

# Delivery of the Corporate Plan to 2020

## The New Forest Area – “Special and Unique”

The New Forest is an area of southern England which includes one of the largest remaining tracts of unenclosed pasture land, heathland and forest in the heavily populated south east of England. It covers south-west Hampshire and extends into south-east Wiltshire and towards east Dorset. It is a unique place of ancient history, fascinating wildlife and stunning beauty. Originally being a royal hunting preserve.

Most of the New Forest (206 square miles) is within the local government administrative area of **New Forest District Council** (290 square miles). Within the district there are 145 square miles of Crown land, managed by the **Forestry Commission**.

The New Forest is a thriving working forest that has prospered for nearly 1000 years. Many of the agricultural practices conceded by the Crown in historical times to local people are still retained. Principal of these is the depasturing of ponies, cattle, pigs and donkeys in the Open Forest by authorised local inhabitants known as Commoners. These unique agricultural commoning practices are administered by The **Verderers**.

The district council was created on 1 April 1974 and was a merger of the borough of Lymington, New Forest Rural District and part of Ringwood and Fordingbridge Rural District. The district is one of the most populated in England (176,462) not to be a unitary authority and within its boundaries there are 37 active **Town and Parish Councils**.

Operating within the heart of the district council area is the **National Park Authority**. National Park status was awarded in 2005 to the New Forest and immediate surrounding area in recognition of the many qualities that the New Forest holds. Planning development within this area is the sole responsibility of the National Park Authority. In other service areas most notably employment and tourism (13.5 million visitors) there are shared responsibilities and close collaborative working with the district council. Approximately 70% of the population of the district live outside of the New Forest Park Authority area in a number of medium sized towns. To the south and east of the district border there lies 40 miles of coastline.

The broad range of responsible organisations and community groups that exist means that the council needs to work very collaboratively with and in the community to deliver solutions.

Based in the district area there are over 8,000 businesses, 89% of which are micro in size employing fewer than 10 people. Self-employment in the district area is relatively high at 13% and unemployment is consistently lower than in the rest of the country. Leisure, tourism and marine along with their associated supply chains are significant employment and economic sectors within the district. The council works closely with, and in support of, the New Forest Business Partnership and the New Forest Tourism Association.

The nature of local business means that average earnings are also low with 60% of the working population earning less than the UK average. This, and the high average house price (£315,000; some £93,000 above the county average), results in significant cross commuting between those who work in the forest but can't afford to live there, and those who can afford to live within the district but work elsewhere. The district council area is located between the two major urban employment conurbations of Southampton and Bournemouth.

The very special nature of the New Forest makes it an extremely attractive place to live; both for those in work and those wishing to retire (21% of the population is over 65). Housing development is made more difficult by many of the natural constraints of the area.

Housing and particularly affordable housing for local people is a particular problem given the background to the district. The district council does still manage its own housing stock (5,044 properties) and there are in excess of 4,000 people on the housing waiting list.

## District Council – Finance and Resources

The history and geography of the New Forest has led to the district council not being a major landowner. Other than the housing stock, fixed assets owned by the council are relatively few. In terms of funding district council visible services, the finances of the council are heavily dependent upon the central government financial regime of grant funding and council tax.

Within the district area towns and parish councils are significant providers of local services, mainly open space and recreational services. In total they levy a precept of over £4.8 million, 26% of the district council's net budget requirement.

The council historically has invested significantly in the provision of five health and leisure centres throughout the district. This originated as a collaborative arrangement with all five being on existing school sites. Alterations to schools management arrangements in recent years have led to changes in the relationship.

The provision of locally delivered good visible services has always been a high priority of the council. Services have been developed to meet specific local needs. For example, the refuse and recycling service still operates a weekly service using plastic sacks. Residents' satisfaction is high with this service which operates effectively.

## Key Measures

The information below gives an indication of the current position in some of the priority areas.

	2014/15	Average last 5 years
<b>Helping local business to grow</b>		
• Number of businesses engaged in the Economic Development programme	385	295
• Number of visits to Brand New Forest website	21,800	17,167
<b>Providing more homes</b>		
• Total Planning permissions granted	587	322
• Total number of additional homes	150	191
• Number of affordable homes built	21	37
• Total applicants on the homesearch register	4,287	5,112
<b>Delivering visible service outcomes</b>		
• Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	29.8%	30.3%
• Residual household waste per household	512.2kg	511.5kg
• Health and Leisure visits	1.597million	1.556million
• Council Tax (Band D)	£155.76	£155.76

## Key Issues looking forward

In 2016 the Council's overall budget spending will have reduced by 15.8% since 2010 due to central government austerity measures.

Over the next four years the government have indicated a level of central funding that will require a further 11.7% reduction in the budget from that in 2016 (Appendix). Any future plan must address this major challenge.

	2010/11	2016/17	2019/20
Government settlement funding & council tax budget support	£23.4M	£19.7M	£17.4M
% reduction	-	15.8%	11.7%

The review of the Local Plan will necessarily see a major change in what the future district area will look like, with a likely substantial increase in planned housing numbers per annum from the current approval level of approximately 200.

Our demographics will further change with those over 65 predicted to increase by 27,900 making up 36% of the population by 2037 (currently 25%).

## Vision and Priorities 2016 to 2020

With an understanding of the complex nature of the New Forest the council will work to deliver a vision that:

Secures a better future for the people and place of the New Forest district by:

- Supporting local business to prosper for the benefit of the people within the community
- Assisting the wellbeing of the people who live and work within the district
- Protecting the special and unique local character of the New Forest district

To help support the achievement of this vision the priorities will be to:

- Help local business to grow and prosper
- Provide more homes for local people
- Deliver visible service outcomes that are valued by the people in the community
- Protecting the local character of the place

The delivery of these priorities will require that the council's actions are:

- Underpinned by effective and efficient management of resources, specifically addressing the reduction in net expenditure required by the Medium Term Financial Plan to 2020.
- Developed through collaboration with the community and other local organisations

## Effective and Efficient Management of Resources - Key Delivery Actions

During 2016-17

Review		Success Measure	Portfolio Responsibility
<b>ECONOMY, HOUSING &amp; PLANNING</b>	<b>E.1</b>	<b>Local Plan</b> <i>Local plan consultation and draft submission for adoption</i>	More homes Economic growth Planning & Transportation
	<b>E.2</b>	<b>Housing Strategy</b> <i>Review the delivery of affordable housing in terms of realistic aspirations of the Council and recent changes in the planning system. Assess the existing constraints and take into account the emerging new Government policy advice. Progress through the local plan review</i>	More homes Economic growth Housing & Communities
	<b>E.3</b>	<b>Supporting Local Business</b> <i>Review the realistic aspirations of the Council in what it wishes to achieve and consider the mechanism for achieving this. Progress through the local plan review to support vibrant localities</i>	Economic growth Leader's
	<b>E.4</b>	<b>Building Control</b> <i>Service delivery review of the Building Control service. Consider the sustainability of the existing arrangements and assess alternatives such as multi-authority joint service provision or a joint (arm's length) local authority trading company</i>	Lower costs More efficient and effective working Planning & Transportation
	<b>E.5</b>	<b>Tourism</b> <i>Review the way in which the council engages with the Tourism industry and the delivery of the service</i>	Lower costs More efficient and effective working Leader's
<b>GOVERNANCE &amp; REGULATION</b>	<b>G.1</b>	<b>Procurement</b> <i>Conclude the review of procurement with the implementation of centre led arrangements and a move towards a procurement partnership</i>	Procurement partnership More efficient and effective working Finance & Efficiency
	<b>G.2</b>	<b>Environmental Health</b> <i>To review all aspects of the delivery of Environmental Health functions (to include Environmental Protection and Commercial)</i>	More efficient and effective working Environment
	<b>G.3</b>	<b>Community Safety</b> <i>Review the Council's involvement in community safety (having regard to the Council's statutory responsibilities)</i>	More streamlined, focused and meaningful outcomes Housing & Communities

<b>OPERATIONS</b>	<b>O.1</b>	<b>Waste &amp; Recycling</b> - Determine strategy in line with the county wide Project Integra review - Review of bring sites to rationalise costs	Improved service delivery Lower costs More efficient and effective working	Environment
	<b>O.2</b>	<b>Health &amp; Leisure Centres</b> Set financial targets and scope service delivery review to challenge existing arrangements and maximise outcomes for the council and the customer in the longer term	Lower costs More efficient and effective working	Health & Leisure
	<b>O.3</b>	<b>Pest Control</b> Review of pest control to determine future strategy and operation	More efficient and effective working	Environment
	<b>O.4</b>	<b>CCTV/Alarm Monitoring</b> Service delivery review to challenge existing arrangements and maximise outcomes for the council and the customer	Lower costs More efficient and effective working	Housing & Communities
	<b>O.5</b>	<b>Enforcement Activity (Streetscene)</b> Identify opportunities for joining up enforcement activities of visible officers	Lower costs More efficient and effective working	Environment
	<b>O.6</b>	<b>Health &amp; Safety</b> Review arrangements for Health & Safety advice across the Council in light of the management restructure	More efficient and effective working	Leader's
	<b>O.7</b>	<b>Crematorium</b> Review potential opportunities for a New Forest crematorium	Community asset Income generation	Leader's
<b>RESOURCES</b>	<b>R.1</b>	<b>Digital Service Delivery</b> Review of ICT to support greater digital service delivery (having regard to the work of Fit for the Future)	Improved service delivery Lower costs Increased skills	Finance & Efficiency
	<b>R.2</b>	<b>Pay &amp; Reward</b> To determine a fit for purpose pay & reward strategy related to performance and productivity (having regard to the work of Fit for the Future)	Recruit & retain the right people and respond to national changes in pay	Leader's
	<b>R.3</b>	<b>Building Works</b> Service delivery review to challenge existing model and maximise outcomes for the council and the customer, including optimising revenue potential and ensuring efficiency and effectiveness of the department	Lower costs More efficient and effective working	Finance & Efficiency
	<b>R.4</b>	<b>Property Services</b> Review of operations and strategy	Improved service delivery	Finance & Efficiency
	<b>R.5</b>	<b>Customer Strategy</b> Transform the management of demand through digital customer services and engagement (having regard to the work of Fit for the Future)	Improved service delivery Lower costs More efficient and effective working	Finance & Efficiency

## Looking Forward 2017-20

Action	Portfolio Responsibility
<b>Accommodation Strategy &amp; Back Office Activity</b> <i>Develop an accommodation strategy to include operational sites to meet the future needs of the organisation and review back office activity in light of the reorganisation</i>	Finance & Efficiency
<b>Modern Working</b> <i>Modernise the way of working to ensure a reduction in costs (having regard to the work of Fit for the Future)</i>	Leader
<b>Tax &amp; Benefits</b> <i>Review in light of changes arising from Universal Credit implementation</i>	Finance & Efficiency
<b>Local Plan Adoption</b> <i>Full adoption of the Local Plan 2018</i>	Planning & Transportation
<b>Coastal</b> <i>Ongoing identification and review of coastal schemes and funding arrangements</i>	Environment
<b>Working with Community Groups</b> <i>Review financial support and partnership working with community groups</i>	All