

Corporate Plan 2024-2028 (Consultation Draft)

Introduction to the corporate plan

This corporate plan is the overarching document that sets our vision, values, priorities, and our commitments. It describes how our services will work together towards our collective ambitions over the next four years.

New Forest District Council works together as one team with one purpose, serving our residents in the best way that we can, delivering value and improving outcomes for our communities and our unique place.

The Council is accountable to our residents and to ensure we get this plan right we have drawn on the results of a resident insight survey and taken on board contributions from members, staff and partners.

Introduction from Cllr
Jill Cleary, Leader,
New Forest District
Council



As Leader I am ambitious for our district and am delighted to present to you the New Forest District Council corporate plan for 2024 to 2028. Thank you to everyone who has supported the development of this important document through taking the time to respond to our consultation. This insight has informed our vision and priorities and we are already working hard to take these forward with a plan which is a reflection of our collective aspirations.

The New Forest is a beautiful place that has a unique offer for residents, businesses and our many visitors. As a well-established community leader, the council has long recognised the strong heritage and a world-class environment we operate within, and work to protect and enhance. Tackling climate and environmental challenges is key to ensure that the special nature of the New Forest can be enjoyed by future generations.

We also want to support the prosperity of our residents. We know there are investment opportunities to come, and it is important to me that our residents now and in the future can benefit from these opportunities. The cost of living crisis has exacerbated some of the inequalities within our communities. We have a plan that focuses on our people as well as our place and we will support our communities to feel safe and supported while being able to take every opportunity that comes the district's way.

Together we will navigate the challenges and seize the opportunities that lie ahead, ensuring our district remains a wonderful place to live, work and thrive.

Introduction from
Kate Ryan, Chief
Executive, New Forest
District Council



As chief executive my role is to ensure the successful implementation of this plan, working closely with our dedicated staff and council members to drive the strategic priorities forward.

The next four years is a critical time for us to advance the most important issues concerning our residents. Our focus is on creating thriving and safe communities and a strong economy, providing homes, and supporting the most vulnerable, responding to the climate and nature emergency, and delivering excellent services that are future proof.

Our corporate plan priorities are designed to tackle these challenges head-on. I am confident that together with our residents, business partners, and other stakeholders, we can achieve our goals by prioritising people, place, and prosperity.

At the heart of delivering our priorities is our staff. We aim to be an employer of choice and I firmly believe that having the best staff, who are well-supported, is key to delivering the best outcomes for our residents. Building on this, and to support the delivery of the commitments within this plan, our transformation programme will invest in our staff, develop the skills and infrastructure we need and modernise our services at pace to be both financially and environmentally sustainable for the future.

Our vision:



To secure a better future by supporting opportunities for the **people** and communities we serve, protecting our unique and special **place**, and securing a vibrant and **prosperous** New Forest

Our values:

Our values underpin the council's vision and priorities by shaping our behaviours and the way we work.

Learning	We learn from what we and others do well and where we need to improve, we support staff development and organisational growth
Empathy	We show kindness, actively looking to understand people's different needs, and ensure our services are responsive
Ambition	We are ambitious for our people and our place, embracing innovation and best practice
Fairness	We act fairly, honestly, and openly in all we do

Our priority themes:



PEOPLE

Helping people in the greatest need and creating balanced, resilient, and healthy communities who feel safe and supported with easy access to services.

- Helping those in our community with the greatest need
- Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives
- Meeting housing needs



PLACE

Delivering growth, opportunity and services that shape our place now and for future generations, within a unique environmental context, to ensure we remain a special place to live, work and visit.

- Shaping our place now and for future generations
- Protecting our climate, coast, and natural world
- Caring for our facilities, neighbourhoods and open spaces in a modern and responsive way



PROSPERITY

Promoting a strong local economy that delivers its aspirations through effective partnerships, attracting investment, and increasing skills and employment opportunities

- Maximising the benefits of economic growth and investment
- Supporting our high-quality business base and economic centres to thrive and grow
- Championing skills and access to job opportunities

UNDERPINNED BY:

Investing in our people and services to meet customer needs, protecting the council's financial position, and embedding sustainability through our Future New Forest transformation programme.

- Putting our customers at the heart of what we do
- Being an employer of choice
- Being financially responsible
- Designing modern and innovative services



PEOPLE

Helping people in the greatest need and creating balanced, resilient, and healthy communities who feel safe and supported with easy access to services.

Our Priorities:

- Helping those in our community with the greatest need
- Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives
- Meeting housing needs

Introduction:

Our vision for our people in the district is one where they feel safe, supported, and can live healthy independent lives. We will continue to support our most vulnerable residents knowing that this will be most effective when we work with our partners, including the voluntary sector.

Many of our residents are feeling the effects of financial hardship and we recognise that households are finding it increasingly difficult with the cost of living, which can disproportionately affect those with the greatest needs. We will continue to work with our partners to develop community hubs, tackle food poverty, provide warm spaces and provide advice and information to support residents within our communities.

Living in fair and affordable communities is crucial for our people, and we are dedicated to enhancing the quality of housing and to ensure it remains accessible for those with lower incomes. Good quality housing fosters strong family and community ties and helps eliminate the inequality associated with poor housing and associated poor health outcomes.

Our focus and efforts will persist in providing affordable housing to our residents, while simultaneously meeting compliance with housing standards. In its capacity as a responsible landlord the council will address any necessary repairs and maintenance requirements as soon as possible. We will also maintain open communication with our tenants to better understand their concerns and act upon them.

The council is the largest provider of social rented properties in the district, and so we have a wider responsibility to ensure housing is delivered that meets the needs of our community. This will involve working with landowners and developers and wider partners to bring forward sites suitable for housing and to address associated infrastructure needs.

There are already established community groups in place, and we will nurture them to ensure that people can receive support from those within their communities, who understand local issues and can help resolve them. It is important to us that our residents feel safe, and we will continue to identify and respond to concerns to build confidence that the New Forest is a safe place to live.

Our vision for the district will preserve our community's strong sense of place through a vibrant arts and culture offer which will see a new cultural strategy being developed bringing opportunities for learning, entertainment, leisure, personal growth, and improved communication with our residents.

Priority	Helping those in our community with the greatest need
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<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more quality, temporary accommodation for single people and families and work with our partners to tackle homelessness. • Ensure our housing strategy and policies supports necessary adaptations and other support that enables people to stay in their homes and to live independently. • Support community engagement, working with partners and our town and parish councils to help resolve local issues, including those associated with the cost of living 	<p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of homelessness duty cases successfully prevented. • Number of households in external emergency accommodation. • Number of families with children under 16 in external emergency shared accommodation over 6 weeks • Maximising allocated budgets for Disabled Facility Grants (DFGs). • Number of Appletree careline customers. • Number of cost of living and community support initiatives and projects.
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Delivery supported through:

- Homelessness strategy
- Housing strategy
- Community Strategy

Priority	Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives
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<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities, working with partners to deliver increased physical activity and good mental health. • We will collaborate with partners to deliver a vibrant arts and culture offer to provide opportunities for learning, entertainment, leisure, personal growth and improved communication. • Work closely with our other public bodies to promote safety, tackle the perception of crime within our towns and parishes, and expand our CCTV coverage to include rural areas. • Conduct emergency preparedness exercises and ensure robust business continuity arrangements are in place to support community resilience in responding to incidents. • Work with our communities to understand their needs and empower them to influence the services and outcomes of their area. 	<p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of physically inactive adults. • Investment in leisure centres (£). • Percentage of resident satisfaction on crime and safety perception measures. • Investment in and rollout of CCTV coverage. • Number of Community Safety Projects. • Number of incidents where Anti-social behaviour powers have been exercised. • Community grants value allocated and the number of people grants are designed to reach.
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Delivery supported through:

- Health and wellbeing strategy
- Community safety strategy
- Community engagement strategy (tbc)
- Anti-Social behaviour strategy
- Emerging cultural strategy
- Tenant engagement strategy

Priority

Meeting housing needs

We will:

- Provide increased numbers of affordable homes by 2026 and explore innovative models with landowners, partners and developers to enable sustainable and affordable homes for the future.
- Ensure all residents in the district can benefit from energy efficiency measures and support landlords to meet efficiency standards in the private rented sector.
- Improve the energy efficiency of over 3,200 council houses by 2030.
- Work with our housing tenants to understand their needs and provide high quality service standards in line with the government's new Social Housing Charter.
- Work with developers and landowners to bring forward opportunities for wider housing provision to meet the needs of our communities, including first homes, shared ownership and other tenures.

Measured by:

- Number of affordable social housing homes delivered by NFDC and its partners.
- Number of affordable council homes delivered against the 2026 target.
- Percentage score for tenant satisfaction as determined in the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs).
- Number of council homes achieving Energy Performance Certification band C.

Delivery supported through:

- Housing strategy
- Greener housing strategy
- Tenant engagement strategy
- New Forest Local Plan



PLACE

Delivering growth, opportunity and services that shape our place now and for future generations, within a unique environmental context, to ensure we remain a special place to live, work and visit.

Our Priorities:

- Shaping our place now and for future generations
- Protecting our climate, coast, and natural world
- Caring for our facilities, neighbourhoods and open spaces in a modern and responsive way

Introduction:

We recognise that we serve a special natural environment. Having an internationally recognised National Park that covers so much of our district, alongside many other protected designations, has many advantages in terms of preserving the character and beauty of this place.

This protected nature of so much of our district also presents challenges; not least in terms of finding the right locations for new homes and infrastructure. We recognise that successful places strike the right balance between growth and conservation.

We consider the social, environmental, and economic impact of what we do and how we do it, shaping our place to deliver the homes, jobs, infrastructure, skills and investment that are needed now and in the future. We will champion the need for carbon reduction, climate adaption, and nature recovery to build our capacity and community resilience in all we do. And there remain opportunities for us to look more widely at our district and the potential it has. Our coastline and its recreation and tourism potential present an opportunity to do more, whilst also recognising the need to work with partners to provide for the coasts long-term management and protection.

Being responsible for the care and operational upkeep of our facilities, neighbourhoods and open spaces remains one of our main responsibilities, and the focus of our frontline services that are so visible to our residents and visitors on a daily basis. We are committed to implementing our new wheeled bin waste collection service, to meet the aim of recycling more.

We will continue to deliver a green and clean environment that supports vibrant high streets and village centres, and we will challenge ourselves to do things differently by reviewing what we do and how we resource our work. We will increasingly use data and technology to ensure that our approaches, processes, and use of resources modernise the way we work and do.

We are ambitious and innovative for our residents, communities and the environments we serve to continue our work for a distinctive, prosperous and thriving place.

Priority Shaping our place now and for future generations

We will:

- Update our strategic planning framework to manage change in the future, including an updated local plan that responds to the Freeport proposition and delivers the homes and infrastructure our district needs.
- Ensure that development considers the social, environmental, and economic factors to provide sustainable outcomes that address the current and future needs of our communities.
- Review our planning processes to ensure they provide greater certainty for customers and deliver timely and effective decision making that makes the best use of resources.
- Encourage Hampshire County Council to provide necessary transport infrastructure including upgrades to the A326, in a way which delivers economic prosperity, connectivity and considers the enhancement of biodiversity and sustainable access from the National Park to the coast.
- Continue to explore the opportunities for alternative recreational offers, such as a new country park or at our coastline, to help alleviate recreational pressure on the National Park.

Measured by:

- Percentage of planning applications determined in time.
- Percentage successful planning application appeals.
- Number of homes delivered against national and local requirements.
- Levels of developer contribution and Community Infrastructure Levy secured (£) and number of projects financed.
- Number of events and cultural activities supported by New Forest District Council.

Delivery supported through:

- New Forest Local Plan
- New Forest National Park Partnership Plan
- New Forest Place Strategy

Priority Protecting our climate, coast, and natural world

We will:

- Build greater climate resilience through preparedness activity developed in our climate and nature emergency action plan and seek out opportunities to provide for carbon reduction, climate adaption, and nature recovery.
- Further develop our strategic thinking on fleet management and carbon reduction across our corporate property estate.
- Work with partners such as the Environment Agency to deliver Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Strategies which will set action plans for protecting our coastline.

Measured by:

- Annual performance against Climate and Nature Emergency Action Plan.
- Overall emissions from council activity (Kg of CO₂).
- Emissions from the council's vehicle fleet.
- Percentage of household waste sent for recycling.
- Number & Percentage of ultra-low/electric taxi vehicles licensed.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with our partners at the National Park and other key stakeholders to support the protection and enhancement of natural landscapes, habitats and biodiversity to ensure the future sustainability of the Forest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of air quality monitoring points exceeding Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2) legal limit.
<p>Delivery supported through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ New Forest Local Plan ➤ New Forest National Park Partnership Plan ➤ New Forest Place Strategy / Economic Strategy ➤ Climate and Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document ➤ Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Strategies 	
<p>Priority Caring for our facilities, neighbourhoods and open spaces in a modern and responsive way</p>	
<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce our district wide wheeled bin collection service and further implement our waste strategy to increase recycling rates and reduce the amount of residual waste. • Deliver a new operational depot at Hardley and consider opportunities to enhance our other depot sites to facilitate carbon reduction across our operations. • Keep our ways of working and the services and facilities we provide under review, focussing on best practice and place-based outcomes to deliver in a modern and responsive way. • Work with our key stakeholders and partners to develop policies, strategies and approaches that enable us to robustly tackle issues that affect the quality of place such as fly tipping and environmental crime. • Develop a district wide parking strategy that looks to support new technologies, respond to the climate agenda, identify development opportunities and potentially generate more sustainable income levels to support the council’s wider aspirations and service delivery. 	<p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of non-recycled waste produced by households. • Number of households using our chargeable garden waste service. • Number of incidents of fly tipping and environmental crime and number of successful actions taken. • Percentage customer satisfaction with the appearance of their local area.
<p>Delivery supported through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Hampshire Joint Municipal Waste Strategy ➤ New Forest Waste Strategy 2022-2027 ➤ Environmental Enforcement policy ➤ Parking Strategy 	



PROSPERITY

Promoting a strong local economy that delivers its aspirations through effective partnerships, attracting investment, and increasing skills and employment opportunities

Our Priorities:

- Maximising the benefits of economic growth and investment
- Supporting our high-quality business base and economic centres to thrive and grow
- Championing skills and access to job opportunities

Introduction:

An important part of our plan over the next four years is to support our high-quality business base and economic centres to thrive and grow, to realise the growth and investment opportunity which is afforded to us by our Freeport status in an inclusive way, and to ensure that our residents have the tools and skills to access the jobs which become available.

Data tells us that demographics and trends are changing, we have an older than average population, that is aging as a cohort, and this has a notable impact upon our overall economic performance as a district. We also acknowledge the indivisible link between access to a place to live and employment as part of a joined-up approach to helping make the New Forest as prosperous a place as it can be.

For the young and those of working age we want to ensure that the New Forest is a place of employment opportunity. Our ambition, by attracting economic growth and investment, is to create a more prosperous future for our residents and businesses that will make a positive difference to people's lives, and to ensure growth can be genuinely inclusive. We cannot do this by ourselves. We need our existing resident and business communities to tell us what greater prosperity looks like to them. Then, to continue to deliver outcomes we will need to place partnership working with the public, private and third sector across the region and beyond at the heart of growing prosperity across the New Forest.

The Solent Freeport is a key part of that, bringing a once in a generation opportunity to cement the Solent's place as a trading hub of global importance, and the New Forest area has a big role to play. Development sites within the New Forest will contribute to some 40% of jobs to be created by the Freeport and more than 70% of developable land. There are expected to be job opportunities in renewables, shipping and wider marine sectors which are at the heart of the Freeport's aspirations. By positively promoting the Freeport we hope to encourage people to gain the skills they need to access these emerging job opportunities. It will also require us to prepare now, so that our future labour force is well placed to provide the skills that our businesses want.

This will mean working with regional partners to encourage our schools and further education establishments to ensure that teaching plans for future skills and employment need.

While planning for the future, we already have a very important Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) sector based around our world class tourism offer and our rural economy. Supporting those smaller businesses to flourish is an equally important part of our plan. Our natural environment also presents opportunities to develop green skills, as well as being a key proponent of our tourism offer.

Much prosperity in the New Forest is linked to our town and village centres, which have always evolved over time and will continue to do so. This may present opportunities to rethink the offer of some of these centres to be more self-sustaining, viable and vibrant, particularly in parts of the district that have not been able to keep pace with changing trends, shopping behaviours, or the economic climate. We will put plans and strategies in place that ensure that this is an area of focus for us.

Priority	Maximising the benefits of economic growth and investment
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<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the Freeport aspiration to further develop the Solent as a globally recognised hub for trade and undertake an enabling role for investment in our Freeport tax sites. • Ensure that investment in our district enhances rather than diminishes our special natural environment and that the benefits are locally evident and felt across all parts of our district. • Work with the public, private and third sector across the region and beyond to deliver inclusive growth and investment that drives prosperity across the New Forest. 	<p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of jobs created within the district. • Hectares of industrial/employment land developed. • Level (£) of retained business rates.
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Delivery supported through:

- Solent Freeport proposition
- New Forest District Local Plan
- New Forest Place Strategy / Economic Strategy

Priority	Supporting our high-quality business base and economic centres to thrive and grow
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<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with local people and stakeholders to develop visions and proposals for their high streets and town centres and consider where targeted regeneration approaches may be necessary. • Establish partnerships to support our local areas to bring in new investment including grant funding. • Support our SME base to thrive, working with the New Forest Enterprise Centre, focusing across the tourism sector and the rural economy. 	<p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of investment or funding secured to improve the performance of our economic centres (£). • The number of projects delivered in our high streets and town centres. • Increases in the levels of footfall in our town centre high streets. • Rate of business start-ups and SME survival rates.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the opportunities for our Arts and Culture offer and community events to help boost the vibrancy of our high streets and town centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions of our high streets and town centres.
<p>Delivery supported through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund Programme ➤ New Forest Place Strategy ➤ Town Centre Partnerships 	
<p>Priority Championing skills and access to job opportunities</p>	
<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake skills assessment and mapping to inform the development of an employment and skills strategy. • Work with partners to best support our residents to access employment opportunities regardless of the barriers they face. • Encourage employment and skills training to address emerging opportunities and local need aligned to the Solent Freeport proposals, the green agenda, as well as established New Forest sectors such as marine, tourism and the rural economy. 	<p>Measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of employment growth (Employment / Unemployment rate) • Number of funded hours of skills programmes and support provided. • Employment rate percentage of working age adults (aged 16-64).
<p>Delivery supported through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Employment and skills strategy 	



FUTURE NEW FOREST

Investing in our people and services to meet customers’ needs, protecting the council’s financial position, and embedding sustainability through our Future New Forest transformation programme

Introduction:

Underpinning the delivery of our priorities is the council’s transformation programme; Future New Forest. This ambitious programme will influence how we operate, enable us to support our strategic objectives and to make choices for the future. The programme will focus efforts on our customers and easy to use digital-first delivery of services, efficient working practices and processes, our people and capabilities, the use of our assets and accommodation and ensuring a sustainable financial position. The Council has developed equality objectives that are embedded in this plan and will maintain an overarching commitment to environmental sustainability in all that we do.

Putting our customers at the heart, we will:	Being an employer of choice, we will:	Being financially responsible, we will:	Designing modern and innovative services, we will
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver customer and digital strategies that meet our customers’ needs. • Develop and provide services using data and insight to ensure that we understand our customers and meet the needs of our diverse communities. • Implement a customer relationship management system that keeps customers informed on progress and instils confidence in service delivery. • Increase the number of services available online, whilst focusing face to face and telephone contact for those who need it most. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a people strategy that outlines how we attract, retain, and grow talent. • Encourage diversity and champion equality within our workplace, developing and supporting an inclusive working environment where all staff are respected with zero tolerance of bullying and harassment. • Invest in skills development, training, and career progressions opportunities to ensure a skilled and resilient workforce and leadership team for the future. • Commit to paying at least the national living wage to our staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a balanced budget and deliver value for money to our residents through service reviews, procurement and contract management, and transformation efficiencies. • Maintain an up-to-date medium term financial plan and financial strategy to address the council’s financial challenges beyond the short-term • Be commercially focused in our approach to investment strategies and income opportunities guided by strategic priorities. • Maximise the use of our assets and accommodation to support efficient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardise and apply common design patterns and platforms across the council to release capacity and deliver efficiency benefits. • Proactively use data and insight to inform decision-making and report performance through a robust performance management framework and culture. • Maximise the use of new technology, automate manual processes and keep our software up to date with technology releases. • Maintain robust and resilient ICT infrastructure to protect the integrity of data and our digital systems

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote employee wellbeing and prioritise work-life balance by adopting flexible and family-friendly working practices 	and effective delivery of our future service provision.	
Measured by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage resident satisfaction in perception measures. Percentage customer satisfaction in perception measures. Number and percentage of services available digitally. 	Measured by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of vacancies filled first time. Percentage staff turnover. Average number of days sickness absence per employee. Number of training days per employee. Amount of training spend per employee. Number of council apprenticeships. 	Measured by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage variance to Council budget +/- (General fund budget variations). Percentage variance to Housing Revenue budget +/- (HRA budget variations). Percentage of Council Tax collected. 	Measured by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefit realisation through ICT investment. Percentage of ICT incidents resolved within SLA. Number of projects delivered on time and to budget. Percentage unscheduled downtime.
Delivery supported through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer Strategy 	Delivery supported through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People Strategy Pay Policy 	Delivery supported through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium Term Financial Plan Transformation Strategy Asset & Accommodation Strategy Procurement Strategy 	Delivery supported through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Strategy ICT Security and Information Governance Policy