



# Directorate Achievements

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## Contents

Directorate achievements .....	3
Introduction .....	3
Place Operations and Sustainability .....	4
Waste service changes .....	4
Hardley Depot opening .....	4
New Forest Show – Recycle for New Forest .....	5
Local Plan Review .....	5
GIS review .....	5
Housing and Communities .....	6
Preparation for housing regulatory standards inspection.....	6
Tenant engagement and satisfaction .....	6
Food safety and public health .....	7
Community support .....	7
Corporate Resources, Finance and Transformation .....	8
Budget outturn.....	8
Transformation strategy review .....	8
Our people.....	8
Equality diversity and inclusivity .....	9
Corporate performance management .....	9

# Directorate achievements

## Introduction

In preparation for the upcoming CPC follow-up visit, this overview document provides a snapshot of key organisational activity, development and initiatives undertaken since the original review.

It has been a significantly busy period for the organisation as a whole since the CPC visit in December 2024.

Highlights include significant service changes, such as the ongoing waste service roll-out, community engagement efforts, such as supporting a local Totton-based charity with funding to provide a weekly drop-in for those facing housing difficulties, and strategic responses to ongoing challenges, such as the impacts of LGR and the continuation of the organisational transformation programme.

A summary of key achievements from each directorate is reflected below.

# Place Operations and Sustainability

## Waste service changes

The ongoing roll-out of waste service changes represent the most significant operational transformation the council has ever undertaken. Phase 1 of the roll-out has now reached 31,000 households, with over 120,000 bins and caddies delivered and more than 400 tonnes of food waste collected across 80 collection rounds.

While the scale and complexity of this change have presented significantly challenges, for instance, roaming animals' interaction with the wheeled bins and food caddies, and systems and processes to support customer enquiries, we have responded constructively.

The phased implementation approach has proven effective in enabling us to identify and address issues in real time within available capacity.

The insights gained are actively shaping preparations for phases 2 and 3, ensuring that improvements are embedded and lessons learned are applied.

This project has required significant support from across the organisation including Customer Services, the Communications Team, HR and Organisational Development. In a true 'one council' approach, staff from teams across the organisation have also supported the roll-out by delivering bins and caddies outside of their normal role including staff from Housing, Transformation, HR and Performance, among others.

## Hardley Depot opening

In March 2025, the new Hardley Depot officially opened, replacing the former Claymeadow site in Totton. Serving as the operational base for services in the eastern part of the district, the depot offers modern facilities including spacious offices, meeting rooms, vehicle maintenance areas, electric vehicle charging points, and extensive storage capacity.

This milestone project, delivered after a decade of planning and development, is designed to support sustainable service growth, improve working conditions for staff, and enhance service delivery for residents.

## New Forest Show – Recycle for New Forest

This year's New Forest Show stand provided a valuable platform to engage residents with the 'Recycle for New Forest' theme, spotlighting the new waste service. The council's presence focused on raising awareness of the changes to the waste collection service, promoting food waste recycling and encouraging sustainable habits. This annual showcase provides invaluable community engagement for the council and an opportunity to meet face to face with residents, visitors and businesses of the district.

## Local Plan Review

The council's Local Plan Review is progressing, with early-stage work focused on evidence gathering, stakeholder engagement, and identifying key issues, including climate change, housing need, and infrastructure. This is a significant piece of work.

The review will ensure the Local Plan remains responsive to emerging priorities and legislative changes, including the impacts of LGR. It is anticipated the revised Local Plan will be ready for submission by December 2026, following statutory consultation and examination phases.

Final stages of development of the playing pitch and built facilities strategies are currently underway, both of which will help inform the new Local Plan.

## GIS review

A GIS review was commissioned by our Planning Policy, funded by MHCLG and in collaboration with ICT team to improve spatial data quality, integration, and usability. The project was delivered by Ordnance Survey over five months following a procurement exercise, and identified key user needs, skills gaps, and improvement areas across technology, processes, and data. An action plan was developed to guide the next two years, aiming to boost efficiency, digital services, and improve geospatial capability across the council.

# Housing and Communities

## Preparation for housing regulatory standards inspection

Proactive preparation for the new housing regulatory standards inspection has shaped activity within housing services over recent months, ensuring high levels of tenant safety and satisfaction.

This has included a full and detailed appraisal of the requirements of the inspection, an in-depth gap analysis of our service delivery, identifying 102 remedial and compliance activities which have been tasked to managers for ownership. A review of key policy documents has also been carried out to ensure they are optimised to place us in the best position ahead of the inspection.

To further prepare for the inspection work is underway to procure an external organisation to complete a 'mock inspection' process. This will provide both an external audit of our current position against regulatory compliance and an accurate idea of our readiness for inspection.

## Tenant engagement and satisfaction

Tenant satisfaction has increased from 81% in 2023/4 to 84% in 2024/5 and continues to illustrate the council's priority commitment to its responsibility as a landlord while the service itself prepares for inspection by the housing regulator.

This summer, saw the first tenant engagement Community Day, held at the Nedderman Centre in New Milton. The event brought together residents, local groups, and services for a day of connection, celebration, and support. The event was a resounding success, with attendees enjoying everything from family-friendly activities and ice cream to informative outreach from housing, community support services, community groups, and wellbeing services.

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many residents' expressing appreciation for the opportunity to meet neighbours, learn about local resources, and feel more connected to their community. Planning for the next event, to be held in Calshot in September, is underway.

In addition to the Community Days, outreach has continued through the Community Hubs and the Estate Walkabouts, where staff and partners can meet residents face-to-face to listen, support, and respond to local concerns. These walkabouts have helped identify areas for improvement, celebrate what's working well, and build stronger relationships with tenants.

## Food safety and public health

All high-risk food safety inspections were completed, with strong progress made across medium and lower-risk categories. The team also supported an EU audit of a major food manufacturer within the district, which involved working in partnership with DEFRA, the EU and local businesses. This significant piece of work prioritised public safety and was a positive exercise in stakeholder management and effective partnership working.

A draft Air Quality Strategy is progressing through the democratic process. The strategy includes the outcome of recent public consultation, which received 96 responses, most of which were supportive. EMT has endorsed the proposal to establish a steering group to oversee implementation and focus on realistic outcomes, improved public awareness and collaborative working with partners.

## Community support

The council's role in supporting our varied communities was demonstrated and praised in helping to coordinate the Gypsy Romany Traveller horse drive in August. Our staff's proactive engagement helped ensure the event was safe and well-managed. Feedback from the organisers of the event and partners was highly positive, recognising and appreciating the council's support and collaborative approach.

# Corporate Resources, Finance and Transformation

## Budget outturn

In June, the council was able to report a positive budget outturn for 2024/25, enabling reserves to be allocated to support the LGA programme, the capital programme, and a £500,000 investment to improve welfare facilities across the depot estate. This relatively strong position reflects sound financial management and places the council in a resilient position to respond to the challenges and opportunities that will be presented in preparing for unitarisation.

## Transformation strategy review

There remains a strong commitment to transformation and the better use of technology to modernise services. However, in light of LGR, the council has approved a revised transformation strategy to reflect that although the financial benefits will no longer be achievable due to shorter timeframes, the core drivers for change remain strong. The revised strategy recognises there is significant value in ensuring the council is well positioned and adequately prepared for a smooth and effective transition to the new authority through the modernisation of technology and development of staff.

The associated customer and digital strategies put our residents at the heart of service delivery supported by the introduction of a modern customer facing digital platform that enhances customer outcomes by designing services that are more responsive, accessible and tailored to the needs of our communities.

## Our people

Our staff continue to be prioritised within the revised strategy with the council's commitment to be an employer of choice. The People Strategy, adopted in April 2025, was also revised ahead of approval to reflect deliverables and people priorities ahead of reorganisation with a focus on maintaining positive staff morale and well-being, development of our employees and support for improved recruitment and retention through a difficult period of transition. The uncertainty

faced by staff is well recognised and the People Strategy supports the development of staff skills and capabilities to build a confident, agile workforce ready to meet current and future challenges, putting our staff in the best position for future opportunities.

## Equality diversity and inclusivity

An equality, diversity and inclusivity statement is now included in the revised approach to service planning, requiring managers to consider how their policies and service delivery are designed to be universal and inclusive. This includes consideration such as digital exclusion, access to services and recruitment.

Early in 2025, a new room at Appletree Court was designated as an Away Space, a neutral multi use room available to all for quiet contemplation, prayer, meditation, breastfeeding, or time out. The space includes soft seating, a small table, a privacy screen, and a fridge. This is reflective of the councils aims to be a more inclusive employer.

## Corporate performance management

A new Business Planning Framework has been developed to support corporate performance management and service plans refreshed to include climate and equality, inclusivity and diversity considerations. A new style of KPI dashboard was presented in line with our performance management framework as part of quarter 4 performance reporting. These provide a new visual representation of progress against the 48 corporate measures aligned with the Corporate Plan and represent a more transparent and user-friendly method of performance monitoring which has been well received by elected members.