

**Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel – 18  
March 2026**

**Safer New Forest Strategic Assessment 2025**

Purpose	To Review
Classification	Public
Executive summary	<p>To review the Safer New Forest Strategic Assessment on crime and disorder, together with the priorities for 2026/27 as defined by the strategic partners of the Strategy &amp; Delivery Group.</p> <p>Recorded crime for the period April 2024 to March 2025 shows an overall reduction of 3% with a significant reduction in the following crime types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violence with injury 8% (from 1192 to 1095)</li> <li>• Violence without injury 8% (from 2954 to 2721)</li> <li>• Residential burglary 15% (from 481 to 409)</li> <li>• Possession of drugs 29% (from 269 to 191)</li> <li>• Possession of weapons 21% (from 154 to 122)</li> </ul> <p>Areas of concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shoplifting increase of 33% (from 799 to 1062)</li> <li>• Other sexual offences 8% (from 274 to 297)</li> <li>• Business &amp; commercial burglary 5% (from 216 to 226)</li> <li>• Trafficking of drugs increase of 19% (from 62 to 74)</li> </ul> <p>The priorities identified through the Strategic Assessment 2025 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shoplifting &amp; burglary</li> <li>• Domestic abuse including violence against women and girls (VAWG)</li> <li>• Serious violence / possession of weapons</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	<p><b>That the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel:</b></p> <p><b>1. Review the data and findings within the annual strategic assessment; and</b></p>

	<b>2. Note the priorities as set by strategic partners of the Safer New Forest Strategy and Delivery Group.</b>
Reasons for the recommendation(s)	<p>Strategic partners of the Safer New Forest partnership convened on 19 January 2026. Following a review of the available data, the Partnership identified and agreed the strategic partnership priorities for 2026/27, as set out in this report.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan 2024–2028 sets out the council’s commitment to empowering residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives. This commitment is supported by the delivery of the Safer New Forest annual strategic partnership plan.</p> <p>The strategic assessment was reviewed by EMT on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026 and support the priorities as identified by the strategic partners of the Safer New Forest Partnership.</p>
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Dan Poole – Community, Safety & Wellbeing
Strategic Director(s)	Peter Matthew – Housing & Communities (interim)
Officer Contact	<p>Brian Byrne Service Manager, Community Safety &amp; Wellbeing 023 8028 5089 <a href="mailto:Brian.byrne@nfdc.gov.uk">Brian.byrne@nfdc.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Nikki Swift Community Safety Manager 023 8028 5106 <a href="mailto:Nikki.swift@nfdc.gov.uk">Nikki.swift@nfdc.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Sarah Jennings Community Safety Officer 023 8028 5105 <a href="mailto:Sarah.jennings@nfdc.gov.uk">Sarah.jennings@nfdc.gov.uk</a></p>

## **Introduction and background**

1. The Crime & Disorder Act 1998 requires district councils to have a crime and disorder committee whose functions are to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by “responsible authorities” of their crime and disorder functions. The “responsible authorities” for the area are:
  - New Forest District Council
  - Hampshire County Council
  - Probation Services
  - Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary
  - Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service
  - Integrated Care Boards
2. These authorities form the nucleus of the “Safer New Forest Strategy & Delivery Group” which co-ordinates the delivery of the responsible authorities’ statutory crime and disorder functions. They are assisted in this by the following partners who are additional members of the Strategy & Delivery Group:
  - New Forest National Park Authority
  - Hampshire County Council Children’s Services
  - Hampshire County Council Adult Services
  - Hampshire County Council Youth Offending Team
  - Education Representative (secondary)
3. The responsible authorities’ statutory responsibilities include preparing annual strategies for:
  - The reduction of crime and disorder in the area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment); and
  - For combating the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in the area; and
  - For the reduction of re-offending in the area.
4. The Strategy & Delivery Group prepares an annual partnership plan setting out agreed strategies for the above.
5. The Strategy & Delivery Group is required to develop an annual strategic assessment of crime and disorder using available data to assist in revising and developing the priorities for the following year.
6. The draft strategic assessment 2025 (Appendix 1) was considered and approved by the Strategy & Delivery Group on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026.
7. Safer New Forest partners reconvened as a working group to develop the action plan for delivery during 2026/27.

## **Corporate plan priorities**

8. The corporate plan 2024-2028 sets out the commitment of empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives, supported by the delivery of the Safer New Forest annual strategic partnership plan.
9. The partnership plan sets out to reduce incidents of crime and disorder, working closely with public bodies to promote safety, tackling the perception of crime within our town and parishes.

## **Options appraisal**

10. The Safer New Forest strategic assessment is compiled from the shared data of the responsible authorities which form the Safer New Forest partnership. The review of this data by the partners on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026 informed the priorities for 2026/27.
11. The partnership plan and priorities were considered and formulated by the strategic partners of the Safer New Forest Strategy and Delivery Group. The plan is informed by the shared data contained within the report and the continued activity of the partnership agencies in tackling crime and disorder within the district.

## **Consultation undertaken**

12. Information contained within this report is compiled by strategic partners of the Safer New Forest Strategy and Delivery Group who agreed to the priorities outline within the report on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026.
13. The Safer New Forest Strategy and Delivery Group is chaired by Cllr Dan Poole, Portfolio holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing who supports the priorities as identified.
14. The assessment and priorities were reviewed by EMT on 24<sup>th</sup> February and following review of the data within the assessment, support the annual strategic priorities for 2026/27.

## **Financial and resource implications**

15. The priorities as outlined within this assessment form part of the shared responsibilities of the responsible authorities that form the Safer New Forest Strategy and Delivery Group.
16. Where additional resources or finances are required, this is met within the existing staffing profile and budgets of partners. Additional funding where required for targeted interventions is

sourced from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) through the communities grants and ASB funds.

### **Legal implications**

17. As a responsible authority, New Forest District Council are required to prepare the annual strategic assessment for the reduction of crime and disorder, including anti-social behaviour affecting the local community within its district.

### **Risk assessment**

18. As the priorities outlined within the assessment form part of a shared approach to addressing crime and disorder within the district, individual activities which form part of the work plan will have an associated risk assessment prior to activities commencing by the lead agency, where required.

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

19. None have been identified arising directly from this report.

### **Equalities implications**

20. Plans and strategies are developed in accordance with New Forest District Council's corporate equality objectives. This assessment seeks to support the responses to crime, as well as the prevention of crime by seeking to promote a positive impact on the victims and perpetrators of crimes, vulnerable people and vulnerable communities within the district.

### **Crime and disorder implications**

21. The partnership plan is directed at achieving the points set out in paragraph 1 and as such is an important tool in addressing crime & disorder issues in the district. The strategic assessment is an assessment of performance against the plan and therefore is significant in assessing the value of initiatives undertaken.

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

22. The data contained within the strategic assessment and partnership plan are for public dissemination and are to be published on the Safer New Forest website on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026.

### **New Forest National Park/ Cranborne Chase National Landscape implications**

23. The annual strategic assessment and associated partnership plan set out the priorities of reducing crime and disorder within the New Forest District boundary area, inclusive of the National Park.

24. The National Park Authority are active partners within the Safer New Forest Strategy and Delivery Group and participated in the development of the priorities for 26/27.

**Appendices**

**Background Papers:**

Appendix 1 – Strategic Assessment  
2025

None