

Supporting our Residents - Action Plan to 2025

Appendix 1

No.	Action	Service	Completion date	Narrative, Performance measures and outcomes
Objective 1 - Helping people on low incomes, including to maximise their income and minimise their costs				
1.1	Support Housing Benefit claimants to receive their full entitlement	Revenues and Benefits	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of households receiving Housing Benefit • Total value of Housing Benefit paid by the Council • Average number of days taken to process claims • Home visits for vulnerable claimants • Contact claimants if additional information is needed by letter, phone, or email • Work with partners, internally (Housing) and externally • Signpost to DWP, maximise income i.e., claim Personal Independence Payments, Carers Allowance etc
1.2	To operate a Council Tax Support scheme which supports as many vulnerable residents as possible and support claimants to receive their full entitlement, but also recognising the importance of protecting council tax income for providing essential services	Revenues and Benefits	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor trends and promote take-up • Ensures the scheme protects the most vulnerable and review the effectiveness of the scheme in relation to collection and arrears levels • Council Tax Support Annual consultation • Number of households receiving Council Tax support • Total value of Council Tax support awarded • Average number of days taken to process claims • Reduce administration, utilising UC data • Revenues Team to promote scheme when contacting claimants
1.3	In partnership with organisations, such as Citizens Advice, to promote and reach out to those who are not currently engaging but financial struggling by provide dedicated advice	Revenue, Benefits and Housing	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers of residents provided with debt, benefits, and financial advice at the Advice Hub • Providing early intervention • Chair New Forest partnership meeting and

	at Hubs across the district offering benefits and financial advice to low-income residents.			promote signposting and referrals and support available
1.4	Adhere to Breathing Space regulations and work with residents and partners to support those in arrears	Revenues, Sundry Income and Housing	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated Debt collection policy in 2022 Capturing data on the number of residents that seek help under the “Breathing Space” scheme and the types of council debts this includes – council tax, rent, business rates, sundry income, car parking etc.
1.5	Support digital inclusion sessions for residents by signposting and working with partners, such as libraries	Revenues and Benefits, Housing and Communications	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of digital inclusion sessions held.
1.6	To utilise our teams, such as Benefits and Housing, to provide financial resilience advice and information.	Revenues and Benefits and Housing	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of residents receiving support and requiring repeated support Referrals and signposts to partner reorganisations
1.7	To administer discretionary funds, such as Discretionary Housing Payments, Exceptional Hardship Payments, and Council Tax Hardship Payments. Benefits Team to work in close partnership with Revenues and Housing, to promote a joint approach, and with partner organisations	Revenues and Benefits	31 March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer the Council Tax Hardship fund and ensure full allocation of funding Fully allocate Discretionary Housing Payment funding Support vulnerable applicants with claiming Promote schemes to households
1.8	To administer the Household Support Fund, including Exceptional Housing Costs, Food Vouchers and working with Hampshire County Council on community grants as part of their Connect4Communities scheme	Revenue and Benefits	March 2024 extended to September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To distribute £90,000 to support vulnerable households with Exceptional Housing Costs, including working with key partners for referrals such as Housing and Citizens Advice New Forest Support vulnerable applicants with claiming To distribute £455,710 in food vouchers to those getting Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit (circa 8,000 households) Ensure paper vouchers sent to those who are unable to use a QR code Provide a Q&A to staff To administer the scheme following the 6-month extension announcement – details to follow.

1.9	To promote advice and information on a dedicated webpage and in correspondence sent to residents, as well as in Information Offices, and work with those who contact us in arrears, for example council tax and rent, and with targeted campaigns.	Revenues and Benefits, Housing, Communications	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep webpage updated and link included in correspondence, such as letters, resident emails, notices and Hometalk, and sent to partners • Display leaflets and information in Information Offices and signpost to residents • Targeted social media campaigns such as saving energy, claiming pension credit
1.10	To chair a bi-monthly meeting with a range of partner organisations operating in the New Forest to share information, promote initiatives, and work together to support our residents.	Revenues and Benefits	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of information and build effective and collaborative working relationships • Avoid duplication of resources • Discuss key themes to understand issues and map the support available
1.11	Work in partnership with Jobcentre Plus, housing providers and the voluntary sector to support vulnerable benefit claimants in the migration to Universal Credit	Revenues and Benefits, and Housing	March 2025 for Tranche 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of referrals • Percentage of appointments kept • Quarterly meetings with DWP • Signposting • Officer group to discuss and agree actions • Utilise Visiting Officer to support the vulnerable
1.12	To actively participate in the Cost of Living Steering Group which works with partners including Citizens Advice, Food Banks, Solent University, Community First Wessex and Youth and Families Matter	Revenues and Benefits	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop an Action Plan • To provide data and information to support research and recommendations • To support the group with campaigns and communications
1.13	Work in partnership with Fare Share and partners to address food poverty, including food larders across the district, promoting community fridges and referrals to food banks in emergencies.	Revenue and Benefits	March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To signpost resident and encourage membership • Councillors to support through their community grants • Referrals to Food Banks and advice and information given to residents • Promotion of 'z' cards • Develop a steering group with the 5 food banks
1.14	To administer the two Energy Support schemes of £400 and £200 to those not eligible for government support and who use alternative fuel to heat their homes	Benefits	September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting the scheme and contacting nursing homes and caravan parks, posters at Information Offices and social media
1.15	To utilize our data to support residents, for	Revenues and	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing training of staff

	example pension credit mailshots, and support low-income households with access to entitlements to welfare benefits.	Benefits		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing entitlements to benefits with residents. • Ensures that income is maximised • Signposting
1.16	To support early intervention by encouraging residents to contact the council if in arrears and work with them to pay their council tax or rent	Revenues and Housing	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on communications • Spread instalments and/or agree payment plans • Provide advice and information on potential support, for example discounts, benefits, and grants • Visiting officer support, including attendance at Hubs
1.17	Work with partner agencies and community groups to develop sustainable networks to support residents in fuel or water poverty to reduce their energy and water costs	Revenues and Benefits and Communications	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Citizens Advice to refer to their energy voucher scheme • Promote schemes such as “social tariffs”
1.18	Promote Living Wage accreditation to employers, including businesses, public bodies, and voluntary and community sector organisations	Corporate	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of employers that have achieved Living Wage accreditation • Number of employees working for employers that have achieved Living Wage accreditation
1.19	Work with local businesses to identify ways in which they might use their skills, capacity, and resources to support achievement of shared objectives around tackling poverty and disadvantage	Corporate	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of businesses and employers engaged • Number and type of new corporate social responsibility activity undertaken by businesses and employers following engagement with the Council
1.20	Ensure local businesses and the self-employed are aware of the support that is available for themselves and/or their employees and customers who may be on low incomes.	Economic Development	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To utilise our dedicated business communication channels to ensure key information is received by businesses and the self-employed.
1.21	Develop and maintain a directory providing contact details of organisations covering a range of activities and support	Corporate	December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide an accessible resource for teams and partners to use to provide advice and/or signpost to organisations
1.22	To work with Citizens Advice New Forest to update the pocket-sized guides and distribute	Corporate	November 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a resource for residents to use which provides information on cost of living support. • To work with partners to support with distribution of guides
1.23	Provide tailored start up support to our residents	Economic	January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide expert assistance through 1:1 support

	considering starting a business or becoming self-employed.	Development		to new and prospective businesses in order that they are resilient and have the best chance of success.
1.24	To trial a drop-in presence at Town Hall, Lymington, with our Housing and Revenue and Benefit Teams to provide in person advice, and support.	Revenue and Benefits, Housing	March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signpost customers to drop-ins if in need of in person support

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Objective 2 – Strengthening families and communities				
2.1	Review the needs of the community and voluntary sector in building stronger communities, and identify where the Council can best support	Corporate	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-annual Town and Parish Forum • New Forest Partnership meetings • SLA with Community First Wessex who support the Voluntary Sector
2.2	Promote volunteering to increase the number of people volunteering for local community and voluntary groups	Communications	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of annual Volunteers Fair • Number of organisations/ residents participating in activities
2.3	Using planning policy to ensure that new developments promote permeability, connectivity, and accessibility	Planning	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning policies promote safe, legible, permeable, and accessible public realm
2.4	Develop a collaborative, area-based approach to support communities with high levels of deprivation in partnership with a range of organisations	Revenues and Benefits, Health and Wellbeing, Housing	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance measures to be developed as area-based approach and initiatives are explored
2.5	Support an annual programme of events which celebrate diversity and promote community cohesion, in partnership with local equality and diversity organisations	Corporate	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful programme of events delivered or promoted linked to each national or international event
2.6	Provide community grant funding to voluntary and community groups for activity focused on supporting vulnerable residents, including funding for debt advice services and other activities that will help reduce poverty, and for community transport schemes	Corporate	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Community Grants budget is fully allocated each year to voluntary sector activities that meet Council's grants priorities. • Grant awards are monitored to ensure they deliver the outcomes set out in funding agreements - Summary report produced in July each year

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of community transport schemes and consider implications of HCC consultation outcomes.
2.7	To attend the Local Childrens Partnership and work with partner organisations	Revenue and Benefits, Health and Wellbeing and Community Safety	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work with partners to share information, joint working, and decide on funding opportunities to support families
2.8	To host a Cost of Living Forum for Town and Parish Councils	Corporate	October 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide and share information on the support and initiatives undertaken locally, and for Town and Parish's to network and consider their support to their communities

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Objective 3 – Promoting inclusive economy by raising skills and improving access to a range of employment opportunities				
3.1	Explore opportunities to spread the benefits of economic growth through the development of the new Local Plan and Freeport	Corporate	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Plan evidence base considers the needs of deprived communities and opportunities to promote a range of different employment types as part of the evidence base Opportunities explored for anti-poverty considerations to be include in viability assessments for new developments
3.2	Seek funds to continue the Activate project, working with local arts and cultural organisations to deliver a programme of cultural activities for a cohort of young people on free school meals, who will benefit from a programme of different activities to develop self-awareness, resilience, and leadership skills.	Health and Wellbeing	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of young people taking part in the programme who are eligible for free school meals Educational attainment of participants, as measured by the school, compared to expected educational attainment without the programme.
3.3	Hold quarterly meetings with DWP, including Partnership Manager, so we are updated and aware of developments, changes, and schemes to support households which we can communicate	Revenues and Benefits	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities for joint working To use our communication channels to promote support, advice, and information

3.4	Ensure businesses are aware of the support available to help them survive the impacts of increased costs and improve their longer-term resilience.	Economic Development	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To utilise our dedicated business communication channels to ensure key information is received by businesses. To work with partners to address gaps in the provision of support to help businesses be more efficient and resilient.
3.5	To work with Jobcentre Plus and local schools and colleges to attend and promote job fairs across the district to support those seeking employment	Human Resources	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend and promote Job Fairs Work with colleges as part of the apprenticeship programme
3.6	To support Community First with their Wheels to Work scheme to support 16 to 25 years old with attending work or education.	Corporate	January 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enable young people the opportunity to hire a moped to enable attendance at college or employment. To promote the scheme

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Objective 4 – Addressing the high cost of housing, improving housing conditions				
4.1	Develop new strategies and ensure that rent levels are as affordable as possible	Housing	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of new homes for social and affordable rent delivered annually by the Council and Registered Providers Number of new Council delivered against target of 600 new homes by 2026 A new Rent Setting and Service Charge Policy was approved and published April 2023 New Housing Strategy to be developed during 2024
4.2	Develop a new business plan/strategy for a further Council affordable housing programme	Housing	March 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interim Business Plan approved by the Council's Housing Scrutiny Committee 30-year HRA Business Plan is being developed to incorporate decarbonisation costs and development options for the future

4.3	Identify opportunities to reduce energy consumption as part of the development of new council affordable housing schemes and consider the cost impact of alternative energy sources on Council tenants	Housing	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions in the Greener Housing Strategy continue to be delivered which reduce energy costs in the private sector and in Council owned social housing. • Penman House will be delivered to Future Homes Standard in early 2024 • All new council build properties will have ASHPs and appropriate fabric measures
4.4	Ensure that existing council homes are well maintained and implement a programme of energy efficiency improvements to lower-rated council homes	Estates	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of reactive repairs completed within target timescales • programme of energy efficiency improvements delivered in Council properties, predominantly in properties with Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings of D, E, F, or G • 120 Air Source Heat Pumps will be delivered by February 2024, as well as whole house retrofit measures which improve the energy efficiency and comfort of tenants' homes. • 3,200 properties will receive energy efficiency measures up to 2030 to bring them up to an EPC rating of C or higher. • The plans to retrofit and decarbonise all properties by 2025 will be finalised over 24/25.
4.5	Support private tenants in their homes, taking enforcement action against landlords / property managers whose properties do not meet the required energy efficiency standards.	Housing	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurable once Government enforcement toolkit has been trailed and released. • Numbers of cases/investigations that have resulted in enforcements action taken. • Launch of New Forest Cosy Homes which provides online support, help and information to support private residents upgrade their homes. • Participation in Consortiums which secure grant funding for our residents.
4.6	Ensure Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are licensed where required and proactively take enforcement against landlords or property managers that are not complying	Housing	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of HMO licences issued. • Number of cases / investigations that have resulted in enforcement action for failure to licence. • Breakdown of enforcement action taken:

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warning letter • Simple Caution • Civil Penalty • Prosecution
4.7	Complete the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy and embed within it a range of measures to significantly improve access to the private rented sector and retention of a private sector tenancy for homeless people.	Housing Services	October 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of households assisted into the privaterented sector
4.8	Work with developers through the planning process to enable the delivery of new high quality, energy efficient affordable homes	Planning	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of affordable homes delivered on strategic growth sites and on other sites. • Planning policies ensure that affordable housing is well integrated on sites and indistinguishable from market homes. • Number of affordable homes delivered to BREEAM standards. • Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group to begin in Nov 23 to assess options for delivering more affordable housing in the district.
4.9	Supporting our tenants in government and regulatory campaigns on how they can hold the Council as a landlord to account	Housing	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making things right campaign

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Objective 5 – Improving health outcomes for people on low incomes				
5.1	Use planning policy to help ensure new developments help create a good living environment which supports good mental and physical health outcomes, through provision of open space and the design of the built environment	Planning, Health and Wellbeing	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning policies that emphasise design quality of new homesand enhance and increase open space provision and public access to it • Planning policies ensure that developments with mixed tenures provide the same access to shared amenities for allresidents of the development
5.2	Support healthy eating programmes targeted	Health and	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people participating in cookery workshops

	at low-income residents and delivered by local voluntary and community organisations	Wellbeing		
5.3	Support outreach advice and support for residents experiencing stress and anxiety due to low income and debt	Corporate	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of clients seen by the outreach advisor in total • Total value of additional income for clients identified by the outreach advisor
5.4	Health and Wellbeing strategy and action plan to collate the efforts that the council are making to alleviate the wider determinants of health, including the impact of poverty	Health and Wellbeing	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To use the Health and Wellbeing Strategy to shape and support the council's response to the wider determinants of health. • To feed back the response via the Health and Wellbeing
5.5	Ensure the development of accessible, quality sports facilities with development plans to support targeted community groups.	Health and Wellbeing	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure Community Use Agreements and development plans on the new artificial turf facilities at Ringwood, Fordingbridge and Totton • Develop informal activity facilities in key priority areas
5.6	Increase physical activity levels with key targeted groups to help improve wider determinants of health.	Health and Wellbeing	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a junior parkrun to be easy access for the most deprived communities. Recording the number of participants and volunteers • Ensure a series of volunteer health walks around the district. Number of walkers, walks and volunteers • Develop a programme of activity sessions in key areas based on insight and evidence of need
5.7	Support activities for the communities of Calshot with the improvements to St Georges Hall.	Health and Wellbeing	September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to work with the army welfare team and local youth workers to ensure codesigned activities are delivered within the community • Maximise the use of the community facility for the whole community of Calshot, ensuring they are involved and engaged with. Recording the hours of usage and variety of organisations using the facility