possible for local residents and that this would put the council in a good position for any new authority.

Appendix 1 – Background report to Cabinet

6. **Principal Risk Register Review**

Portfolio – Leaders

Recommended:

That Council adopt the Principal Rish Register updates.

Cabinet Discussion:

The Leader presented the Principal Risk Register which was presented in a new format. The Risk Register (Appendix 1) detailed all 19 principal risks. Updates were provided on the register every 6 months to the Cabinet, which enabled oversight of all risks and mitigation plans in place to ensure that members were informed about risk management and the implications. Following a quarterly review, two risks had been removed and one had been added. The two risks which had been removed related to the political environment due to the HCC elections planned for May 2025 being postponed and Hardley depot, which had been completed. The new risk related to recruitment and retention of staff due to the uncertainty of LGR and devolution. It was highlighted that the Audit Committee had reviewed the Principal Risk Register and the feedback had been considered by officers and included within the report.

The Assistant Director of Finance confirmed that Cabinet were presented with an update on the Risk Register every six months and that two risks had been removed and a new one added. Feedback from the Audit Committee was highlighted within paragraphs 16-18 of the report, in particular that unmitigated (inherent) and mitigated (residual) risk scores had been included within the risk register.

A non-Cabinet member referred to paragraph 17, of the report and was pleased to see highlighted that the council would work with partner agencies where there were risks. The example of the disruption of the water supply in the District was provided and the importance of good communication was essential.

Appendix 2 – Background report to Cabinet

This page is intentionally left blank

Cabinet – 6 August 2025

Revised Transformation Strategy and Business Case

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) has fundamentally changed the context in which the council approaches transformation. 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. 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.
Recommendation(s)	**That Cabinet recommend to Council:** **1. The noting of the revised business case position and** **2. The approval of the revised transformation strategy**
Reasons for recommendation(s)	A key element of the corporate plan is the underpinning theme of the transformation strategy, Future New Forest. 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.

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

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
Grand Total	£2,109,000	£406,000

* 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
One Off Total Costs	1,179,000	930,000	2,109,000

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
Recurring Total Costs	328,000	328,000	656,000	-251,000	405,000
TOTAL	1,507,000	1,258,000	2,765,000		

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

Appendix 1

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 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.

Appendix 1

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
Modernising services 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. 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.	**Stronger case for change** 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. 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.
Financial constraints Rising costs and new burdens mean we face a significant and growing budget gap. 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.	**Adjusted case for change** The financial challenge remains but LGR changes the context in which this is addressed. 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.

Appendix 1

Capacity and capability We need new skills to deliver the changes we must make. 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. 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.	**Stronger case for change** 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. 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.
Climate and sustainability Meeting national and local targets to reduce emissions and support nature will require us to change the way we use resources and deliver services. 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. 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.	**Same case for change** National and local targets to reduce emissions are unchanged by LGR and the case for change remains.

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.

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
• Any and all service processes may be reviewed to identify ways to improve customer experience, enhance performance and release capacity. • All current software applications supporting front- and back-office operations are in scope for standardisation, optimisation and integration. • Replacement of current CRM and housing maintenance systems. • Identifying, cataloguing, cleansing and connecting key datasets to support customer delivery and/or LGR preparation. • Implementing the Customer Strategy, including associated changes to channels, customer SLAs, KPIs and feedback mechanisms. • 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.	• Decisions about how capacity released through service design is realised. • Full structural reorganisation of customer services around the digital platform/CRM. • Investment in developing systems which are unlikely to be retained post-LGR. • Changes to formally documented policies that have been adopted by elected members. • Changes to service delivery, eg stopping services or reducing service levels.

• Consolidation of customer service activity to simplify, integrate and consolidate existing roles.	

People and capabilities

In scope	Out of scope
• People Strategy development and delivery across all services and teams, including developing organisational values, behaviours and staff skills. • Changes to reward and recognition approaches • Minor changes to organisational structures to better align capacity and capability	• Significant changes to staffing structures and job descriptions. • Changes to pay and grading structures, terms and conditions or employment models. • Significant changes to learning management systems or training providers

Assets and accommodation

In scope	Out of scope
• All operational buildings eg offices, depots, stores • Delivery of the Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) 2025-onwards	• HRA assets, eg social housing properties, garages, and associated systems* • Operational assets within Place and Sustainability directorate (plant and fleet) • Redesign of customer, community or workforce facing spaces. • Major investment in assets that would only deliver returns beyond the life of the current authority.

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

Transformation delivery and LGR readiness

In scope	Out of scope
• Oversight of all projects and programmes relevant to organisation transformation and/or LGR • Transformation programme governance • Benefits management • Service and financial planning processes • Leadership, management and performance culture. • LGR planning and preparation	• Delivery of long-term financial savings linked to workforce reductions. • Leadership decisions on the method of realising benefits identified through the transformation programme.

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
Business Case/Transformation Strategy														
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														
Transformation Portfolio Governance & Oversight														
Agree purpose & scope for centralised PMO														
Establish organisational PMO (structures, systems, processes, people)														
Review governance structures to ensure alignment with PMO														
Programme Delivery- Programme benefits management														
Define benefits & agree detailed profiles (owners, measures, returns period)														
Establish benefits management system/process														
Organisational Data														
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
Define digital architecture and capabilities														
Align customer and digital strategies														
Customer journeys and design patterns														

Appendix 1

Assess existing customer data sets														
Establish digital building blocks														
Procure new tools/capabilities														
Implement new tools/capabilities														
Deliver MVP digital services and capabilities														
Establish MVP components (inc portal, e-forms, CRM and chat)														
Implement 1st phase customer changes														
Implement revenues and benefits integrated forms and portal														
Prioritised redesign of services (for Digital Platform Readiness only)														
Develop user testing approach and recruit users														
Identify priority services for redesign (eg Top 20 list)														
Standard service redesign approach														
Design-Prototype-Build-Deploy cycle														
Deliver housing maintenance system														
Project planning and alignment with wider transformation (Housing/ICT led)														
Requirements gathering, functional, non-functional (Housing led)														
Regulatory and legal compliance/data and reporting documented (Housing led)														
Supplier selection & procurement (Housing led)														
Integration and testing														
Implement digital housing repairs process integrated with CRM/customer portal														
Regulatory Services System Replacement														
Agree approach to regulatory system replacement														
Asses current business requirements and refine/rationalise														
Potential market engagement														
Deployment Customer Strategy														
Embed customer competencies into recruitment and onboarding process														
Customer learning needs established and solution identified														
Roll out customer learning solutions														
Structures														

Appendix 1

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

Appendix 1

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														

Cabinet – 6 August 2025

Principal Risk Register Review

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	This report updates the Cabinet on the position of the Council's Principal Risk Register. The main updates are as follows: • All Service Risk registers have been reviewed to inform any proposed changes to the Principal Risk Register. • All principal risks have been reviewed, with the latest risk ratings shown in Appendix 1. • Two risks have been removed due to no longer being a key risk to the Council's operation: ➢ Hampshire County Council – Political Environment ➢ Major Projects – Hardley Depot • One additional risk has been included that has arisen or become apparent in the previous 6 months: ➢ People – Recruitment and retention of staff considering Local Government reorganisation.
Recommendations	**It is recommended that Cabinet:** **1. Consider the Principal Risk Register updates and recommend adoption by Council.**
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

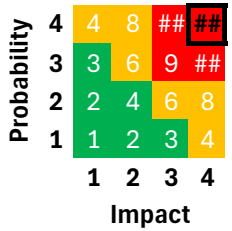
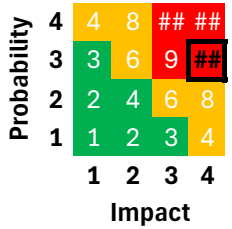
Background Papers:

Principal Risk and Risk Management Policy Update to the Audit Committee on 24th January 2025

Link to Risk Management Policy

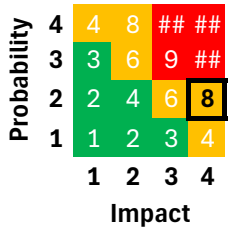
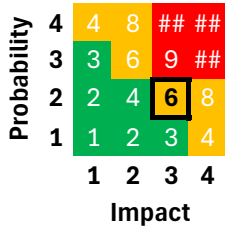
Principal Risk Register
July 2025

APPENDIX 1

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation
Operations						
PR1	Cyber Security	Transformation Priority 4: Designing modern and innovative services	Strategic Director Corporate Resources & Transformation Section 151 Officer	Inherent Risk Score High  Residual Risk Score **High** 	Malicious attack results in significant loss of sensitive data and/or significant disruption to Council operations	• Dedicated ICT security team in place to manage and maintain the organisations security posture. • ICT Security & Information Governance Policy approved by EMT in place for all to adhere to. • End user awareness provided by eLearning modules. • Cyber incident response service in place to support actual or suspected breaches and expert assistance in the event of an incidence. • The Council funds a reserve to quickly respond in the event of an attack. • Compliance gained and renewed annually to accreditations including PSN and Cyber Essentials. • Regular internal vulnerability scans taking place with remedial action undertaken. • Full IT health check undertaken annually by an external accredited tester with remedial action undertaken

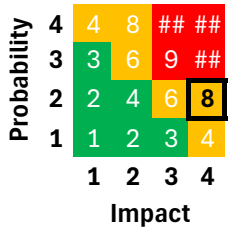
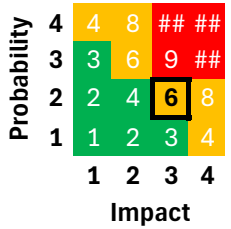
Principal Risk Register
July 2025

APPENDIX 1

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 Medium  Residual Risk Score **Medium** 	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.

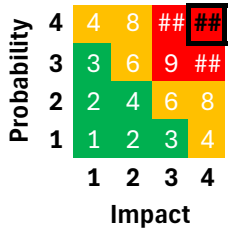
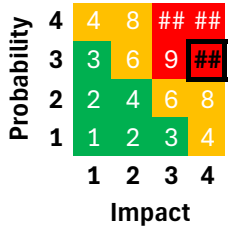
Principal Risk Register
July 2025

APPENDIX 1

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	Inherent Risk Score Medium  Residual Risk Score **Medium** 	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.

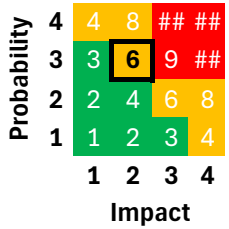
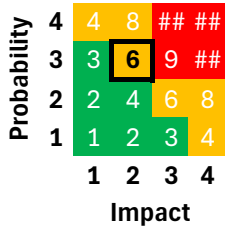
Principal Risk Register
July 2025

APPENDIX 1

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 High  Residual Risk Score **High**  	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.

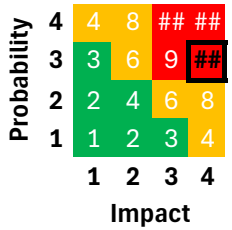
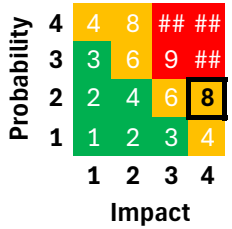
Principal Risk Register
July 2025

APPENDIX 1

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	Inherent Risk Score Medium  Residual Risk Score **Medium**  	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.	Implementation of the Council's H&S management system, including proactive monitoring and review of H&S arrangements, risk assessments, Safe System of work, training and performance monitoring. Regular H&S audits are undertaken by the internal H&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.

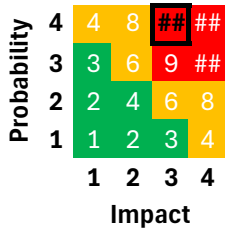
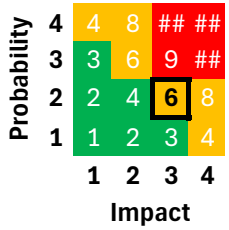
Principal Risk Register
July 2025

APPENDIX 1

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	Inherent Risk Score High  Residual Risk Score **Medium**  	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.

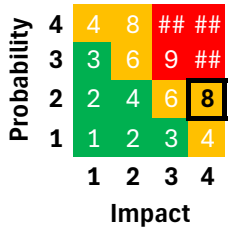
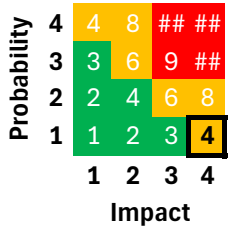
Principal Risk Register
July 2025

APPENDIX 1

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	Inherent Risk Score High  Residual Risk Score **Medium**  	A safeguarding incident occurs which, through action or omission by the Council, might otherwise have been prevented.	Under the supervision of the Hampshire Safeguarding Boards, the Community Safety Team remains engaged in safeguarding issues, supported by Designated Safeguarding Reporting Officers (DSROs). They implement effective processes and training programs in housing, ensuring a comprehensive approach to safeguarding measures. 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.

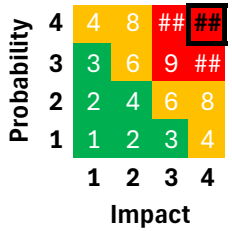
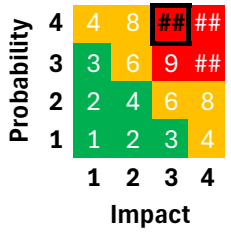
Principal Risk Register
July 2025

APPENDIX 1

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)	Inherent Risk Score Medium  Residual Risk Score **Medium** 	Inadequate legal & governance arrangements resulting in unlawful decision making and/or maladministration .	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. 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.

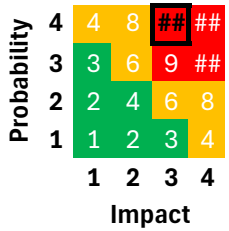
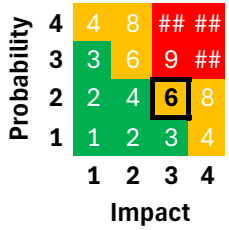
Principal Risk Register
July 2025

APPENDIX 1

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation
PR9	Local Government Reform / Devolution	All	Chief Executive	Inherent Risk Score High  Residual Risk Score **High**  	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.	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.

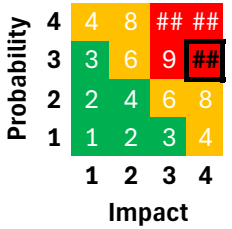
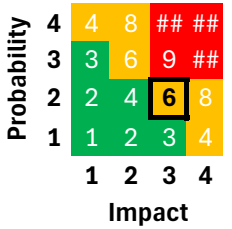
Principal Risk Register
July 2025

APPENDIX 1

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	Inherent Risk Score High  Residual Risk Score Medium 	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

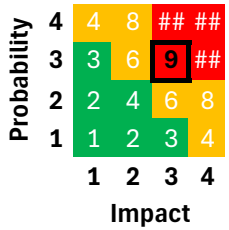
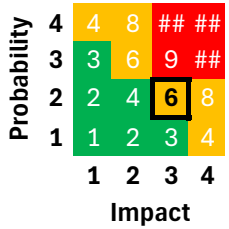
Principal Risk Register
July 2025

APPENDIX 1

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	Inherent Risk Score High  Residual Risk Score **Medium** 	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.

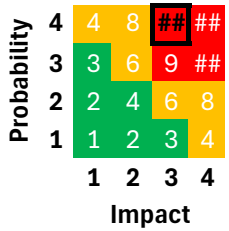
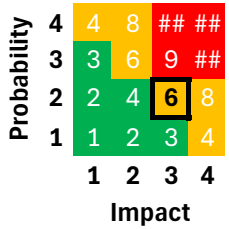
Principal Risk Register
July 2025

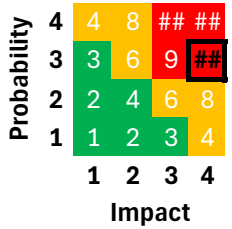
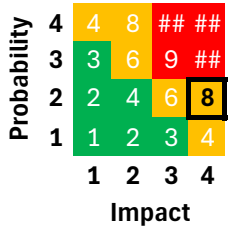
APPENDIX 1

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	Inherent Risk Score High  Residual Risk Score Medium 		The Council's approach is set out in the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, which has recently been reviewed and approved by Audit Committee. Every Service area has a Fraud Risk Survey carried out and continually reviewed. All staff complete fraud e-learning each year.

Principal Risk Register
July 2025

APPENDIX 1

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	Inherent Risk Score High  Residual Risk Score Medium 	Procurement activity takes place which is not in the best interests of the Council and its stakeholders and/or is in breach of legislation.	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. Spend analysis is completed three times per year and shared with the leadership team. 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.

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation
Major Projects						
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	Inherent Risk Score High  Residual Risk Score **Medium** 	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. 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.	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.

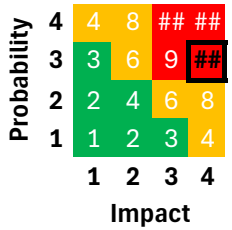
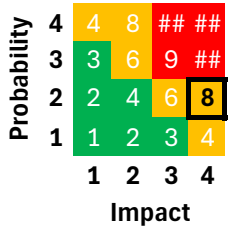
Principal Risk Register
July 2025

APPENDIX 1

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

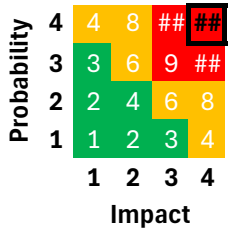
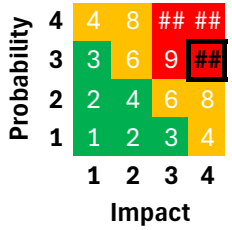
Principal Risk Register
July 2025

APPENDIX 1

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	Inherent Risk Score High  Residual Risk Score **Medium** 	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.

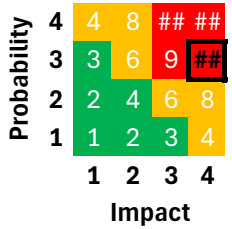
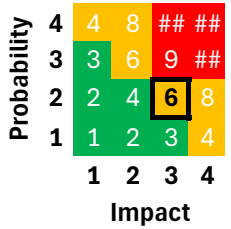
Principal Risk Register
July 2025

APPENDIX 1

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	Inherent Risk Score High  Residual Risk Score **High**  	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.

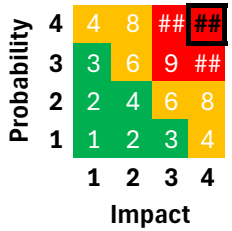
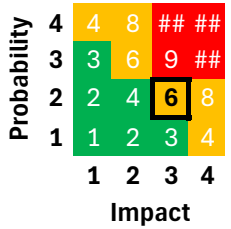
Principal Risk Register
July 2025

APPENDIX 1

Ref	Risk Title	Corporate Plan Theme	Risk Owner	Risk Rating	Risk Event	Overview and Mitigation
Reputation						
PR17	Climate and Ecological Emergency	Place Priority 2: Protecting our climate, coast, and natural world	Strategic Director Place, Operations and Sustainability	Inherent Risk Score High  Residual Risk Score **Medium** 	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.	Continuing implementation of the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan. Funding of £150k per year for the corporate plan period. Regular review of budget allocation, seeking alternative funding sources, prioritising projects based on impact and funding availability. Recruitment and expansion of the Climate Change & Sustainability team is in progress to support these actions. Development of a service climate risk assessment template to ensure this risk is being addressed through service delivery.

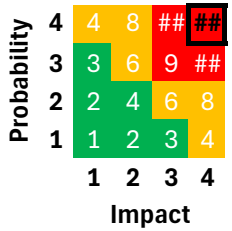
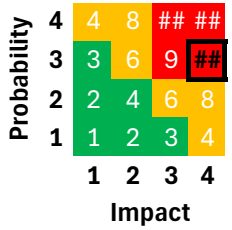
Principal Risk Register
July 2025

APPENDIX 1

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	Inherent Risk Score High  Residual Risk Score **Medium** 	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.

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	Inherent Risk Score High  Residual Risk Score Medium 	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.

Principal Risk Register
July 2025

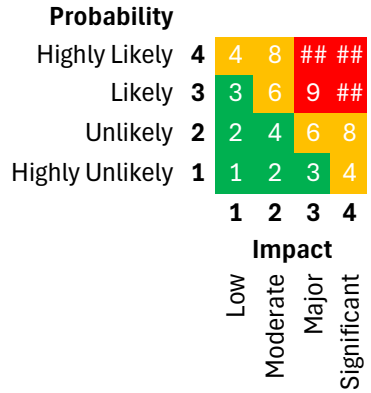
APPENDIX 1

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



Council– 15 September 2025

Report of Cabinet – 3 September 2025

Part I – Items Resolved by Cabinet

1. Financial Monitoring Report (based on performance April to June 2025 inclusive

Portfolio – Finance and Corporate / all

Cabinet Resolution:

That Cabinet note the latest budget forecasts of the General Fund, HRA, and Capital.

Cabinet Discussion:

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate presented the report highlighting that it was the first financial monitoring report of the financial year. The purpose of the report was to reflect on the rephasings from the previous year, in particular £896,000 from the General Fund, £1.931 million for the capital programme and £60,000 within the Housing Revenue Account.

Other substantive variations related to the refuge and recycling service, including the Council fully utilising the additional grant from DEFRA of £151,000 to support the rollout of the new service. An additional £150,000 had been agreed by the Section 151 officer to allow the service to start the planning and immediate commencement of the trial of food caddies behind the gates in areas within the perambulation where there were free roaming animals.

The Portfolio Holder reported that he fully endorsed the recommendation within the report, including the allocation of additional funding towards the waste service as covered within the report.

The Assistant Director of Finance in addition, highlighted that the pay award had been agreed with an increase of 3.2%.

A non-Cabinet member questioned the 'behind the gates' trial and sought to understand why the additional expenditure had not been

budgeted and planned for. It was felt by another member that had the audit carried out prior to the introduction of the new service been more comprehensive that the expenditure would have been planned for.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate addressed the points made, highlighting that the council had sufficient reserves on which to draw upon, for what was a major service change and that it was expected that the roll out would be difficult. It was therefore understandable that it would require change and adaptations to address any issues. The council was responding as issues arose and the service was adapting to the problems identified. There were reserves available to afford the changes to the roll out of the waste service.

A non-Cabinet member highlighted that the issues now arising from the roll out of the new service, had been raised in meetings in 2020 and 2021 and that members had received the outcome of the residents survey at a meeting. The top issues raised within the survey was of the proposed waste service centred around accessibility and issues of livestock in the forest.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate noted that the report being considered was about financial monitoring and summarised that there were adequate resources to meet the challenges.

Part II – Recommendations to Council

2. **Review of new waste collection service phase 1 roll out and motion to suspect phases 2 and 3**

Portfolio – Environment and Sustainability

Cabinet Resolutions:

1. That Cabinet considered the contents of the report, and the summary of the debate at the Extraordinary Council meeting, included at Appendix 4;

2. That Cabinet noted the change in approach to food waste collection during the pannage period, whereby residents within the perambulation will be asked to keep food caddies behind gates;

3. That officers would continue to work on a business case to extend the "behind gate" policy beyond pannage, and that an "in principle" agreement to this longer-term policy change is given, with the final decision being subject to a business case;

4. That the Waste Programme Board will retain oversight of implementation, and will receive a Phase 2 plan and updated risk assessment;

5. That Cabinet supported further dedicated engagement sessions for ward councillors throughout the phased rollout to support their role within their local communities;

6. That, in considering the motion referred to Cabinet by Council at Appendix 1, the Cabinet noted that the options appraisal in the report identified that phases two and three should proceed as planned, with the mitigations and improvements noted in the action plan in this report; and

Recommended:

That Cabinet recommend to Council to endorse the Cabinet's resolutions above, as the correct and proportionate response to the motion.

Cabinet Discussion:

The Leader clarified that the item followed the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 28 August 2025. In accordance with Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, she reported she had agreed to the include the item on the agenda as a matter of urgency. The urgency

arose from the need for Cabinet to consider the motion referred by Council relating to the roll-out of the Council's new waste and recycling service, and to make recommendations back to Council in view of the financial implications. The urgency was due to the upcoming phase two roll-out and the need to conclude the matters raised by the motion at the Council's next ordinary meeting on 15 September 2025.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability reported he was pleased to present the report with an update on the implementation of the new waste and recycling collection service. The transition was one of the most significant operational changes in decades. It was ambitious, complex and essential, not only to meet the statutory obligations of the Environment Act 2021, but also to deliver a sustainable and modern service for local communities. It was acknowledged that residents had experienced disruption during the phase one roll out. At the Extraordinary Council meeting he had offered his sincere apologies to residents. He understood that there was a degree of frustration and that work was being carried out to resolve the issues as swiftly and effectively as possible, whilst at the same time, not overlooking the advantages of the new service and the progress which had been made to date. Missed collections were reducing and the crews were adapting to the new rounds. This had had an impact across the organisation from front line staff, support services, contractors and officers. Lessons were being learnt from phase 1 and actions taken.

The report also reflected upon the concerns raised by members at the Extraordinary Council meeting last week when constructive feedback had been given from residents and partners. The Portfolio Holder commended the report to Cabinet and asked that the recommendations be endorsed to support the continued roll out of the waste and recycling service to meet the needs of residents and reflected the values of the organisation.

The Strategic Director – Place, Operations and Sustainability reported that he hoped the report was helpful in setting out the recommendations for consideration which were linked to the Extraordinary Council meeting. Appendix 4 detailed the main points arising from the debate. Cabinet were being asked to note the proposed changes in response to lessons learnt, especially in relation to the pannage period. £150,000 had been set aside for the first phase trial for the start of pannage on 15 September. Officers would continue to work behind the scenes to develop a business case for ongoing service change to address this issue. The Waste Programme Board would continue to retain oversight in considering future phases and would review an updated Risk Assessment.

The recommendations were outlined in the report along with conclusions. The scale of the task in hand was further highlighted and that work was being undertaken for the benefit of the residents of the New Forest.

Cllr M Wade as the mover of the motion presented at Full Council was invited to address the meeting. He reported that all members of the Council had a responsibility to the residents of the New Forest to ensure the delivery of a fit for purpose service. The residents speaking at the Extraordinary Council meeting had not felt they had received a fit for purpose service. It was further highlighted that there were over 900 emails received by customer services waiting responses as well as busy phone lines.

It was felt that the problems experienced by residents should not be repeated during the future phases. Cllr Wade reported he understood that the council was responding to the problems but felt that the roll out had not been properly planned and as a result there was unbudgeted expenditure. The concerns about animals and waste had been raised previously, as well as considering best practice and good communication with residents. It was requested that there be a pause in the service roll out, to review the concerns, put mitigating actions in place and to prove they were successful before rolling out the future phases. It was felt there was time to do this and still meet the requirement for the collection of food waste.

The Leader reported that given the matter had been debated at Full Council and that it was before the Cabinet for consideration, she did not intend to wider the debate outside of Cabinet. The matter would be further considered by all members at the next Full Council meeting.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate reported that any delay to the rollout of the waste and recycling service would be costly and estimated that a delay could be in the region of £2.5 million. It was acknowledged that there had been a shortfall in customer services resource. A short pause to the roll out would not resolve the ICT issues and there would be an impact on contractors, etc with any revised timetable, and the deadline for collection of food waste might not be met which could put the government grant at risk. It was felt that sufficient resources had been made available to address the major concerns with behind the gate collections for some areas.

Other Portfolio Holders supported the approach to proceed with the roll out. It was felt that phase 1 had largely been successful. Changes were being implemented to address concerns. It was anticipated that phases 2 and 3 would have the benefit of lessons learnt from phase 1.

The Leader felt that having considered the learning, mitigations and improvements noted in the action plan in the report, and the options appraisal identifying that phases two and three should proceed as planned. She felt that it was not appropriate to support the motion and asked that Cabinet recommend to Council to endorse the Cabinet's resolutions as the correct and proportionate response to the motion. Cabinet confirmed support to these recommendations.

Appendix 1 – Background report to Cabinet

Cabinet – 3 September 2025

Review of new waste collection service phase 1 roll out and motion to suspend phases 2 and 3

Purpose	For Review
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	This report provides a comprehensive overview of the project to launch the council's new waste service. An Extraordinary Council meeting was called by the Chairman of the Council in response to concerns expressed by councillors regarding reported operational disruption, and the impact on residents of the initial rollout of a new waste collection service within New Forest District. This meeting was held on 28 August 2025. The report provides background data on the phase 1 roll-out, highlights lessons learnt, and actions already underway to overcome issues raised and to provide more corporate resilience for phases 2 and 3. The report also considers the implications of delaying the programmed roll out to the rest of the district, as a basis for discussion on the matters raised.
Recommendations	**1. That Cabinet consider the contents of the report, and the summary of the debate at the Extraordinary Council meeting, included at Appendix 4.** **2. That Cabinet note the change in approach to food waste collection during the pannage period, whereby residents within the perambulation will be asked to keep food caddies behind gates.** **3. That officers continue to work on a business case to extend the "behind**

	gate" policy beyond pannage, and that an "in principle" agreement to this longer-term policy change is given, with the final decision being subject to a business case. **4. That the Waste Programme Board will retain oversight of implementation, and will receive a Phase 2 plan and updated risk assessment.** **5. That Cabinet support further dedicated engagement sessions for ward councillors throughout the phased rollout to support their role within their local communities.** **6. That, in considering the motion referred to Cabinet by Council at Appendix 1, the Cabinet note that the options appraisal in this report identifies that phases two and three should proceed as planned, with the mitigations and improvements noted in the action plan in this report.**
Reasons for recommendation(s)	The new waste collection service is a significant change that will affect every household in the district and is a key corporate priority for the council. The service also contributes to the council's environmental and climate change objectives, increase recycling rates, reducing emissions, and reducing the amount of overall general waste and littering from sacks. During the Phase 1 roll out to 31,000 households, issues have been encountered with data, systems and processes that have impacted on the project and residents. These are being addressed with the learning used to shape phases 2 and 3.
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Geoffrey Blunden – Environment and Sustainability

Strategic Director(s)	James Carpenter – Strategic Director of Place, Operations and Sustainability
Officer Contact	Chris Noble - Assistant Director, Place Operations Karyn Punchard – Waste Programme Director Liz Mockeridge – Service Manager, Waste and Transport

Introduction and background

1. New Forest District Council (NFDC) began a phased rollout of a new waste collection service for residents in June 2025 as part of a wider waste management strategy and programme. This strategy is designed to improve recycling rates, modernise collection services and meet statutory requirements set out in the Environment Act 2021 which are due to come into force in 2026. The Act requires that by 1 April 2026, household food waste is collected separately from other waste, and sent for recycling.

2. The waste strategy was agreed at a meeting of the Council in July 2022 with an update considered in February 2024. The policies to support the strategy were agreed at a meeting of the Council in July 2023.

3. The key elements of the new service are:

   - **New weekly food waste collections** with a 23-litre lockable kerbside caddy and a 7-litre kitchen caddy;
   - **Fortnightly recycling and rubbish collections** using new 240-litre (recycling) and 180-litre (rubbish) wheelie bins

   There are no planned changes at this time to the format of other waste collection services, such as glass and garden waste collections.

4. In support of these frontline service changes, the overall Waste Programme also includes projects relating to:

   a. Depot facilities (including completion of the new depot at Hardley as well as enhancements at Ringwood and Lymington depots)
   b. New container procurement, storage and distribution
   c. District wide property assessments
   d. Revised route planning
   e. Recruitment of additional employees

f. Revised employee working practises and Terms and Conditions
g. ICT (for back-office, customer-facing, and "in-cab" technology improvements, delivered via the Bartec system)
h. Information and communications to support the new service

5. A dedicated Waste Management Programme Board is in place to oversee the complex workstreams required to deliver the roll out in time to meet government targets and within approved budgets. The membership of the Board comprises the Leader, Portfolio Holders for Environment & Sustainability and Finance & Corporate, members of the Executive Management Team and senior waste officers. The Board meets monthly.

6. In keeping with the approved strategy, the project proposed to roll-out the service over three phases:

- Phase 1 (Lymington Depot area) commenced June 2025
- Phase 2 (Ringwood Depot area) commencing October 2025
- Phase 3 (Totton/Hardley Depot area) commencing March 2026

7. Phase one has now been implemented across the Lymington Depot area (covering New Milton, Barton, Milford, Lymington, Pennington, Boldre, Brockenhurst and surrounding villages). A total of 31,000 homes are now receiving the new service, which entailed the delivery of over 100,000 containers.

8. In accordance with the approved project plan, preparations are well underway for phase two with the initial communications having been sent direct to residents in mid-July. Recruitment of loaders and drivers for the new rounds is in progress and container deliveries to phase 2 households commences on 25 August 2025.

Extraordinary Council Meeting

9. On 4 August 2025, six District Councillors submitted a request to the Chairman of the Council to call an extraordinary meeting of the Council to urgently review the roll-out of the new waste and recycling service.

10. In accordance with paragraph 3 of Schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972, the Chairman exercised this power to enable the Council to meet to discuss the project, on 28 August 2025.

11. The related motion (in appendix 1), included on the Council agenda submitted by Cllr M Wade, in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders for Meetings, requires reference to the Cabinet for

consideration, before reporting back to the next Council meeting. This is due to the financial implications in the context of the Council's agreed budgets, which are identified at paragraph 58 below.

12. A number of issues were cited by those Members who requested this extraordinary meeting. The submitted motion asked the Council to note missed collections, overflowing bins, interference from animals, confusion about collection points, impacts in phase 2 and 3 areas including call waiting times, and impact on NFDC staff. It also references a meeting held with partner organisations on 6 August 2025, updated cost projections for phase 2 and 3, and states that Cabinet has continued to progress to phase 2 despite these known issues.

13. The request for the Extraordinary Council meeting sought that supporting information be provided in advance. Each of these requests was responded to in detail within Appendix 2 to this report. Some data requested is not held and this has been indicated where this is the case.

14. A summary of the debate at the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 28 August 2025 is included in appendix 4. At this meeting, the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability announced that for the pannage period, residents within the perambulation (areas open to livestock) would be asked to present food waste for collection behind their gates.

15. The key issues are summarised below to support the review and decision-making.

Commentary on roll-out progress and learning

16. Appendix 2 illustrates in detail the successes and also the challenges of the rollout so far. This section is a summary of key factors in relation to phase 1.

17. This programme is a very significant set of transformation projects with the following changes coming together at the same time:

- New collection containers – over 120,000 for phase 1
- New materials (food waste) collected for the first time
- Change in collection frequencies
- New collection policies
- New collection routes for crews
- New staff taken on to support collections
- Changes in working practices for staff
- New ICT (back office, customer facing and in-cab)
- New/amended depot facilities and layouts
- Training programmes

- Wider interdependencies with other council services e.g. Customer Services, Housing Services, Communications

18. These changes, being delivered to 82,000 homes in total across the unique geography of New Forest District was recognised for its complexity and significance at the outset. Learnings taken from other councils who have delivered changes to waste services in the past identified likely high levels of service disruption whilst the new service "beds in", even before considering the additional complexities arising in the district. The complexity and likely challenges were conveyed as part of the briefings leading into the roll-out.

19. The new service has seen excellent take-up from residents in the first phase areas in terms of participation in food waste collections, with increasing tonnages being collected (see Appendix 2). As of 15 August 2025, the new service has completed 10 weeks of delivery, amounting to nearly 620,000 household collections. During this same period an additional 1,367,500 collections of glass, garden waste (across all three phases), refuse and recycling (in phase two and three areas) have been made.

20. The vast majority of householders have had their collections carried out without service disruption. The new service is delivering on many of the expected benefits, including increased recycling rates, reductions in manual handling and other injuries for staff, and reduced litter on collection day.

21. There have also been some key challenges with the rollout. These have resulted in some residents seeing significant disruption in service. A review of the phase 1 roll out was commissioned by the Waste Programme Board to implement learning for phases 2 and 3. Actions being implemented are detailed in the table below.

22. In addition to the actions detailed, Officers will provide dedicated engagement sessions for ward councillors throughout the phased roll out to support their role within their local communities.

Issue	Detail	Key learnings from phase 1 to be taken forward in phase 2
Container Deliveries	There were delays in initial delivery of containers to a number of residents. This was due to a range of factors: • Format and clarity of address data used for deliveries did lead to difficulties for delivery teams. • Inability to "live monitor" delivery progress. • A key vacancy within the waste team (Operations Manager) at the time of container delivery.	Following discussions between officers and the contractor: • Agreement of improvements in address data format – testing with the contractor has taken place to ensure that both street lists and maps give the best chance of accuracy of delivery, reducing properties who have missed or duplicated deliveries. • Setting up of a live shared delivery progress sheet – so that council staff, including customer services, can view the delivery contractor's progress and better inform responses to customer enquiries. • The key role of Operations Manager has now been appointed to, giving increased contract management capability within the team which will facilitate more regular contract meetings during the delivery phase. • Delivery spot checks by council staff.
Missed collections	Missed collections reported by residents have been at a higher level than expected. This is due to 3 factors: • Some of the new collection rounds are taking longer to complete than anticipated (in part due to high participation rates) leaving uncollected containers at the end of the day. • Unfamiliarity with new rounds and neighbourhoods	Key actions and learnings for phase 2 have been agreed, and commenced, as follows: • Additional staff resource has been agreed for rural rounds, which was a key round with a disproportionate number of missed collections due to the round taking longer to complete than expected. • Staff recruitment – bringing forward the recruitment of staff for phase 3, to support phase 1 and 2 areas. • Introduction of 5% market supplement from 1 August for drivers to improve recruitment and retention.

	• An increased sickness level, limited agency staff availability and recruitment challenges, has meant that the additional staffing contingency that was allowed for in phase 1 has not been sufficient. This has had knock-on effects to other parts of the district and is not just contained to the phase 1 area. (More information on all these factors is included in Appendix 2 - this includes data showing that just 0.4% of collections are being reported by customers as missed each week).	• Increased support and training for staff using the new in-cab technology, to ensure that the system supports efficient collections, data recording and accurate service delivery. • Gradual improvements in round completion are being observed, as crews become naturally more familiar with their rounds and new ways of working. However, it may be that additional collection resource is needed if some rounds continue to be too large to complete. This is being monitored. • For phase 2, some staff from the Ringwood depot will spend time before service change working in the phase 1 area, to provide familiarisation with new vehicles, ICT and working practices. • Crews will be informed as early as possible of new routes/rounds, so that geographical familiarisation can begin well before scheme commencement, i.e. by sitting down with staff to discuss these new routes.

Livestock accessing food waste	In areas open to livestock, there have been instances of animals accessing food waste. Concern about this has been expressed by the public and key partners. There has been an average of 10 instances reported each week. More information on the policy background is included in Appendix 2.	A meeting was held on 6 August with representatives of key partners has led to the following actions being taken:
		
		• Two trial areas on selected roads (commencing 22 August – affected residents have been written to).
		  ○ On selected roads in Brockenhurst, the collection point for food waste will be moved to behind gates.
		  ○ In East Boldre, the selected roads will see the collection point for food waste *and* general waste/mixed recycling containers moved behind gates.
		These trials will provide valuable data on the impact of changes to policy on relative costs, time, health and safety

		and other operational or environmental impacts ahead of phase 2 commencement. • Ongoing research into more secure food waste containers • Further data analysis on property quantities and locations affected by this issue. A follow-up meeting was held on 27 August to discuss progress on the above actions. At this meeting it was agreed with partners that for the upcoming pannage period, where pigs are released into the Forest, residents within the perambulation (areas open to livestock) will be advised to present food waste containers behind gates on collection day. This will alleviate the potential risks of animal interactions with food waste. The Financial Monitoring Report presented to Cabinet on 3 September, details £150,000 that has been allocated to provide additional staff and vehicle resource to support this temporary change. As well as this temporary policy change, it is recognised that a longer term position is needed. Officers are working on a business case to extend the "behind gate" policy beyond pannage. To aid in communications and officer progress, an "in principle" agreement to this longer term policy change is sought via the recommendations in this report.
Customer contact	Whilst customer contact from the phase 1 area is gradually reducing, there have been periods where contact has been high in response to service disruption and repeat issues not being resolved.	The direct communications with residents via two direct mailings and information delivered alongside containers has worked well in terms of preparing residents for the change. Contact volume has largely been driven by instances where the service has failed. The actions described throughout this table are

	Customer feedback has been that response times have been significant, and this has tested customer service staff capacity and resilience, despite additional resource being deployed into the CS team. It is also evident that existing systems and processes have not met the needs of the roll-out demand from customers, data recording or feedback and assurance.	designed to improve delivery of the service itself, and in turn reduce direct customer contact in the phase 2 area. However, with the level of service change already described, an elevated level of contact can still be expected, and additional resources on top of that which had been provided for phase 1 (as detailed in Appendix 2) have been agreed for the Customer Service and Waste Advisory teams, to provide increased capacity and support to our customers. Website messaging is to be reviewed and a more flexible approach to digital communications utilised to keep residents informed. A project to provide a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system is currently underway but will not be delivered until 2026. In the interim period, the transformation team and ICT are working with the waste service and customer services on options and process redesign to improve case management and introduce improved direct resident communications during phases 2 and 3.
Bring sites	Bring sites have seen a significant increase in usage, and in the context of the staffing issues described elsewhere, the increased collection requirements have been difficult to fulfil diverting supervisor capacity to collect from these. In part, this is likely due to businesses who incorrectly used the domestic collection under the previous sack	The actions described above regarding staff recruitment and retention, also apply here. The bringing forward of staff recruitment from future phases will help to provide the increased level of collection resource needed to manage these sites and maintain more regular collections. It is also noted that the material being deposited includes commercial waste from inside and outside of the district, which is exacerbating the issue. As a result, the council's enforcement

	collection scheme in phase 1 areas, plus changes implemented in neighbouring authorities driving disposal out of their areas.	team are monitoring sites, and a review of such sites will be carried out once all phases have been delivered.
Collection points	Notwithstanding the issues described around containers presented outside gates in areas accessible to livestock, the approved collection policy states that *"If the property is in a private footpath, lane, or road, the collection point will, wherever possible, be where the lane or road meets the public highway."* It has been identified that for phase 2, improvements in communication to residents directly affected by this, must be improved.	Officers will ensure that identification of properties affected by this will be carried out ahead of phase 2, and direct communications issued to ensure residents are fully informed. Crews will also receive additional training on collection points.
Sack Deliveries	Staff assigned to sack deliveries have been diverted to support other collection services, and this has caused delay in some residents in phase 2 and 3 areas receiving their sacks.	Crews were up to date on these ahead of the suspension of deliveries, meaning that some areas are 10 weeks behind the standard schedule. Recovery should be quicker as there is no longer a requirement to deliver to phase one areas. In response to the backlog: • Deliveries are ongoing and collections are available from Council offices and contact centres. • Additional support is being provided by Streetscene teams to ensure recovery is rapid. • An annual equivalent of sack rolls is being delivered to phase three areas to ensure more support capacity is available during phase two and phase three roll out periods.

		• The catchup and annual deliveries will be complete by October.
Flats	Deliveries of containers to flats were carried out in-house in phase 1. On arrival at some properties residents physically prevented containers from being delivered. At others, it was identified that the initial property assessments were incorrect and further access arrangements needed to be planned for. Larger containers were separately procured for flats, deliveries of these ran late at one stage and the arrival of one size of container incorrectly marked up meant that some planned containers were unusable, and a contingency plan needed to be implemented, necessitating reassessment. Commercial properties, specifically care homes, had evidently being receiving domestic collections, they had expected a bin delivery and collections that would not occur. These issues and missed collections led to overflowing bins in some instances.	Phase 2 and 3 flats will continue to be delivered by in house teams with the following mitigations: • Earlier deliveries are being made by manufacturers to prevent gaps in stock in the event of any delivery delays • Waste adviser and supervisor checks have been made on properties with communal storage to confirm initial container assessments • Experience of the previous, phase one, mis-labelled containers ensures that the team have the enhanced experience to respond to any future rapid pivots in container availability and assessment. • Additional in-house resources identified in the event of any disruption to bin deliveries, allowing for a rapid response preventing any delays in later phases. • The Housing Service are supporting the rollout with additional site assessments and support and education to tenants.

Oversize and undersize container deliveries	Late delivery of the online request forms meant that requests were received after the planned delivery period, which creating a backlog at a time of restricted resource availability.	The provision of the online form came late during the phase one bin delivery period. This has been available since and is already being used for phase two and three areas, well ahead of the communications prompting residents to submit their requests. This allows for planned deliveries ahead of collection commencement. Recovery of the previous backlog continues at this time, prioritising vulnerable residents. This is being delivered by in-house Waste and Streetscene resources supplemented by additional external resources.

Commentary on proposal to postpone phases 2 and 3

23. Whilst most residents have experienced the expected service, the council would indeed have wished to have experienced, and witnessed, less disruption. The project is perhaps the largest in terms of scale implemented in the district for a generation. Service disruption was expected and was planned for, particularly when taking into account the complexities of delivering such a project in a geography as unique as the New Forest District.

24. However, it is apparent that the scale of service disruption has been in excess of the level deemed acceptable, and there have been a number of incidents that have attracted elevated media attention. For this both officers and members of the cabinet have rightly issued apologies to affected residents and have taken ongoing management steps to address issues as they arose, within the fluid and complex environment of delivering operational services.

25. There continues to be clear programme governance in place, with effective risk management, budget assurance, and operational updates through the Waste Programme Board, and the linked Steering Groups with the frequency of these meetings having increased in tune to the emergence of issues during roll-out.

26. The table in section 22 highlights a summary of significant learning and improvements to the service that have either already been implemented or will be in place ahead of the planned phase 2 roll out.

27. It is anticipated that these actions will significantly reduce service disruption and customer contact to closer to expected levels (recognising that substantial service change will always attract significant demand). Members may therefore consider these sufficient, with necessary governance, monitoring and reporting, and scrutiny by members without implementing a delay. In addition, it is worth noting that Phase 2 delivery is to 16,000 properties compared to 31,000 in phase 1. Correspondingly the numbers of vehicles, staff and new collection rounds are also lower than in phase 1.

28. The current planned phase 2 and phase 3 key milestone dates are:

Milestone	**Phase 2 dates**	**Phase 3 dates**
Resident communication 1	21 July	11 November
Container delivery commences	25 August	19 January

Collections commence	20 October	16 March

29. A delay to the service roll out is to be considered by Council, such a delay is not without risk and further complications.

30. For the purposes of setting out the implications, an example delay of 4 months is discussed in this section of the report. This takes account of the difficulty in rolling out a new service in the period November to February, with potential impacts of weather and the natural break in services that occurs in the festive period.

31. As highlighted further in the report, it is not immediately clear without detailed contractual discussions with multiple partners, whether this example timeline is feasible or deliverable at this stage. Any costs included are estimates, and ranges are given to illustrate the likely financial implications.

32. If it is not feasible, it must be noted that such a decision could put phases 2 and 3 back for a much more significant period of time. For example, if container/vehicle manufacturers or the container delivery contractor cannot adjust their production/service timelines in the short term, it may result in a much longer lead time for the required equipment or services. Many of the cost implications detailed below would be significantly higher in these circumstances.

33. The most significant consideration to note is that the government have set a deadline, mandated in the Environment Act 2021, of 31 March 2026 for the roll out of food waste to all domestic households. Any delay to phase two or three beyond 31 March deadline will result in New Forest District Council being non-compliant with the legislation. The consequences of such non-compliance would need to be determined via external legal advice, in conjunction with potential reputational damage, over and above that resulting from any customer complaints.

34. Funding of £2.3 million has been provided to NFDC by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to support the implementation of food waste collections by the deadline of 31 March 2026.

35. Communications have already been sent directly to residents regarding the start of phase 2, informing them of key dates. To change the timescales at this stage will require additional and corrective direct communications to residents. There is a risk of confused messaging to residents if the message and timescales are changed when some residents already have containers delivered to

their properties and all residents have received communications to expect delivery of their containers by a certain date. There would also be a cost of around £15,000-20,000 for the re-production and posting of leaflets and letters with the changed dates.

36. The container manufacturer has already delivered the phase two containers into the former Claymeadow depot in Totton. The delivery of the phase three containers is scheduled to commence in December 2025 ahead of deliveries to residents commencing for phase three in January 2026.

37. The possibility of delaying some containers being delivered into NFDC storage sites could be explored but the high demand across the industry as all local authorities work to comply with the Environment Act deadlines means that there is little capacity for manufacturers to adjust production times.

38. Previous conversations with the manufacturer indicated that there would be additional costs of £100,000-150,000 for the delay in the manufacture of containers for phase three. This cost is based on an uplift in unit costs incurred as a result of the delay.

39. Delay of phase 2/3 rollout will have the following implications with regard to container storage:

- Storage of containers in the stacks that they are delivered in for prolonged period may damage the containers, especially over the winter period where there is likely to be water ingress and further damage from freeze/thaw splitting containers in low temperatures. This may lead to an unquantifiable cost to replace these containers, but to give an indication, loss of 10% of stock would equate to c£55,000.

- Storage for the containers requires a substantial footprint that comes at a cost. Extension of the rollout programme would require an additional 4 months of storage at Claymeadow and Queensway storage locations. An extended use period of Queensway would delay the intended re-letting of this site, meaning NFDC would continue to be directly liable for Business Rates, and would delay the generation of rental income.

- Current storage capacity is insufficient to store containers for both phases 2 and 3, meaning that a larger footprint for storage will also need to be identified. There are currently no further options available within the NFDC estate. Commercially rented space has been considered in the past but suitable sites are

scarce and this would likely come at a cost of £50,000-100,000 and there is no site currently identified.

40. The council has entered into a contract with a contractor to provide container deliveries over all three phases. This contract would require amending to accommodate a new timeline. As with the container provision, there is no certainty that there will be industry capacity to move the container delivery period due to the peak in work taking place across the country, driven by legislation change. The container delivery industry has very few available contractors, and alternative options would be extremely limited. The procured contractor is also delivering multiple contracts, and their programme is finely tuned and mapped out for many months.

41. Any cancellation of work due to the contract expiring may still require the full contract payment under the contract terms and conditions at a cost of £260,000. Any agreed movement of work may see the requirement for compensation to be paid. A realistic outcome is that NFDC would have to arrange container deliveries for a readjusted timeline itself. This would require the use of hire vehicles and temporary staff to complete the work in-house, and it can be assumed that a cost at least equal to the contract cost of £260,000 would be incurred.

42. To allow for new wheeled bin-based collections, there is bin lift retrofitting programme under way to prepare the current vehicle fleet for service change. At this stage, once new bin lifts are fitted they are deployed onto the old collection scheme but cause a slower operation as service bins are used to lift the sacks into the rear of the vehicle. Staff are prohibited from manhandling sacks over the lifting equipment due to the personal safety risk from accidentally triggering the lift movement. The use of service bins slows down the collections in comparison to the use of open backed vehicles.

43. At this time the retrofitting programme is exactly matched to service change so the slower operation is manageable within current resources but delaying service change may require additional vehicles and staff to be hired, and additional agency staff used to deliver the sack-based services in phase two and three areas. If the current vehicle retro-fitting programme is paused, it should be noted there is a Europe-wide shortage of bin lifts, and if existing production slots are lost there is no guarantee of being able to access the equipment needed on an adjusted timeline. This would mean hiring in of additional vehicles. This would in turn have an impact on depot capacity and it is possible that this is unfeasible within the current depot footprint.

44. Deliveries of sacks would have to continue for longer than planned in the phase 2 area. This would require additional vehicle and staff resource. It's expected this would have a cost of £66,000 for staff/vehicles and the purchase of the sacks themselves.

45. Hampshire have put in place contractual arrangements for the transfer/disposal of food waste. At the time of writing, it is not known if a delay would have any financial implications which may be passed back to NFDC.

46. The council has already accepted the delivery of the new vehicle fleet for phase 2. Long term storage, especially if these continue to be parked outside over winter without use, will lead to the degradation of their condition, and much of the vehicle warranty period will have passed before they are put to full use if the scheme is delayed. This may have a future cost implication.

47. Additional staff (operations support, waste advisors and customer services teams) have been taken on for the duration of the project on a fixed term basis. There would be a cost for an additional 4 months for these staff to ensure their employment covers the revised roll-out period.

48. As of 2025/26, the council has been guaranteed at least £1.2 million of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) funding, to support the collection, recycling and disposal of packaging waste. This annual funding is to support "efficient and effective" collection schemes with high levels of recycling capture. The existing sack-based service would not be classed as efficient or effective in these terms, and in 2026/27 this funding would likely be reduced as a result. The exact mechanism of how the funder (Pack UK) will calculate payments on this basis are not currently known.

49. Staff retention – there is a risk that delays in implementation will lead to some staff leaving. As one of the last remaining councils in England still operating a sack collection service, frontline staff in phase 2 and 3 areas have been waiting a long time for the working condition and manual handling benefits that the change will bring. It's notable that we've also recruited staff from other neighbouring Local Authorities since the phase 1 service change. Staff are currently being interviewed for frontline roles in the phase 2 and 3 areas and may have been appointed by the time of this meeting.

50. Feedback from residents has shown strong demand for the new system, with many households welcoming the introduction of bins as

a more reliable, practical and hygienic way of managing waste. Residents are already aware of the changes and have seen communications and preparations taking place across the district, which has raised expectations. Any delay at this stage would risk undermining public confidence, generating unnecessary frustration and potentially leading to reputational damage.

Corporate plan priorities

51. The new waste collection service supports Corporate Plan Priority 2: Protecting our climate, coast, and natural world by:

- **Minimising non-recycled waste** through the separate collection of food waste from households.
- **Cutting vehicle emissions** by using the Bartec system to design more efficient waste collection routes.
- **Boosting recycling rates** by introducing separate food waste collections and providing larger wheeled bins for recyclables.
- **Reducing litter and spillages** by replacing sacks with more secure and contained waste collection methods.

Options appraisal

52. The measures being introduced to mitigate the challenges seen in the phase 1 area have been clearly presented in section 22 of this report, and the implications of delaying phases 2 and 3 of the service rollout have also been detailed. The result is a recommendation to proceed with phase 2 as originally planned.

Consultation undertaken

53. Recent consultation has focused on identifying and addressing the challenges associated with the rollout of the new waste collection service. Resident feedback via complaints and comments made to the council is of significant importance to the council. This information is continually under review and is used to make incremental changes.

54. Consultation has also included meetings with representatives of organisations and wider stakeholders working and living in the New Forest.

55. The Waste Management Steering Group has continued to provide strategic guidance, particularly in relation to operational complexities, resident engagement, and service readiness.

56. The Programme Board has overseen the evaluation of key risks, including logistical constraints, communication gaps, and the need for additional resources where needed.

57. Feedback from these groups has been instrumental in refining implementation plans, ensuring that the service remains responsive to community needs while delivering on environmental objectives.

Financial and resource implications

58. The additional costs already approved to support the rollout of phases 2 and 3 are detailed in Appendix 2.

59. Commentary around estimated costs associated with a delay in rollout are documented throughout the report, and summarised below. This is in the context of considerable uncertainty about exact costs as there has not been sufficient time to fully engage with multiple industries (property, vehicle manufacturing, container manufacturing, container delivery) on the implications of a delay. As detailed in section 32, a more significant delay than four months (in the event that a shorter delay cannot be accommodated) would significantly exacerbate these costs.

Element	Estimate cost or range of cost (£)
Additional communications costs	15,000 - 20,000
Container cost increase	100,000 - 150,000
Loss of container stock resulting from storage over winter	40,000 - 70,000
Additional container storage costs (NFDC estate)	60,000
Loss of rental income due to storage overrun	105,000
Additional storage capacity (3rd party)	50,000 - 100,000
Remaining delivery contract costs at contract expiry	260,000
Cost of phase 2 and 3 container deliveries	260,000
Additional hire costs resulting from delay in vehicle retrofitting	40,000 - 50,000

Additional depot capacity requirement due to increase in hire vehicles	Unknown
Additional sack supply and delivery costs	66,000
Waste transfer/disposal costs	Unknown
Vehicle maintenance cost associated with unutilised fleet	Unknown
Extension to temporary staff deployment	120,000
Reduction in EPR income from PackUK	Unknown
Staff retention issues	Unknown
	0
Total (£)	**1,116,000 - 1,261,000**

60. The range of costs given at the base of the table above do not include the "unknown" factors that have not been possible to quantify at this stage and therefore should be viewed as a minimum level of additional cost to be incurred.

61. It is also of note that DEFRA transition grant totalling of £2.3 million has been received to facilitate the delivery of the new food waste service in accordance with the legislation. It has not yet been ascertained as to whether there would any requirement to repay any or all of this grant, should the Council not meet the 31 March 2026 deadline.

62. In line with the Council's Standing Orders for Meetings, the related motion on this agenda affects the Council's approved strategies, policies or budgets, meaning that it must be referred to Cabinet for consideration, before reporting back to Council.

Legal implications

63. The Council is bound by legislation (Environment Act 2021) to roll-out a separate food waste collection service by 31 March 2026. It is unclear what repercussions the government may impose through non-compliance, but any actions could come with severe financial and reputational risk.

64. Detailed discussions on the implications of delays to phases 2 and 3 have not taken place with key partner suppliers. There are a range of potential outcomes from this, from basic contract amendments to the potential need for re-procurement in some cases.

Risk assessment

65. As requested, a risk log is included as Appendix 3 to this report.

66. In the first 2 months of the new service, zero instances of injury due to manual handling or sharps/puncture injuries were reported in the phase 1 area. This is a very encouraging demonstration of the H&S benefits of the move away from sack collection to bins.

67. The key risks of delay to the rollout of phases 2 and 3 could be summarised as follows:

- Legal – relating to the Environment Act 2021 and contracts
- Financial – as outlined in the financial section above
- Deliverability – as described, it is feasible that a short-term delay is not achievable, pushing service change back by 12 months or more.
- Strategy delivery – delay in achieving the benefits of change as highlighted in the Waste Strategy, for example no improvement in recycling levels, health and safety, or litter left after collection of sacks,

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

68. Over 400 tonnes of food waste was collected in the first 10 weeks of the new service. Although no formal data has been collected, participation in this service (known from other areas to be difficult to achieve) has been high, at c70% of all households presenting separate food waste for collection in many areas. This is significantly higher than the expected figure for a service where, nationally, a 55% participation rate is considered to be a good rate engagement rate with the service and is level with the best performing services (WRAP, 2025).

69. The service has also led to improvements in street cleanliness associated with the previous sack service. Streets that would previously have been strewn with litter because of seagull and animal attacks, are now reported as clean after collections have taken place. As highlighted above, a delay in the rollout of phase 2 will delay the realisation of these benefits across the rest of the district.

Equalities implications

70. The equalities impact assessment (EIA) for both the strategy and policy is regularly reviewed on receipt of resident feedback and on learning lessons during the implementation of service change.

Feedback from recent discussions will be considered as part of this regular review process.

Crime and disorder implications

71. None identified.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

72. As described, waste teams and ICT counterparts are continuing to work on the rollout of new ICT systems and identifying improvements that can be made in case management.

New Forest National Park / Cranborne Chase National Landscape implications

73. Reducing littering and spillages from sacks will support the aims of the National Park and National Landscape by enhancing the natural beauty and reducing risks to wildlife.

74. In response to concerns raised in the initial roll-out —particularly regarding livestock accessing containers in the open Forest—this report makes it clear that the aim is to minimise animal interference with a set of proposed changes, influenced by forthcoming trials in the affected area. This is being explored further with key partners.

Conclusion

75. The report has presented the size of the challenge to project delivery – not only being one of the last councils in England to move away from sack collections to containers, but also the supporting changes needed in ICT, depots, staffing, and many other significant factors. This is all aimed at increasing recycling, improving staff working conditions and improving the local environment by reducing litter.

76. Participation in food waste collections has been very encouraging, with the 400 tonnes collected so far indicating that if this level of participation is replicated across the rest of the district, it will amount to c6,000 tonnes per annum. This amounts to a 16% reduction in black bag waste being sent for incineration. Most recent statistics on missed collections reported by residents, amount to 0.4% of scheduled collections, and performance has improved since the scheme launch. Each corporate complaint received represents a failing, but these have been received from just 0.16% of households.

77. The report has set out these challenges from phase 1. It is acknowledged that where there has been service disruption, these have had a detrimental impact upon residents, and they must be resolved.

78. The report details the actions being taken to resolve these issues, both in the phase 1 area itself, and in preparation for phase 2 and 3 areas. The actions proposed will ensure that future phases learn from the experience of phase 1. In particular, the move to amend collection policies during pannage shows that changes can and will be made when needed.

79. Phase 2 is just over half the number of households in phase 1, with rural based households in more complex locations already receiving collections as part of a dedicated rural collection round.

80. The costs and risks of a delay in phases 2 and 3 are significant, and not without further complication, and are laid out in the content of this report.

81. These factors have led to the recommendations at the top of this report.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Notice of Motion
Appendix 2 – Waste collection data from phase 1
Appendix 3 - Waste programme risk log
Appendix 4 – Summary of Council debate

Background Papers:

October 2024 Cabinet – Waste Programme Update

July 2022 Cabinet – Waste Strategy

Waste collection policy

Report and appendices from Extraordinary Council Meeting 28 August 2025

Appendix 1 – Notice of Motion

In accordance with Standing Order 22, Cllr Malcolm Wade wishes to move the following motion:

This Council notes:

1. Ongoing waste and recycling operational issues in Phase 1 areas, including:
    - Missed collections of general, recycling and food waste.
    - Overflowing bins and public health risks from rotting food.
    - Interference from free-roaming animals, particularly donkeys, as a result of changes to collection points in open forest areas.
    - Confusion among residents about collection point requirements.
    - Impact on collections in Phase 2 and 3 areas, as well as call-waiting times for residents.
    - Impact on NFDC officer time and staff morale.
2. The recent partner meeting of **6 August 2025** involving the Verderers, Forestry England, the New Forest Association, and the Commoners Defence Association, which acknowledged these issues and agreed trial changes to bin placement.
3. That trials to address these problems are only commencing in August, with a further partner review not until 27 August—just one day before this meeting.
4. That updated projections for the cost of the Phase 2 and 3 rollout have not been published, which would take into account the additional costs incurred for Phase 1 (including staff pay, transportation costs, officer time and other fees and charges).
5. That the Cabinet has continued to progress Phase 2 implementation despite these known issues, and **before** trials and risk assessments have concluded.

This Council believes that:

1. Waste removal is an essential service for residents and businesses across the New Forest area.
2. An efficient and effective rollout of Phase 2 and 3 is essential to ensure that we avoid additional costs and minimise disruption for our residents and staff.
3. That this is best achieved by learning the lessons from Phase 1 and ensuring that they are not repeated in Phases 2 and 3.

Council therefore resolves:

a) To suspend the implementation of Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the waste container rollout until:

- A full report is made to Council categorising the Phase 1 issues with clear mitigating actions identified and delivered.
- Results of the trials on bin placement and container security are available and reported to Full Council.
- An agreed operational policy for collection in open forest areas is in place and communicated appropriately with all relevant stakeholders.
- The council reviews its commercial waste policy with regard to camping and caravan sites where there is residential use alongside commercial use.
- Secure food waste container options have been identified and tested.
- A full risk assessment for Phase 2 and Phase 3 areas is completed and published.
- An improved communication and education service is implemented to support residents in the transition to the new service.

b) That bin placement in open forest areas should, where practicable, be **inside property cattle grids** pending the adoption of any secure container solution, to prevent animal access.

c) That monthly performance data be published on missed collections, animal interference incidents, complaint volumes and resolution rates, and customer service SLA compliance, for the duration of the Phase 2 and 3 rollout.

d) That the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability report progress directly to Full Council **before** any further rollout stages proceed.

APPENDIX 2 – WASTE COLLECTION DATA – PHASE 1

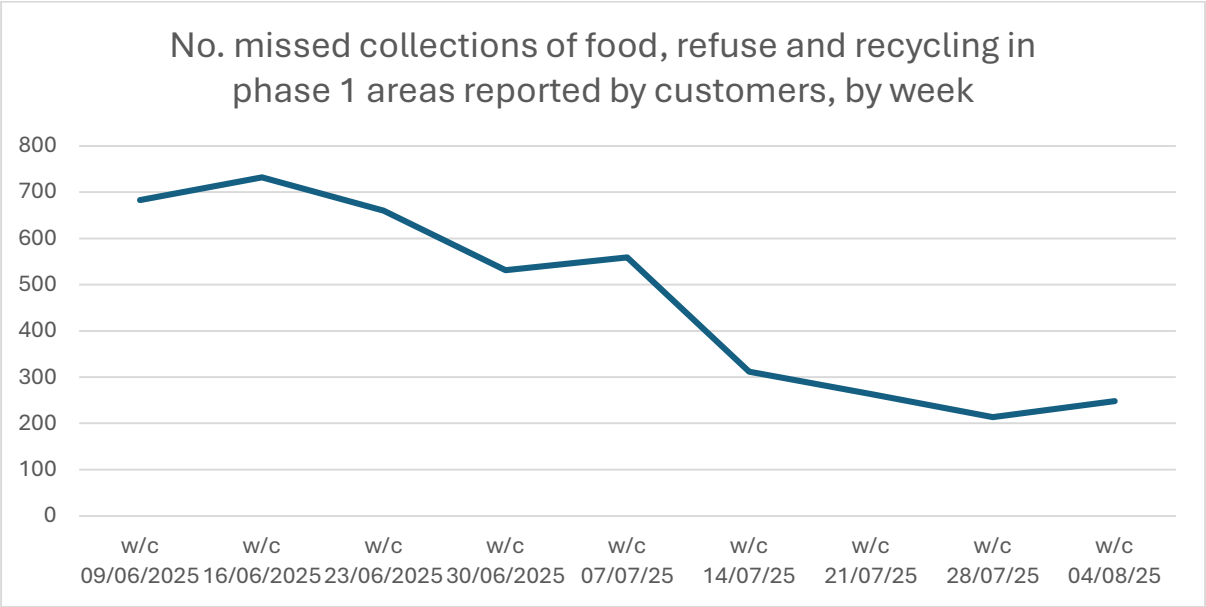
This appendix addresses the specific data requests contained in the requisition for an extraordinary meeting of the Council.

1. **Number of bins still undelivered in Phase One areas, by type and location.**

   As of 15 August 2025, there were 157 addresses (out of c 31,000) awaiting a full set of containers. It is anticipated these will have been completed by the end of August.

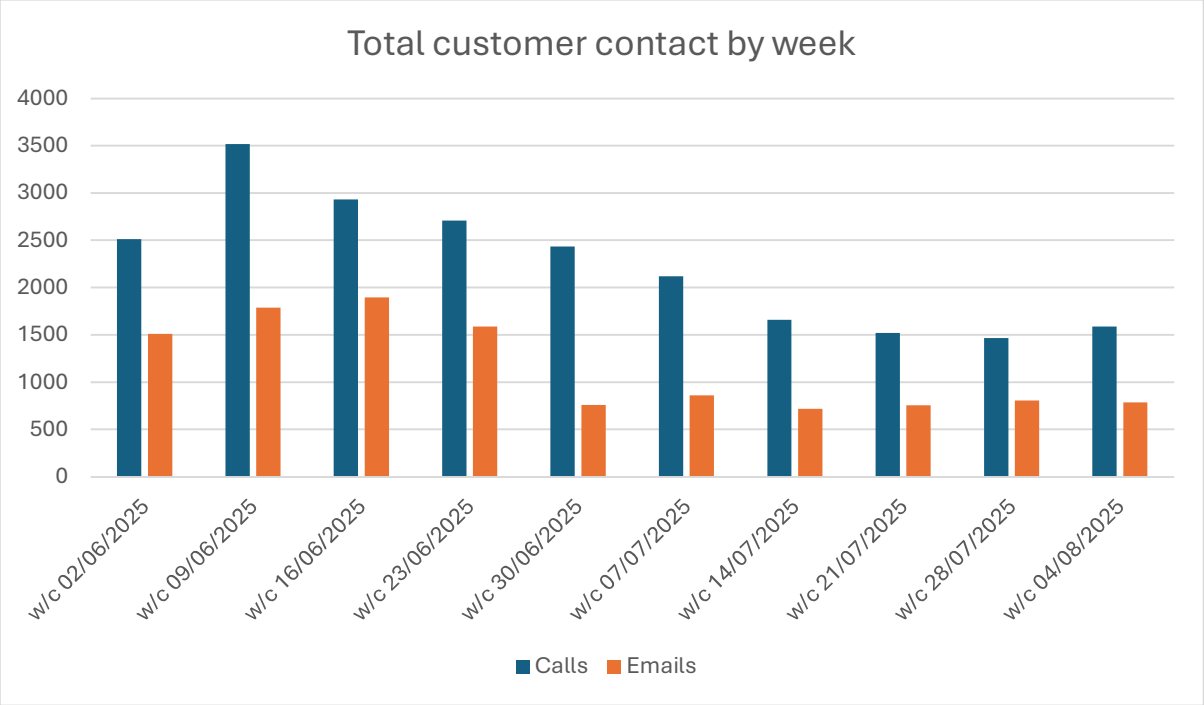
2. **Volume and categorisation of complaints received since rollout began, including missed collections and food waste issues including data on impact to the Council's service level agreement (SLA) for customer service: query volumes, average response and resolution times since the rollout began.**

   The graph below includes data up until 11 August 2025. It shows that since the beginning of the roll out (9 June 2025) the number of missed collections reported to the council by residents in the phase 1 area has significantly reduced. Hotspots and slower collection days do however remain, mainly due to large rounds (e.g. on a Friday). The 248 missed collections reported in the w/c 4/8/2025 equates to 0.4% of scheduled collections. This level continues to improve as staff become more familiar with the rounds, new ways of working, new vehicles and the in-cab technology.



Whilst not formally recorded, from staff observations, food waste presentation has been much higher than anticipated. Analysis of tonnages collected shows volumes are gradually increasing on a weekly basis (from 27 tonnes in week 1 to 53 tonnes a week in early August).

Overall customer contact has substantially reduced since the start of the scheme, as shown in the graph below.



The above data relates to all contact received by the Customer Services team over this period (note – Housing and Planning services have separate arrangements for handling customer contact, so the primary call volumes for the team relate to waste and other environmental services). Because of limitations in the existing CRM system, it is not possible to further accurately break down the calls. As a snapshot of call waiting times, in the period 28 July to 8 August, the average waiting time on the telephone was 13 minutes.

Forty-nine corporate complaints relating to the waste service have been recorded from the start of the service rollout, up to 31st July.

3. Staffing levels, resourcing shortfalls, and any reports of work-to-rule or industrial issues affecting performance.

- Staffing and Resourcing:
    - At the time of writing, all posts at the Lymington depot (which is the depot delivering services to phase 1 areas) are currently filled, indicating no formal staffing shortfall.
    - Sickness absence, rather than staffing levels, has impacted availability, necessitating the use of agency staff. This has led to service delays due to unfamiliarity with routes among agency drivers. In addition, agency staff are not always available, and there is high turnover as many people are often working for an agency as a stopgap between other roles. The number of working days lost among frontline staff in the phase 1 area is shown below for May (pre-service change), June (the month of change) and July (post-service change.

Month	No. lost days
May 25	62
June 25	104
July 25	165

    - To provide additional staffing support and resilience in the phase 1 area, recruitment of five drivers required for phase 3 was expedited earlier than initially planned. There were no suitable applicants in the first round of recruitment. After the second round there were 7 applicants who at the time of writing are being shortlisted for interview. The difficulty attracting drivers has been mirrored in neighbouring council areas. HGV drivers have recently been informed they will be given a 5% market supplement on their salary for

until at least March 2026, to aid recruitment and retention. Recruitment for staff for the phase 2 area has seen stronger interest. Recruitment is ongoing.

- Industrial Relations:
    - Engagement with union representatives remains proactive and constructive.
    - Some reluctance to undertake overtime has been noted among crews.

4. Missed or delayed glass collections, bottle bank collections, glass car park recycling points, and green waste collections areas affected, scale of missed service, and impact on residents.

- With rounds taking longer than anticipated to complete, and levels of sickness/holiday absence, at times there have been impacts upon other kerbside services in other parts of the district. This had included glass collections being cancelled on some days, and residents asked to wait for their next collection. This does have a negative impact on residents but as the material is not degradable and alternatives (bring sites) exist, postponement of this service is seen as the least impactful compared to alternatives. Data on the exact numbers of households affected is not available.,
- Green waste collections have not seen a significant increase in missed collections as a result of the phase 1 service change. On average since service change began, an average of three missed garden waste bins are reported to NFDC per day.
- Bring sites:
    - These sites have seen a significant and impactful increase in usage since the kerbside service changed. The reasons for the change in the volume of material is unlikely to be due to one factor, but it is thought to be for number of reasons:
        - In phase 1 areas an increase in the amount of domestic cardboard may be due to resident being unaware a small bundle can be left beside the recycling bin. Residents can also request additional recycling capacity where they have the space to accommodate an additional wheeled bin.
        - Residents that are used to our old “collect all” kerbside bag collection service for disposing of excessive waste (e.g. from house/loft clearance etc), are now looking for additional ways to dispose of this waste. This waste should in fact be taken to the Household Waste Recycling Centres run by Hampshire County Council.

- Additional business waste may now be being deposited at sites as businesses are no longer able to set out additional waste mixed with the domestic collections due to capacity restrictions.
- Residents who have experienced missed collections may be depositing additional waste/recycling at the bring sites

- In the first quarter of 2025/26 there has been a total of 219 instances of the wrong material being deposited on the floor, or inside containers reported at bring sites. This is a 40% increase on the same period last year and 120% increase on the same period in 2023/24.
- These issues are requiring an increased level of resource input. Many of our bring sites are now being emptied daily (up from 2-3 times a week).

5. Waste vehicle loading weights and any implications for road safety, legality and routing.

- Vehicles have varying maximum payloads depending on size.
- Vehicles are specified with safety systems in place to prevent overloading, including automatic shutdowns and alarms.
- Crews are trained on these systems, and no safety incidents have been reported.
- Maximum weight of some vehicles has reduced via the addition of bin lifts onto them.
- All weights are reported and monitored via the weighbridge subject to verification through documentation and safety checks.

6. What if any work studies were carried out to compare the timings/routes of the current waste collection process and the new process and did we benchmark data from other local authorities used to support the scheme.

- The experiences of other authorities were learnt from. This came from two sources – WRAP's best practice guidance, which is based on evidence generated from multiple authorities and specialist studies, and the direct experience of a range of authorities in Hampshire, Surrey, Dorset and further afield. WRAP's evidence-based data is the industry standard data with modelling for timings designed for a range of operation types. This tailored data is used in conjunction with the parameters of the modelling software to provide optimised rounds. Collection rounds had not been optimised or redesigned in well over a decade so substantial changes were necessarily made in conjunction with the changes to the operating model.

- The supervisors and drivers of the current rounds reviewed the new rounds and were in agreement that they were feasible.
- There is no direct comparison between the old and current rounds as they are entirely different models of operation. The bagged system utilises crews to work for up to an hour ahead of the collection vehicle to pull sacks out to a central collection point meaning that collection vehicles make very few stops along a road. Bin based collection systems collect from each individual property, driving down side roads where the current system would often see them just collecting from the main roads, and there is a time allocated to the emptying of each bin as the bin lift cycle takes an allocated period. Time is then allocated to the return of the containers, again this is not a requirement of the sack-based system.
    - Comparative analysis with other services indicates performance is currently below expected levels, even accounting for rurality. At this stage this is considered to be due to containers not being presented at the correct locations. This leads to crews walking further than planned for and therefore taking more time per property than planned for. The impact of this means that fewer properties than expected, and certainly fewer than those in comparable boroughs, are being collected by each given round.
    - A further factor influencing the completion of rounds is the higher than forecast participation in the food waste service. The expected engagement of residents, based on experience from other authorities, was that there should be an initially high participation rate followed by a slight but rapid reduction in use as residents became aware of the level of food waste and behaviours changed. The current participation rate is currently sustained at around 70%. Food waste collections with a participation of above 55% are considered to be good performers, while those between 35% and 55% are considered average and those below 35% participation are considered to be poor performing. Consideration was given to the demographics of the population within the New Forest and the service was modelled with a 60% participation rate, this being above the expected service use. This high participation rate highlights the success of the communications in encouraging residents to engage with the service. Programming and modelling are ongoing to improve route efficiency. Survey work is also being undertaken to ensure that any further factors influencing the slow rate of collection are identified so can be addressed.

7. Cost projections vs actual spend: including any cost overruns or unbudgeted expenditure.

The details in the table below will all be reported to Cabinet in a Financial Monitoring Report on 3 September 2025.

Item	Description	Approval process	2025/26	
			New Variations Expenditure £'000's	New Variations Income £'000's
Refuse & Recycling- additional Grant re New Service Roll Out	This amount results from a higher-than-expected Defra grant, to support the transition to the new service	n/a		-151
Operations Administration	Service change workload and sickness temporary cover	This is funded via the increased grant funding as detailed above	25	
Driver recruitment	As described elsewhere in report, new drivers to be appointed earlier than budgeted to support service delivery	This is funded via the increased grant funding as detailed above	67	
Narrow Access Round	Collection resource allocated to rural collections has not been sufficient -this additional cost provides further resource to increase reliability of collections.	This is funded via the increased grant funding as detailed above	59	
Driver market supplement	To aid recruitment and retention, a 5% market supplement is being applied to driver salaries	This is funded through the pay award contingency	105	
Waste Advisors	2 additional waste advisors are being recruited on temporary contracts, to provide increased capacity to resolve customer issues and undertake property assessments	This funding was approved by Strategic Director as per Financial Regulations	46	
Programme Support	Provision of programme management support for an extended period of time	This funding was approved by Strategic Director as per Financial Regulations	22	
Additional Customer Services	An additional customer service post, to provide greater capacity for customer contact	This funding was approved by Strategic Director as per Financial Regulations	20	
Behind gates collection trial	Funding for collection resources to support “behind gates” trial during pannage	This funding was approved by Strategic Director as per Financial Regulations	150	

New waste supervisor	To support frontline teams with additional supervision		19	
Totals			**513**	**-151**

8. **Clarification of policy on bin pickup points: whether containers must be placed on property boundaries or collected from within premises. The container pick up location and interaction with New Forest wildlife being a major issue in phase one roll out.**

- The existing policy states that "Unless otherwise agreed with the council, householders are asked to place their waste containers at the edge or curtilage of their property, where it meets the public highway."
- However, the policy also states that, "In some circumstances the council may request that containers are left behind the householder's gate."
- There have been on average since service change, 10 reports (from the public) per week of livestock accessing waste. In response to this there was a constructive meeting with key partners held on 6 August 2025. The meeting brought together representatives from the Verderers of the New Forest, Forestry England, the New Forest Association, the Commoners Defence Association, and NFDC elected members and officers, to discuss the new waste and recycling collection system. The session focused on addressing concerns raised by local stakeholders, particularly around the interaction of free roaming animals with the new waste receptacles. Partners shared valuable insights into the possible impact of waste containers on livestock and public safety and highlighted the need for clear communication and immediate practical solutions with the forthcoming pannage season also an important consideration.
- In response, a series of measures were agreed. This included targeted trials in areas most affected by free-roaming animals to test the operational impact of alternative bin positioning, enhanced monitoring and patrols to assess interactions between animals and waste containers, and ongoing research into more secure food waste containers. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for 27thAugust to review progress and continue collaborative efforts.

9. **Analysis of food waste contamination in general waste bins due to missed or inadequate food caddy collection.**

- This is not information that is currently captured, and residual waste is not routinely sampled to ascertain this, and it would be difficult to link the presence of food waste in the black bin as a direct consequence of missed collections. As

highlighted earlier, food waste tonnages have steadily increased since the scheme began.

10. Contingency plans (if any) held by NFDC to respond to operational failure, including back-up collections and emergency clean-ups.

- Increased levels of staff were hired prior to scheme commencement, primarily to be allocated to the additional food rounds. In addition, more staff were hired as "pool staff" to cover other staff when they are absent. Due to some rounds taking longer to complete and increased levels of sickness, this has not proven to be sufficient.
- Additional hire vehicles and agency staff have been deployed – this was already planned for and budgeted.
- Streetscene and corporate staff have supported bin deliveries and driver capacity.
- It is also worth noting that adjacent authorities are currently experiencing similar difficulties recruiting operational staff, in particular HGV drivers t, which has caused disruption to services.
- Contingency measures already in place or underway have been mentioned elsewhere in this report.

11. Health and safety assessments or risk logs produced during Phase One rollout.

- All relevant risk assessments (RA) were completed in advance and are regularly reviewed in line with corporate health and safety policy.
- The food waste RA has been updated to reflect changes in container handling.
- The waste programme risk log is included as appendix 3.

12. Legal or contractual penalties/clauses relating to missed collections or resident complaints under contractor agreements.

- As the service is delivered in-house, there are no contractual penalties for missed collections.
- Corporate complaints will be responded to in accordance with the council's policy. Should a resident not be satisfied with the council's stage 2 response they are entitled to submit their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman, who will investigate their case.

				Risk rating											
Risk #	Work Group	Date added	Risk Description	Likelih	impact	Over	Risk Owner	Mitigations	likelihood	impact	Overall	review date	Risk/Issue	Status
7	Infrastructure		Ringwood - long term availability of site and Associated area - lease agreement and landlord consent not yet signed/agreed	3	3	9	Chris N	3/06/25 - contact from HCC - lease received detail to be provided to update HCC when detailed plans for the new cabins available. 22/05/25 - Cb CN has escalated NFDC desire to progress the lease agreement with HCC. Awaiting update. 07/05/25 - CB - Awaiting response from HCC on lease and consent for new porta cabins. 03/04/25 - CB - Cb meeting Phil M on the 9th April to check latest status. 12/03/25 - CB Lease discussions with legal teams. Soon to be signed - no known blockers 28/01/25 - CB - LGR and devolution proposals mean longer-term this site will likely be owned by new unitary authority. reducing risk of availability 20/01/25 - CB - Lease discussions progressing well HCC, awaiting confirmation of lease agreement. various details being worked through with HCC - HCC now more positive over lease renewal - close when lease agreed	2	2	4		Risk	open
10	Infrastructure		Lack of long term depot capacity - Ringwood/Marsh Lane	2	3	6	Chris N	12/08/25 Draft report received and officer comments returned to Arcadis - revised draft awaited. 07/05/25 - CB - Arcadis appointed to look at MLD - work in progress - completion expected end of summer 2025 12/03/25 - CB - tenders received from consultants. Work to start within next month - complete by end of summer 2025 Managed via Infrastructure group - consultants being engaged for MLD review. Outcome expected in 2025	2	2	4		Risk	open
11	Infrastructure	20/11/2024	Ringwood and Marsh lane: insufficient budget for replacement portacabin at Ringwood, supervisor office and other welfare improvements at Marsh Lane Depot	4	3	12	Chris N	10/03/25 - CB - approval given to proceed with improvement works. Meetings setup to progress and agree way forward. 28/01/25 - CB Chris N has presented costs to James C for review - awaiting feedback Additional funding Required to meet minimum welfare requirements CB: 20/11/24 - Chris N noted that the £70k was available in addition to the remaining £183k remaining from Ringwood improvements	2	2	4		Risk	Open
16	Infrastructure	20/11/2024	Financial/Service Risk in 3- 5 years: Change in government policy - prioritising separate fibre and card Risk around increased costs for NFDC - vehicles and containers for future service arrangements - Linked with Gov policy and HCCs decision to provide a twin stream MRF.	3	3	9	Chris N	24/07/25 - HCC decision to move to twin stream poses significant risk to NFDCs waste collection budgets and will require significant officer time to input into the route map for compliance and JMWS revision 17/06/25 KP - Project Integra officer meeting on 10 June - NFDC will provide resource for JMWS update 02/06/25 - Additional NFDC resource required to input into JMWS update and defra SR route map 07/05/25 - CB - HCC has agreed to fund a MRF that will separate Fibre and Card - due to be operational end of 2027. Costs to be assessed/discussion ongoing. 03/04/25 - CB - project integra strategic board to meet 16th April. Awaiting fuller update from HCC. 24/03/25 - Meeting between NFDC and HCC took place 05/03/25. 19/02/25 - CB - NFDC have been invited to HCC meeting regarding cost sharing. 28/01/25 - CB - NFDC to better understand future costs involved and direct negotiation with HCC on cost sharing 09/12/24 - Member support required for interim approach - considering future direction of travel.	3	3	9		Risk	open

				Risk rating												
Risk #	Work Group	Date added	Risk Description	Likelih	impact	Over	Risk Owner	Mitigations	likelihood	impact	Overall	review date	Risk/Issue	Status
17	Infrastructure	20/11/2024	Bin distribution to residents - Jett Track record and risk of non-delivery to households	3	4	12	Peter C	12/08/25 KP - contract meeting agreed revised arrangements for data provided to Jett and on site contract management by Jett for phase 2 distribution 22/07/25 SM - Jett have ceased mop up deliveries and this has been taken back in house. Waste team are working closely with Jett to ensure the data provided for Phase 2 is useable and trackable. 17/06/25 KP - container distribution for Phase 1 not complete - Jett has increased resource supplemented by 2 streetscene crews but numbers missed remain high 22/05/25 - CB Jetts performance has been escalated to CEO. Jett are behind schedule: risk to NFDc as legal action might need to be taken. operational contingency plan in place. 07/05/25 - CB regular contract meetings are taking place to monitor deliveries 22/04/25 - CB - Some reporting data issues ongoing from Jett - NFDC are working through issues with Jett - Successful meeting took place (23/04/25) now alignment/spec is clear going forward. 12/03/25 - CB - regular engagement sessions being setup between NFDC and Jett to ensure alignment and regular communication. 20/01/25 - CB - Change in ops manager. Dave WO is managing relationship and keeping a close eye. DWO to has scheduled check in meetings with Jett ahead of engagement. CB 20/11/24 - Manage contract closely, with regular check ins with ahead of delivery dates 9/12/24 - waste Ops Manager replacement to manage relationship as a high priority	2	3	6		Risk	open
19	Operations and Fleet	20/11/2024	Vehicle production/build lead times - for all phases and any changes to phase 1 arrangements and open forest collections, including bring site implications.	4	4	16	Simon C	12/08/25 SM - SC confirmed currently waiting on 2 side lift vehicles which should be delivered end of this month or early next month. 2 caged vehicles are just awaiting their tracking to be fitted and will then be delivered. 04/07/25 Dennis Eagle advised delivery times, from order, is 52 weeks for RCV's	4	3	12		Risk	Open
21	Operations and Fleet	20/11/2024	Linked with above: availability of hire vehicles:	2	3	6	Simon C	12/08/25 - SC to confirm current availability of hire vehicles including cost and how quickly they can be made available to us. 22/07/25 - SM - we still have a number of hire vehicles supporting the phase one roll out. 22/05/25 - CB - seek update from Simon on availability of hire vehicles. Ensure hire companies are aware of plans/situation around any delays in new fleet vehicles. Expensive mitigation. SC having vehicles without bin lifts will mean there are vehicles that are on the O licence that can't be used. Any further hired vehicles would mean additional HGV parked overnight. This could mean a limited number of hired RCV's can be on site (Added SC 17/12/2024). There has been a supply issue with Electric bin lift. We are currently awaiting a schedule of retrofitting the lifts (Added SC 24/03/2025)	1	3	3		Risk	Open
23	Strategy	20/11/2024	Working practice change - risk to service delivery through levels of sickness absence and poor take up of overtime	3	4	12	Karyn P	12/08/25 Increased levels of sickness have been seen in recent week impacting service delivery 03/04/25 - Cb existing and new staff have all signed contact variations and will move to new contracts from 1st of June. Low risk Some possible staff disgruntlement at a range of significant changes to routes, vehicles and working practices. 24/03/25 - KP - some possible operational impact due to changes taking place directly before phase 1. Some possible staff disgruntlement at a range of significant changes to routes, vehicles and working practices. 26/02/25 - CB - 9 staff have not signed the amended contracts, plus an additional 14 pending returns. (23 in total) 80 staff have signed and returned. operational impact reducing but will be assessed once final numbers are received. 19/02/25 - CB - a number of signed contract variation letters received - positive direction of travel KP 21/01/25 Changes agreed by EMT carefully managed communications - staff will be issued variation letters on 11/02/25 via depot briefings	3	3	9		Risk	Open
27	Strategy	26/11/2024	Levels of resources across the Programme: Is it adequality resourced to deliver changes requested by members and partners	4	4	16	Karyn P	12/08/25 Outcome of EGM and Lessons Learnt will determine extent of any changed budget requirement	2	2	4		Risk	Open

				Risk rating				Residual Risk						
Risk #	Work Group	Date added	Risk Description	Likelih	impact	Over	Risk Owner	Mitigations	likelihood	impact	Overall	review date	Risk/Issue	Status
29	Strategy	26/11/2024	Risk that insufficient budget is allocated to the programme over the full lifecycle, including changing operational need.	3	3	9	Karyn P	12/08/25 - increased resource requirements and business case for operational changes - current impact unknown. Budget re-assessed with new rounds/staffing assumptions to feed into Jan Board and Feb Cabinet 2025	3	3	9		Risk	Open
31	Fleet and Operations	26/11/2024	Risk that IPL do not deliver Containers as per agreed timelines and quality (Phase 2)	2	4	8	Peter C	12/08/25 KP - Phase 2 deliveries progressing well 22/04/25 - CB - Some issues with quality/branding of food waste caddies (currently 700). Concerns have been escalated by waste team and team is in contact with IPL to rectify the situation. Impact is that NFDc will use time and resource to rectify issues. Distribution teams are actively checking for incorrect containers. 03/04/25 - IPL have delivered 180L and 240L containers for storage at Queensway and Claymeadow. - Risk around food Caddies arriving late from Friday 11th April. 05/03/25 - Phase 1 deliveries on track. Close risk for phase 1 when deliveries are complete. 26/02/25 - CB - IPL delivering containers from 26/02/25 - schedule in hand with NFDC teams. 19/02/25 - CB - CB has chased IPL a number of times. Expecting reply asap. Meeting to be setup if required. Manage relationship closely with IPL, via regular check ins etc	1	2	2		Risk	Open
33	Infrastructure	26/11/2024	Budgetary Risk: Risk around food waste disposal: Not able to use Marsh lane (Veolia site). There will be additional costs of transporting food waste to Marchwood and Hurn	3	3	9	Chris N	12/08/25 - no further update, CN to chase. 24/07 no further update , however there is a clear operational impact of distance to tipping point for food waste for P1 area 18/06/2025 - this has not yet been discussed with HCC, CN will raise with them before end June. 03/04/25 - KP sent food waste tipping calcs to team for comment. Recommendation that £124k of additional tipping costs be sought from HCC 10/03/25 - KP - Cost modelling working was reviewed to understand financial implications. Further work being undertaken. 5/03/25 - CB Nicola R has planned in to model routes to calculate/estimate cost/time differences to inform budget planning and any additional next steps	3	3	9		Risk	open
35	Strategy	18/12/2024	Risk that Councillors are not up to date with the key messages of the waste programme when responding to residents.	4	4	16	Karyn P	12/08/25 Councillor and town and parish engagement Sessions for Phase 2 set up in September 2025 03/04/25 - CB - Further engagement sessions arranged and online resources in place. monitoring until P1 roll out 24/03/25 - CB - Officers are receiving some queries from councillors which highlights further messaging required. 12/03/25 - CB - Comms to Cllrs has been increasing, with face to face, teams and emails being setup/sent. Increase Cllr engagement - Increase messaging to Cllrs and ensure message is understood, not just received. Briefings held Dec 24/Jan 25 with further face to face briefings to be arranged	2	2	4		Risk	Open
51	Infrastructure	12/03/2025	Bins storage issues across Queensway and claymeadow - lack of space and knock on effect on budget and staff resource	4	4	16	Liz M	22/07/25 - SM - bin delivery for Phase 2 has started into Claymeadow depot. Insufficient available space at Queensway due to later completion date of remedial works and nesting gulls – Alternative sites may be required plus additional costs 22/05/25 - CB - Site will not be vacated until september due to nesting birds- other sites will need to be considered for future phases. Both resource and budget will be impacted. 07/05/25 - Insufficient available space at Queensway due to late completion date of remedial woks – Alternative sites may be required. Options to be investigated. 22/04/25 - CB - Storage issues should be minimised once delivery rate from Jett is known. (Jett deliver roughly 900 containers a day). Team are managing stock control carefully. Monitoring situation. Phase 1 storage issues, caused by contractors remaining on site, are being managed by operational teams by maximising the use of Claymeadow Phase 2 will be more easily managed due to space constraints removed. Phase 3 to be planned.	3	4	12		Risk	open

				Risk rating					Residual Risk					
Risk #	Work Group	Date added	Risk Description	Likelih	impact	Over	Risk Owner	Mitigations	likelihood	impact	Overall	review date	Risk/Issue	Status
52	Infrastructure	24/03/2025	Efficient Bin distribution to households could be affected by bin storage location/arrangements	3	3	9	Liz M	17/06/25 KP - the limited storage capacity and need to move containers around has affected the efficiency of bin distribution Phase 1 22/05/25 - CB - now an issue. Impact across service as staff and budget being used to mange as best as possible. 24/03/25 - CB - Containers are being moved between claymeadow and Queensway by operational staff to enable efficient distribution by Jett.	3	2	6		Issue	open
54	Operations and Fleet	02/06/2025	Recruitment of loaders and drivers, and turn over of staff. Potential impact of Chargehands and Supervisors driving routes and not overseeing roll out managment and isssues.	4	4	16	Peter C	12/08/25 - 7 applicants received for Ringwood driver position and 7 recieved for Hardley position. Currently shortlisting for interview. 24/07 Driver recruitment currently no applicants, ongoing work with HR to look at the sitution, pay, market supplements, addtional adverts etc 22/07/25 - SM - no outstanding positions for phase one but due to additional resource required with mop up crews supervisors and chargehands are regularly driving. 17/06/25 - Phase 1 recuitment complete but bedding in rounds has meant chargehands and supervisors are driving and resources are stretched. 04/06 DWO reported that they had 2 further applications for driver post, leaving just 1 remaining vacancy HGV list has been established from NFDC staff, a continued effort on recruitment and training on new loaders to be drivers.	2	4	8		Risk	open
55	Resources	24/07/2025	Impact of the implementation of the Customer First programme, to include a new CRM and telephony	4	4	16	Ryan S	24/7/25 - Recruitment of additional staff, discussions with ICT around implementation plan and timelines, Customer First Project Board involved, aware and will make informed decisions on roll-out, pre-implementation work underway.	3	3	9	Ongoing	Risk	Open
60	Strategy	30/07/2025	Reputational damage due to media coverage of animals accessing waste containers on the open forest	4	3	12	James C	Meeting taking place with key partners, set clear actions that can be shared in comms messaging to show the Council commiment to service improvement.	3	3	9		Risk	open
61	Strategy	12/08/2025	Risk that Key partners are not up to date with key messages	4	4	16	Karyn P	12/08/25 - recent meetings with key partners have clarified collections policy and actions have been agreed.	3	2	6		Risk	Open

Appendix 4

Cabinet – 3 September 2025

Review of new waste collection service phase 1 roll out and motion to suspend phases 2 and 3

At the Extraordinary Council meeting of 28 August 2025, Council passed the following resolution:

That the Council consider the contents of the report to inform its debate.

The following summarises the council's consideration of this item:

Council agreed to suspend standing orders to allow three registered members of the public to speak at the start of this item. The speakers were; Gary Lee, Susan Carter and Tony Fessler. They highlighted the following concerns in relation to the roll out of Phase 1 of the waste and recycling service:

- Donkeys accessing bins on collection day, in particular the food waste caddies. The donkeys had developed ways to access the bins and freely roamed the streets in the village of Brockenhurst to access food. There was concern expressed that this could lead to an increase in aggression in the behaviour of donkeys and that there was a fear that a member of the public might get injured.
- It was asked that the trial to put the bins behind gates become normal practice to prevent donkeys accessing the waste. It was also asked that a member of the council visit the area on collection day to observe the problems being experienced.
- It was highlighted that the 2021 census results had 34% of the population of Brockenhurst over the age of 65 and the impact the new service had on these residents. Bins in communal areas were considered to be too high and the residents were experiencing difficulty in lifting the lids of the bins up and putting the waste into them. Residents in non communal areas were also experiencing difficulty in coping with the new containers. It was felt that there had been no consultation with residents, and that if there had been, this would have been flagged up. There was concern over risk of injury and breach in the council's duty of care.

- Communication to residents in May 2025 regarding where to place the containers. Residents had been asked to place them where they meet the public highway, however this was a change for residents living down private roads. It was felt that there had been a conflict between the waste collection policy document and the communication to residents. It was highlighted that some private roads were too narrow for refuse trucks with the new service. It was requested that the small bin trucks be brought back to collect the waste in a similar way to the previous service.

Cllr Blunden, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability presented the report and acknowledged the disruption during the phase 1 roll out and offered his sincere apologies for the inconvenience and frustration faced by residents. Work was being carried out to resolve the issues as swiftly and effectively as possible but it was recognised that this was a huge operational change and a very complex service. The council had an environmental responsibility to collect food waste and to reduce waste and it wanted to provide a modern service for residents.

The report set out various workstreams and did not overlook the advantages of the service change and the progress which had been made to date. The collection rates were improving week on week and 98% of waste and recycling had been collected. The crews were adapting to the new system. It was noted that there had been an impact across the organisation of the new service for all staff, in particular frontline and operational staff. Thanks was given to all staff. It was highlighted that the service was safer for crews and would improve recycling rates. It was a service which would meet the needs of residents.

The Portfolio Holder addressed a specific issue raised by residents and partners around the presence of free-roaming animals, particularly pigs during the pannage season. He highlighted that constructive discussions had been taking place with the Verderers, Forestry England, the Commoners Defence Association and the New Forest Association and that a set of temporary arrangements had been agreed. This meant that certain properties would be asked to place their food waste containers behind the gates for collection. To make this possible, additional resources were being invested to account for the additional time crews would take to collect food waste caddies from behind gates.

The new service was a major change and with it came an opportunity to make it a success.

Members debated the report and summary of the points arising during the debate are detailed below:-

- Members acknowledged the importance of providing a service fit for purpose to residents and that it was necessary to get it right. The new waste and recycling service was supported in principle and the ambition to recycle more.
- A number of Members reported that they had been contacted by local residents living in the phase 1 area in relation to a number of concerns, including missed collections, failure to deliver containers, roaming livestock, reporting matters to the customer services team and that these problems extended wider than the phase 1 area with other residents experiencing problems, including missed collections and not being delivered the plastic sacks in the phase 2 and 3 areas. This included missed glass and garden waste collections.
- Environmental concerns were raised. It was noted that some properties had not been included in the list for receipt of containers and that this needed to be addressed.
- The impact of missed collections was district wide and had an impact on the bring sites in the District, many of which were overflowing with waste and recycling.
- Customer services had experienced a high volume of enquiries in relation to the new waste and recycling service and that the time taken to answer telephone calls had been as high as 40-50 minutes at times which also had an impact on other services.
- Improvements were suggested to the communications with local residents in advance as well as during the service roll out. This included the interface with ward councillors. This could take the form of more timely dissemination of collection rates within particular areas, to support clear messaging to local residents.
- A number of members highlighted the volume of concerns which had been brought to their attention by local residents which was districtwide.
- Tribute was made by members to the officers who had been involved, in particular front line staff and customers services for their hard work in challenging circumstances.
- It was acknowledged that there had been an impact on staff and that the level of sickness had increased, which might indicate low morale.

This was felt to be an ongoing risk to the council and there was a duty of care as an employer to address this. It was also felt that recruitment was difficult, with a low number of applications being received for vacant posts. It was suggested that a review of staffing issues be carried out and that this also include staffing at the various hubs around the district.

- Members speaking in support of the actions within the motion suggested that a pause to the service would enable solutions to be identified and bring the project back on track, ensuring that phases 2 and 3 were carefully planned, building on the lessons that were being learnt from phase 1. It was acknowledged that there would be costs associated with any delay the roll out of phases 2 and 3 but also that there would be a cost associated with a failure to deliver a good service, which included reputational damage. It was also recognised that there was a deadline to roll out a food waste collection service by March 2026, which would put £2.5 million of funding at risk, if this service was not delivered on time.
- A member highlighted matters included within the Risk Assessment, this included operational risk which had not been stabilised, missed bin collections higher than expected, container delivery late or wrong and that narrow access rounds were not working as well officers would like. These matters, in the view of the councillor, were indicators that there should be a pause to the rollout of the future phases before the issues were multiplied across more residents. In relation to the financial risk, it was highlighted that initially there was insufficient budget for the roll out, unexpected tipping charges and a reliance on agency staff. The officer report indicated there was a £1.2 million assumption to the delay to the roll out of phases 2 and 3 but that this was not fixed liability.
- A number of ward members in the New Milton area reported that the roll out of the new service had been successful in their area with waste collected in good time and that the streets with cleaner as a result of the introduction of the new containers. The sack service had left the streets littered with rubbish arising from seagull attacks each week. It was felt that local residents were supportive of the new service and that following discussions with the crews collecting the waste that morale with staff was high. A 98% collection rate was positive.
- The proposed trial to change the collection points of the containers in specific areas was welcomed to address issues with donkeys. Financial information on the trial and the additional costs was requested.

- A clear plan of mitigating actions and measurable Key Performance Indicators was requested which would monitor progress and instil confidence.
- It was noted that many of the issues raised at the meeting had been considered by the member led working group through the development of the Waste Strategy. Good practice from other authorities had also been reviewed.
- It was generally acknowledged that the roll out of the service had not been as smooth as desirable, recognising that it was the largest and most complex project the council had ever introduced. Despite that, the new service was delivering for the vast majority of residents and there were concerns that a delay could hamper the progress being made to resolve the areas experiencing disruption.

Cllr Steve Davies, Deputy Leader thanked all those present at the meeting for the debate and recognised that there was a lot to consider and to learn lessons to improve the service. The importance of more robust scrutiny was recognised and that the report highlighted lessons learnt and the matters which were being addressed. He believed that the improvements to the service would make the big difference to local residents. A sincere apology was made to the customers who had felt let down. It was highlighted that in New Milton the service had been exemplary. Confidence was expressed that the planned improvements would help to resolve the areas of concern. Finally, the Deputy Leader praised staff, in particular the customer services team in the roll out of the waste service.

Cllr Geoff Blunden, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability reported that he would reflect and take on board the comments made at the meeting. He recognised there were areas which were not working and that these were being fully addressed. Other areas, such as New Milton were however working well. The Portfolio Holder apologised to the residents present at the meeting in relation to the problems faced in Brockenhurst.

There was a focus on solutions to address issues and this was the priority of the team. He felt that pausing the roll out would delay matters further. Missed collections accounted for a small percentage of the number of collections across the district. The collection of food waste had been a success, with the collection of 60 tonnes of food waste last week. He was

confident that the steps taken by the council set out in the report, showed there was a clear action plan and effective governance.

Notice of Motion

In accordance with the Standing Orders, the following motion, proposed by Cllr Malcolm Wade and seconded by Cllr David Millar was referred to Cabinet.

To consider a motion calling for:

This Council notes:

1. Ongoing waste and recycling operational issues in Phase 1 areas, including:
    a. Missed collections of general, recycling and food waste.
    b. Overflowing bins and public health risks from rotting food.
    c. Interference from free-roaming animals, particularly donkeys, as a result of changes to collection points in open forest areas.
    d. Confusion among residents about collection point requirements.
    e. Impact on collections in Phase 2 and 3 areas, as well as call-waiting times for residents.
    f. Impact on NFDC officer time and staff morale.

2. The recent partner meeting of **6 August 2025** involving the Verderers, Forestry England, the New Forest Association, and the Commoners Defence Association, which acknowledged these issues and agreed trial changes to bin placement.
3. That trials to address these problems are only commencing in August, with a further partner review not until 27 August—just one day before this meeting.
4. That updated projections for the cost of the Phase 2 and 3 rollout have not been published, which would take into account the additional costs incurred for Phase 1 (including staff pay, transportation costs, officer time and other fees and charges).
5. That the Cabinet has continued to progress Phase 2 implementation despite these known issues, and **before** trials and risk assessments have concluded.

This Council believes that:

1. Waste removal is an essential service for residents and businesses across the New Forest area.
2. An efficient and effective rollout of Phase 2 and 3 is essential to ensure that we avoid additional costs and minimise disruption for our residents and staff.
3. That this is best achieved by learning the lessons from Phase 1 and ensuring that they are not repeated in Phases 2 and 3.

Council therefore resolves:

a) To suspend the implementation of Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the waste container rollout until:

- A full report is made to Council categorising the Phase 1 issues with clear mitigating actions identified and delivered.
- Results of the trials on bin placement and container security are available and reported to Full Council.
- An agreed operational policy for collection in open forest areas is in place and communicated appropriately with all relevant stakeholders.
- The council reviews its commercial waste policy with regard to camping and caravan sites where there is residential use alongside commercial use.
- Secure food waste container options have been identified and tested.
- A full risk assessment for Phase 2 and Phase 3 areas is completed and published.
- An improved communication and education service is implemented to support residents in the transition to the new service.

b) That bin placement in open forest areas should, where practicable, be **inside property cattle grids** pending the adoption of any secure container solution, to prevent animal access.

c) That monthly performance data be published on missed collections, animal interference incidents, complaint volumes and resolution rates, and customer service SLA compliance, for the duration of the Phase 2 and 3 rollout.

d) That the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability report progress directly to Full Council **before** any further rollout stages proceed.

This page is intentionally left blank