

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Strategy for Business – “Helping local business grow”

Vision to be a business friendly and supportive Council

Working collaboratively to create a sustainable local economy, a vibrant business and visitor destination with an unparalleled quality of life, where highly productive businesses create quality jobs for local people. New Forest District Council will be open for business to do business.

Strategic Focus

Components that will drive the delivery of our vision:

Business

- Small and medium sized enterprise (SME) support programme
- Connecting local businesses with support and funding programmes
- Support for our local towns and villages
- A dedicated Council service

Skills

- Employer led skills - connecting businesses with training providers

Infrastructure

- Complete roll out of the Hampshire high speed broadband programme across the New Forest
- Capitalise on development opportunities to enhance economic growth in the District.

Our Objectives

The Council's corporate plan has identified a priority of “Helping local business grow.” The objectives of this being:

- Local Jobs growth
- Providing for opportunities for young people to remain, live and work in the District
- Improved business productivity
- Increased visitor spend
- Business base growth and diversification

New Forest Strengths

- An unrivalled quality of life in an outstanding natural environment; the District successfully thrives on the reputation of being a high quality location to work and live.

- Excellent location with good transport links to the national motorways, M3 corridor, rail networks, good connections to the international airports of Heathrow and Gatwick and close to Bournemouth and Southampton airports that also serve as gateways for business.
- The area is within easy reach of Southampton international freight port, which offers easy access to national and international markets.
- The business base includes multi-national companies and approximately 8,000 vibrant, diverse and responsible small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs)
- The National Park continues to act as a magnet.
- Within the New Forest there are exemplary educational establishments and links to both Southampton and Bournemouth Universities.

Supporting activity

Business

Dedicated support of the New Forest Business Partnership

Through the business partnership the Council provides support to our SMEs and larger employers through a yearly support and event programme. The partnership consists of representatives of all major business sectors and public bodies.

Support for our towns and villages

As a business friendly council, we will ensure that our main town and villages are clean, safe and accessible trading environments. Through the business partnership we will look to support the needs of all areas.

Connecting local businesses with support and funding programmes

We will help our businesses to remain located and to grow in the New Forest by connecting with local and national business support programmes and services provided by Hampshire County Council, Local Enterprise Partnerships and other business support partners.

Destination New Forest

The Council will further develop and promote the New Forest's unrivalled national and international visitor offer through innovative initiatives such as "Film New Forest" in partnership with Creative England. Continued support will be provided to the local tourism sector businesses, encouraging increased visitor spend.

Skills

Learning and Skills Centre

We will work with partner organisations to develop learning and skills that equip local people either in work or seeking work to remain locally.

Employment and Training agreements

We will ensure residential and commercial developments provide employment and training opportunities for local residents through S106 agreements.

Employer led skills

We will work to ensure the voice of local business influences training provision to meet the needs of the local economy. This will be achieved by working with the business partnership.

Working apprenticeships

We will help promote apprenticeships and assist young people to access employment opportunities, particularly within SME's who often find this more difficult.

Infrastructure

Broadband delivery

The Council is committed to improve access to High Speed Broadband in rural areas and will work proactively with Hampshire County Council and local businesses to improve access for more remote areas

Capitalise on development and regeneration opportunities to enhance economic growth

We will take opportunities that encourage the delivery of land and property for commercial use for growing New Forest businesses with a focus on areas outside of the National Park.

Local Plan

We will use the local planning process to help those who wish to work in the New Forest have affordable housing and employment opportunities locally.