

**Place and Sustainability Overview & Scrutiny Panel – Thursday 13 March 2025**

**Climate Change Adaptation**

Purpose	For Review
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	<p>In response to the Council’s declaration of a Climate Change and Nature Emergency, this report highlights the importance of climate change adaptation to the New Forest District.</p> <p>The report (at Appendix 1) outlines the anticipated changes in weather and climate trends, providing data and narrative relating these climate change impacts to the demographic make-up of the district. The report looks at how four key hazards (flooding, coastal erosion, heatwaves and air quality) may affect the district, its residents, and the Council, and gives an overview of the role of the Council, local partners and statutory bodies in responding to these events. The vulnerabilities and opportunities identified within this report will inform discussions about the short-term actions and long-term strategy needed to reduce climate risk.</p> <p>Appended to the report are summaries and action guides targeted at residents, officers, and councillors to help these stakeholders better understand climate change adaptation and the actions needed to increase resilience to extreme weather.</p>
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	<p><b>It is recommended that Place and Sustainability Overview &amp; Scrutiny Panel:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Acknowledges the anticipated climate change impacts for New Forest District and the effects these may have on the environment, residents, and Council services, based on the data and projections outlined in this report;</b></li> </ol>

	<p><b>2. Approves the dissemination of this report to members of the Climate Change and Nature Emergency Task and Finish Group, to inform discussion on the future actions and priorities of climate adaptation in New Forest District;</b></p> <p><b>3. Supports the ongoing adaptation of council assets and services through delivery of the Climate Change and Nature Emergency Action Plan (linked to organisational transformation, policy development, risk assessment and business continuity processes) to improve efficiency and resilience of council operations;</b></p> <p><b>4. Supports the communication of climate change adaptation messages and measures to council stakeholders via the summary and action guides, the NFDC website, and other communication channels.</b></p>
Reasons for recommendation(s)	<p>The recommendations will enable the district and the Council to become more resilient to the impacts of climate change, demonstrating local leadership and commitment to the declared Climate Change and Nature Emergency.</p> <p>The content of the Climate Change Adaptation report contributes towards several of the priorities in NFDC Corporate Plan 2024-28, especially the Place and People themes.</p> <p>The recommendations are also supportive of the key principles outlined in the Council’s Future New Forest Transformation Programme.</p> <p>The Council is required to meet legal obligations within the Climate Change Act (2008) and other national policy commitments around climate change.</p>
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Geoffrey Blunden Environment and Sustainability
Strategic Director(s)	James Carpenter

	Strategic Director – Place, Operations and Sustainability
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## Introduction and background

1. Climate change 'adaptation' refers to the measures that are needed to prepare for the impacts that extreme weather and climate change will likely bring. Adaptation will protect and safeguard current and future generations of people, and the environment they live in.
2. New Forest District Council (NFDC) declared a Climate Change and Nature Emergency in 2021 and has subsequently supported the development and delivery of a Climate Change and Nature Emergency (CC&NE) Action Plan. Through this action plan, the council is working internally and with partners to deliver four priority programmes of climate action: Carbon Reduction, Climate Adaptation, Nature Recovery and Programme Management (including communications, data analysis and reporting). The creation of this report and the associated outcomes address many of the priority actions committed to by NFDC in the CC&NE Action Plan.
3. A wide range of stakeholders are involved in and/or responsible for delivering climate change adaptation measures across the New Forest District and wider region. Individuals, organisations and statutory bodies (including NFDC) operating within and across administrative and geographical boundaries have roles to play in assessing risks and taking action to ensure that people and places are resilient.
4. NFDC working in partnership with the New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA) on the issue of climate change adaptation is important to ensure that both organisations have the same understanding of the issues and opportunities across the district, of which we share approximately 70% of the same landmass. Working collaboratively will be beneficial to both the residents and the environment of the district as we work towards collective adaptation actions.

## **Projected seasonal changes**

5. In general, it can be expected that the district will see warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers. It is also likely that the intensity and frequency of storms and extreme weather events will increase.
6. The report (at Appendix 1) highlights:
  - what the climate in the district will look like under both a 2°C and a 4°C Global Warming Level scenario,
  - the climate change indicators residents are likely to experience
  - the change to sea level
7. A more detailed account of projected seasonal changes is being developed by the New Forest National Park Authority, which has agreed for this information to be used across organisations. By using the same projections data, we can ensure that there is consistent messaging to residents and coordinated adaptation responses. This Climate Change Risk and Adaptation Opportunities Assessment will be made available in Spring 2025.

## **Demographics of New Forest District in the context of climate change**

8. The demographics of the district are important in relation to climate change, as those living in certain areas or with certain conditions can be more vulnerable to the effects of extreme weather and climate change and/or may be more likely to struggle to adapt.
9. Drawing on data from the Hampshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment ([JSNA](#)), the report explores some key demographic data relating to the New Forest District. A list of potential personal and social vulnerabilities is presented in a table at section 38 of the report. This table indicates how people with certain characteristics may be vulnerable to the impacts of extreme weather and climate change.

## **Key climate change hazards for New Forest District**

10. The report outlines four key hazards that are likely to affect the New Forest District and its residents. These are flooding, coastal erosion, heatwaves, and air quality. We are already witnessing the

effect of these hazards in many areas of our district, and data shows that the risk they pose is increasing.

11. The report looks at the impact of the hazards on residents – the people, businesses and the environment. The report also looks at the impact of hazards on NFDC – their buildings, assets and staff.

### **Action in the District**

12. Improving resilience to climate change in the district is the responsibility of everyone. The table at section 68 of the report identifies different stakeholders and the responsibility they have over climate adaptation within the district. The stakeholders include residents, landlords, businesses, council, formal agencies, community groups, landowners and Town and Parish Councils.
13. Across the district there are a range of agencies and organisations that have different roles and responsibilities relating to contingency planning for emergencies. There are also a range of Community Groups across the district taking part in work to actively tackle climate change.

### **Outputs and communication**

14. The Climate Change Adaptation Report is the key output of the climate adaptation work for 2024/25. The report focuses on providing background to topic of climate change and the importance of adaptation in the context of the New Forest. At the end of the report, there are guides which provide summaries on the content of the report and suggest actions for residents, officers, and councillors.

### **Next steps**

15. Using information from this report, the next steps will be to:
  - integrate climate change adaptation into the NFDC formal policy framework and service risk assessment processes
  - inform the Climate Task and Finish Group
  - update the NFDC climate webpages
  - support community engagement and communication
  - produce Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan(s)

### **Corporate plan priorities**

16. The climate change adaptation report is most closely aligned to place priority 2 – protecting our climate, coast, and natural world. However, the report also outlines how climate change

adaptation can deliver benefits against other place and people priorities.

### **Options appraisal**

17. Option 1 is accepting the recommendations. This means moving forward with a shared understanding of climate change adaptation, with support for ongoing NFDC action and external communication. It demonstrates commitment to the Climate Change and Nature Emergency declaration and Corporate Priorities. This work will help to safeguard the people and places of the New Forest District now and in the future.
18. Option 2 is not accepting the recommendations, which could be detrimental to the Council and the New Forest District. Impacts could include:
  - Further officer time and resources to analyse climate change projections
  - A poor and disjointed approach to adaptation across the district and wider region
  - Greater risk of climate change impacts as appropriate adaptation measures haven't been put in place
  - Reputational damage
  - Legal challenge of not complying with Climate Change Act (2008) and other political commitments

### **Consultation undertaken**

19. This report has been produced in consultation with a range of NFDC officers and with the Climate and Nature Steering Group. There has also been significant consultation with the New Forest National Park Authority. Hampshire County Council is aware of the work, and Test Valley Borough Council has been consulted with.
20. The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability has been consulted with and provided views and guidance, as well as the Strategic Director for Place, Operations and Sustainability.

### **Financial and resource implications**

21. There are no direct financial or resource impacts resulting from this report.

### **Legal implications**

22. There are no direct legal impacts resulting from this report.

### **Risk assessment**

23. There are no key risks associated with these recommendations.
24. One of the next steps in this report is to produce a service level risk assessment addressing the four key hazards highlighted throughout the report. This will increase the Council's awareness of the risks associated with climate change.

### **Environmental / Climate and nature implications**

25. This report should improve the knowledge and awareness that residents, officers and councillors have surrounding climate change, its relevance to the district and the risks associated with it.
26. It is hoped that this report will demonstrate the action required by stakeholders across the New Forest. This should encourage residents, officers and councillors to make changes, therefore promoting climate adaptation and creating a more resilient district.

### **Equalities implications**

27. Completed Equality Impact Analysis (see Appendix 2). Whilst the report itself does not generate any negative or disproportionate impacts on any protected groups, it does highlight that there are some groups in the New Forest who are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

### **Crime and disorder implications**

28. There are no direct crime and disorder impacts resulting from this report.

### **Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications**

29. There is no direct data protection, information governance or ICT impacts resulting from this report.

### **New Forest National Park implications**

30. New Forest National Park Authority colleagues were engaged throughout the creation of this report. The content of this report has been produced alongside the Risk and Adaptation report being prepared by the NFNPA in order to ensure a comprehensive overview of climate change across the district.
31. Activities undertaken to date and the strategic direction proposed align to the objectives of the NFNPA's Re:New Partnership Plan.

## Conclusion

32. The impacts and risks of extreme weather and hazards are likely to increase under future climate change scenarios, especially given the demographics of residents and the sensitive environmental designations of the New Forest District. There are groups across the district who are likely to be more vulnerable to the effects of climate change than others, who may need extra assistance in making adaptations.
33. Understanding the risks and opportunities associated with climate change, and making appropriate adaptations to processes, systems, practices, and structures will increase local resilience and protect current and future generations of people, and the environment they live in. NFDC is uniquely positioned to lead by example in its response to the Climate Change and Nature Emergency, taking action within the organisation to become more resilient, and encouraging greater activity in the community.
34. A wide range of stakeholders have formal roles and responsibilities for emergency response, community preparedness and business continuity planning. This report aims to communicate the overarching risks and opportunities for climate action to residents, council officers and Councillors, with key deliverables being summaries, action guides and broader communications to provide greater knowledge and encourage individual action.

## Appendices

List appendices here:-  
Appendix 1 – Climate Change Adaptation Report  
Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Analysis

## Background Papers:

[Local Authority | The Met Office climate data portal](#)  
[Climate Report for New Forest](#)  
[What will climate change look like in your area? - BBC News](#)  
[LP-Adaptation-Toolkit-for-LA-October-2024.pdf](#)  
[LCAT: Local Climate Adaptation Tool](#)