



**New Forest**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

# Corporate plan 2024 to 2028

For people, place, prosperity



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## Introduction

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 of the 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

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.



Residents at our Fordingbridge community hub



# 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 will show kindness, actively look to understand people's different needs, and ensure our services are responsive.

# Ambition

We will be ambitious for our people and our place, embracing innovation and best practice.

# Fairness

We will act fairly, honestly, and openly in all that we do.

## Our values

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

## Our priority themes



### Underpinned by our Future New Forest transformation programme

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



A photograph of three people walking through a forest. On the left, a woman with curly hair and glasses wears a white t-shirt and dark pants, carrying a white bag. In the center, a man with a beanie and a vest points upwards. On the right, a woman with sunglasses and a backpack walks. The entire image is overlaid with a purple tint.

# People.

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

Image courtesy of New Forest National Park Authority

# People priorities

1

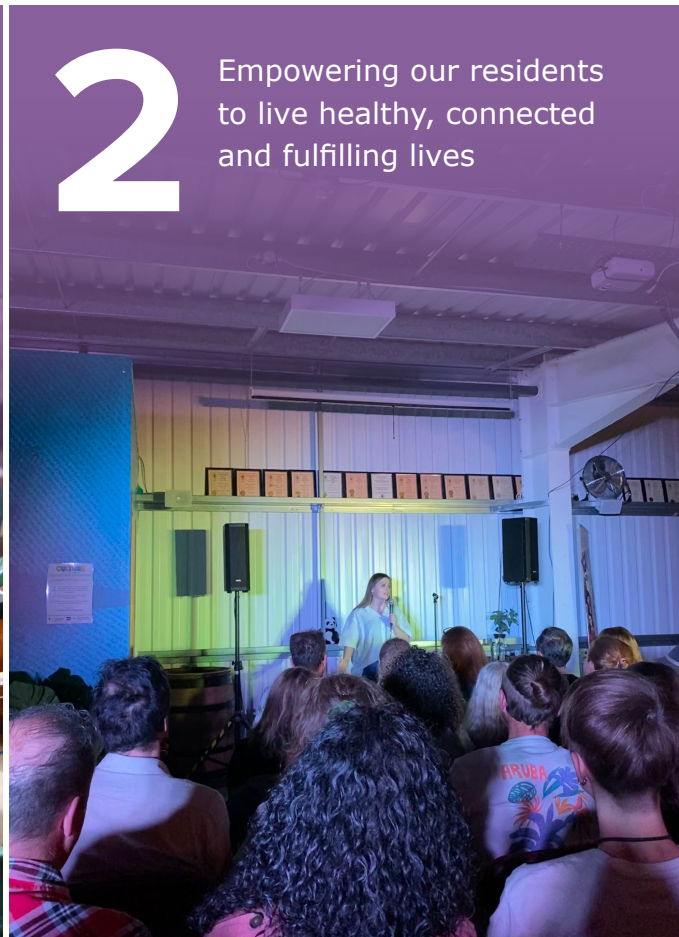
Helping those in our community with the greatest need



A food larder at one of our community hubs

2

Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives



Comedy night in partnership with Culture in Common

3

Meeting housing needs



One of our housing developments, Platinum House, Ringwood



## ● People priorities

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 and towns and parish councils.

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, and

safety compliance of council owned and privately rented housing and to ensure it remains accessible for those with lower incomes. Good quality and safe 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 and new consumer standards. In its capacity as a responsible landlord the council will address any necessary repairs and maintenance requirements as soon as possible and meet new regulatory requirements. 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, and which supports a collaborative response to tackling homelessness. It is important to us that our residents feel safe, and we will continue to identify and respond to emerging issues and 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.

# Our people priorities

## Priority 1: Helping those in our community with the greatest need

### We will:

Provide more quality, temporary accommodation for single people and families and work with our partners to tackle homelessness.

Ensure our strategies, policies and working practices support 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, homelessness and community, health, safety and resilience.

### It will be measured by:

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.

Number of Appletree careline services provided to customers.

### Delivery will be supported through:

Homelessness strategy

Private sector housing strategy

Community strategy



# Our people priorities

## Priority 2: Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives

### We will:

Protect and improve the health and wellbeing of our communities, working with partners to deliver increased physical activity and good mental health and wellbeing.

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.

Support our communities in increasing their resilience to respond to, withstand and recover from adverse situations.

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.

### It will be measured by:

Resident perception that their quality of life is affected by the fear of crime.

Resident perception that they feel safe when outside in their local area.

Investment in and rollout of CCTV coverage.

Number of education and awareness sessions in relation to serious crime.

Number of positive interventions in response to Public Spaces Protection Orders (1 and 2).

Number of events and cultural activities supported by New Forest District Council.

### Delivery will be supported through:

Health and wellbeing strategy

Community safety strategic partnership plan

Community strategy

Anti-social behaviour strategy

Cultural strategy

Tenant engagement strategy

# Our people priorities

## Priority 3: 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.

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.

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 and regulatory regime.

### It will be 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 overall tenant satisfaction with the Council as a landlord, as determined in the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs).

Number of council homes achieving Energy Performance Certification band C.

Percentage scores for the 5 safety and compliance management Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs).

### Delivery will be supported through:

Housing strategy

Private sector housing strategy

Greener housing strategy

Tenant engagement strategy

Statutory development plans prepared by the local planning authorities

# 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.



# Place priorities



**1** Shaping our place now and for future generations

Our Ladycross housing development, Hythe



**2** Protecting our climate, coast, and natural world

Aerial view of Hurst Spit



**3** Caring for our facilities, neighbourhoods and open spaces in a modern and responsive way

Out on location carrying out essential work



## Place priorities

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.

# Our place priorities

## Priority 1: 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 transport authorities and bodies, including 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 less sensitive parts of our coastline, to help alleviate recreational pressure on particularly environmentally sensitive sites within the National Park and along parts of the Solent coastline.

### It will be measured by:

Percentage of major planning applications determined in time.

Percentage of minor planning applications determined in time.

Percentage of other planning applications determined in time.

Percentage of successful planning appeals.

The total outstanding net dwelling supply as set out in our development plan.

### Delivery will be supported through:

Statutory development plans prepared by the local planning authorities

New Forest National Park partnership plan

New Forest place strategy

# Our place priorities

## Priority 2: 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 adaptation, and nature recovery with the latter expected to be informed through the development of a Hampshire wide Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) which is being led by Hampshire County Council.

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.

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.

### It will be measured by:

Amount of non-recycled waste produced by households.

Households using our chargeable garden waste service as a percentage of total properties in NFDC available to receive the service.

Emissions from the council's vehicle fleet.

Percentage of household waste sent for recycling.

### Delivery will be supported through:

Statutory development plans prepared by the local planning authorities

New Forest National Park partnership plan

New Forest place strategy / economic strategy

Climate change and biodiversity supplementary planning documents

Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) strategies

Clean air strategy

Taxi licensing policy

# Our place priorities

## Priority 3: Caring for our facilities, neighbourhoods and open spaces in a modern and responsive way

### We will:

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.

### It will be measured by:

Number of fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 people

Percentage customer satisfaction with the appearance of their local area.

Equivalent number of 0.5 litre bottles filled at water-filling stations – waste averted.

### Delivery will be supported through:

Hampshire joint municipal waste strategy

New Forest waste strategy 2022-2027

Environmental enforcement policy

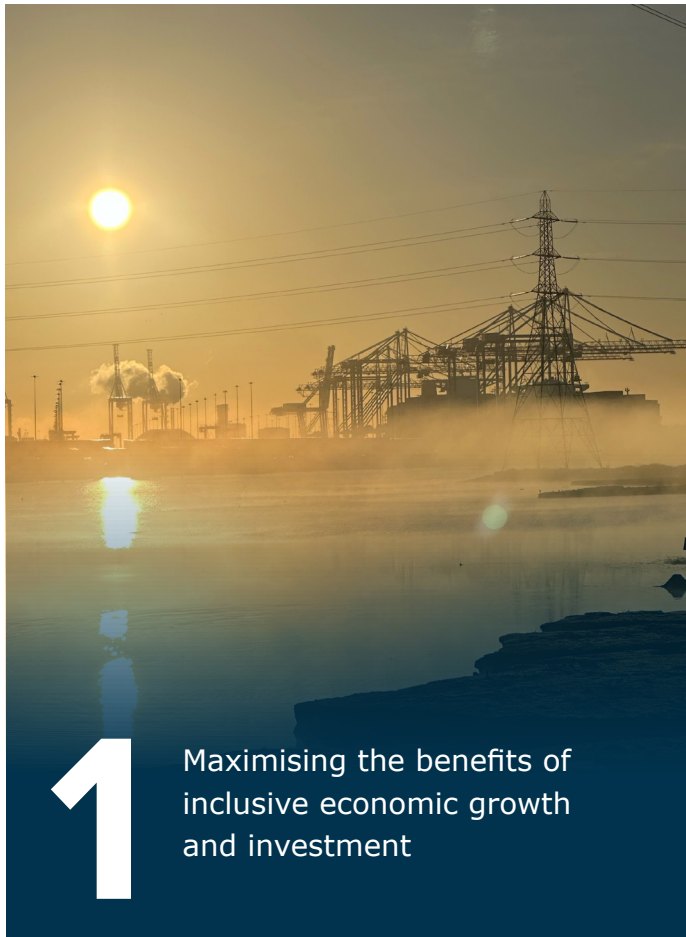
Parking strategy



# Prosperity.

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

# Prosperity priorities



View overlooking Solent Freeport



Platinum Jubilee Business Park, Ringwood



One of our grounds maintenance apprentices



## ● Prosperity priorities

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 including our world class tourism offer, our rural economy and marine sectors. 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.

# Our prosperity priorities

## Priority 1: Maximising the benefits of inclusive economic growth and investment

### We will:

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.

### It will be measured by:

Squared metres of industrial/employment land developed.

Level (£) of retained business rates (at source).

### Delivery will be supported through:

Solent Freeport proposition

Statutory development plans prepared by the local planning authorities

New Forest place strategy / economic strategy

# Our prosperity priorities

## Priority 2: Supporting our high-quality business base and economic centres to thrive and grow

### We will:

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 and other business membership organisations and other partners, focusing across our tourism, rural and marine economy.

Explore the opportunities for our Arts and Culture offer and community events to help boost the vibrancy of our high streets and town centres.

### It will be measured by:

Perceptions of our high streets and town centres.

Vacancies of retail premises within town/local centres.

### Delivery will be supported through:

UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund Programme

New Forest place strategy

Town centre partnerships



# Our prosperity priorities

## Priority 3: Championing skills and access to job opportunities

### We will:

Undertake skills assessments 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 the marine, tourism and rural economies.

Recognise that in our role, we cannot directly influence the measures in this priority however we will continue to exert our influence to improve skills and employment outcomes for our residents.

### It will be measured by:

Employment rate percentage of working age adults (aged 16-64).

Proportion (in percentage terms) of employee jobs with hourly pay below the living wage.

### Delivery will be supported through:

Employment and skills strategy



# Future New Forest

Transforming tomorrow, together

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.

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:

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.

### It will be measured by:

Percentage resident satisfaction in perception measures.

Staff survey average satisfaction score of 3.5 or higher (out of 5) for the question what would be your overall rating of the NFDC ICT service.

Resident survey average satisfaction score of 3.5 or higher (out of 5) for the question How do you rate the quality of digital services at the council.

### Delivery supported through:

Customer strategy

## Being an employer of choice, we will:

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 progression 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.

Promote employee wellbeing and prioritise work-life balance by adopting flexible and family-friendly working practices.

### It will be measured by:

Percentage of vacancies filled first time.

Percentage staff turnover.

Average number of days sickness absence per employee.

Number of council apprenticeships.

### Delivery supported through:

People strategy

Pay policy

## Being financially responsible, we will:

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 and effective delivery of our future service provision.

### It will be measured by:

Percentage variance to Council budget +/- (General fund budget variations).

Percentage variance to Housing Revenue budget +/- (HRA budget variations).

Percentage of Council Tax collected in year.

Percentage of Non-domestic Rates collected in year.

### Delivery supported through:

Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)

Transformation strategy

Asset & accommodation strategy

Procurement strategy

## Designing modern and innovative services, we will:

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

### It will be measured by:

70% of benefits realised at project closure across all ICT projects in the annual work programme.

Percentage of ICT incidents resolved within SLA.

70% of ICT projects to be delivered on time and on budget in the annual work programme

Percentage unscheduled downtime for critical systems

### Delivery supported through:

Digital strategy

ICT security and information governance policy



# Corporate plan 2024 to 2028

 For people, place, prosperity