

Local
Plan

New Forest District Council Local Plan Review

New Forest Consultative Panel – 5 March 2026



Planning in New Forest District



Agenda

- Introductions
- Why planning matters
- Where are we in the Local Plan review
- Timetable
- What is in our plan
- Any questions

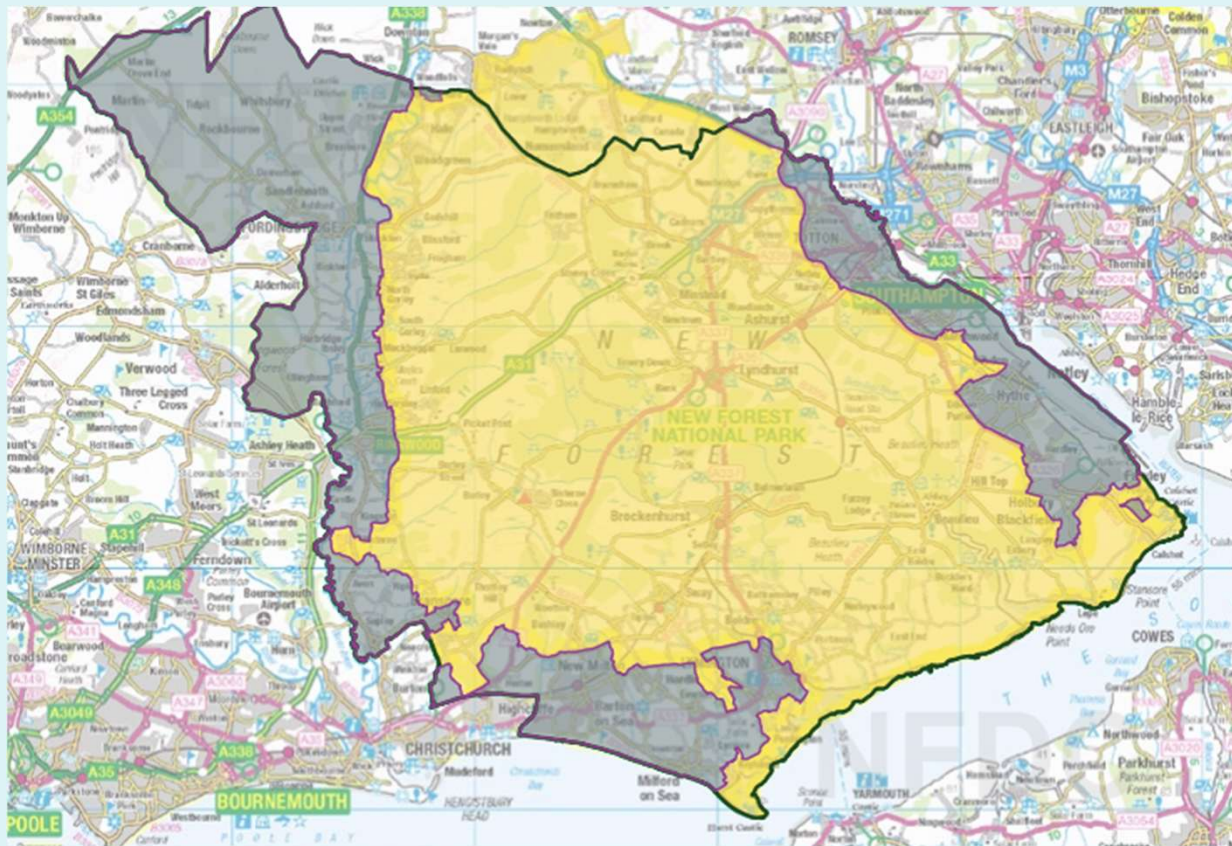
A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner consisting of a grid of overlapping circles in various shades of green and teal. The text 'Local Plan' is overlaid on this graphic in a white, sans-serif font.

Local
Plan

Planning for the Future – Why It Matters



What area is the District Council planning for?



Local
Plan

Key challenges for the Local Plan to address

Housing Demand Growth

- Demand for 22,500 new homes by 2043 requires expanded land use and infrastructure planning.

Demographic Challenges

- An ageing population and shrinking workforce create recruitment challenges for local businesses.

Climate and Sustainability

- Commitments to net-zero emissions by 2050 drive renewable energy and sustainable transport integration.

Economic Diversification

- Supporting marine industries, advanced manufacturing, and digital technology strengthens economic resilience.

Environmental & Infrastructure Constraints:

- 57% of plan area constrained (National Park, habitats, flood risk, Green Belt).

Infrastructure:

- Transport, GP provision, schools, playing pitches

Policy and Engagement

- New national policy coming out and a need to align with robust stakeholder engagement and updated national policies.



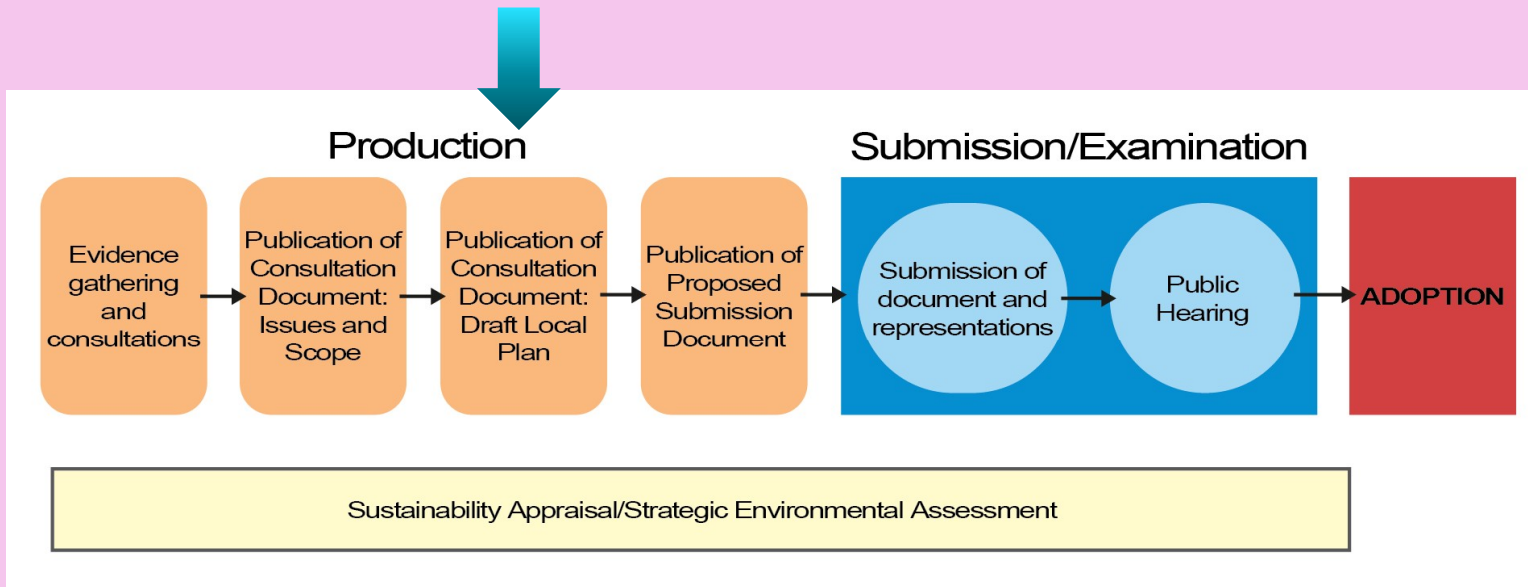
Local
Plan

Where are we in the Local Plan review



Where we are in the review process

- Current consulting on the draft spatial options and policy direction local plan



Local
Plan

Purpose of Spatial Options and policy direction document



Draft Vision for 2043

A long-term vision for the future of New Forest District.



Revised Objectives

Updated aims to guide the Local Plan's development.



Spatial Options for Development

Potential approaches to distributing growth across the district.



Emerging Policy Direction

Core Policies – strategic principles and priorities.

- This is **not** a full draft of the Local Plan.
- It sets out our thinking on the plan's overall structure and direction.

**Local
Plan**

Timetable



Timetable for to the adoption of the plan



Local
Plan

What is in our plan



What the Plan Covers

- Core Topics in This Consultation

- Vision & Objectives to 2043
- Sustainable Spatial Strategy (where growth should go)
- Strategic Development Growth Options (SDGOs)
- Housing needs, mix & affordability
- Settlement hierarchy & built-up area boundaries
- Natural environment & biodiversity (New Forest, Solent, River Avon)
- Green Belt & new Grey Belt designation
- Climate change, flood risk & coastal change
- Transport, infrastructure & community facilities
- Design, placemaking & design codes



Local
Plan

Housing Need & What It Means

- A major step-change is required
 - Standard Method gives 1,254 homes per year (22,572 over plan period)
 - Current commitments (permissions and allocations): 6,835 homes
 - Potential future supply options: 6,747 homes
 - Even if every potential option were deliverable, there remains an estimated shortfall of ~8,910 homes
 - Delivery must consider:
 - Environmental constraints
 - Infrastructure capacity
 - Viability & deliverability
 - The Plan will likely set a housing target lower than full need, with unmet need discussed with neighbours and will need to be justified



Local
Plan

Spatial Options for Growth

- Five broad strategic options (all likely to be combined):
 - Option 1: Focus growth in towns and villages per current settlement hierarchy
 - Option 2: Large expansions to towns
 - Option 3: Large expansions to towns and main villages
 - Option 4: A new settlement
 - Option 5: Larger-scale growth in small rural villages (including within National Landscape)
- All options have pros/cons; none perform strongly across all sustainability themes.
- We are asking communities which combination feels most appropriate.



Local
Plan

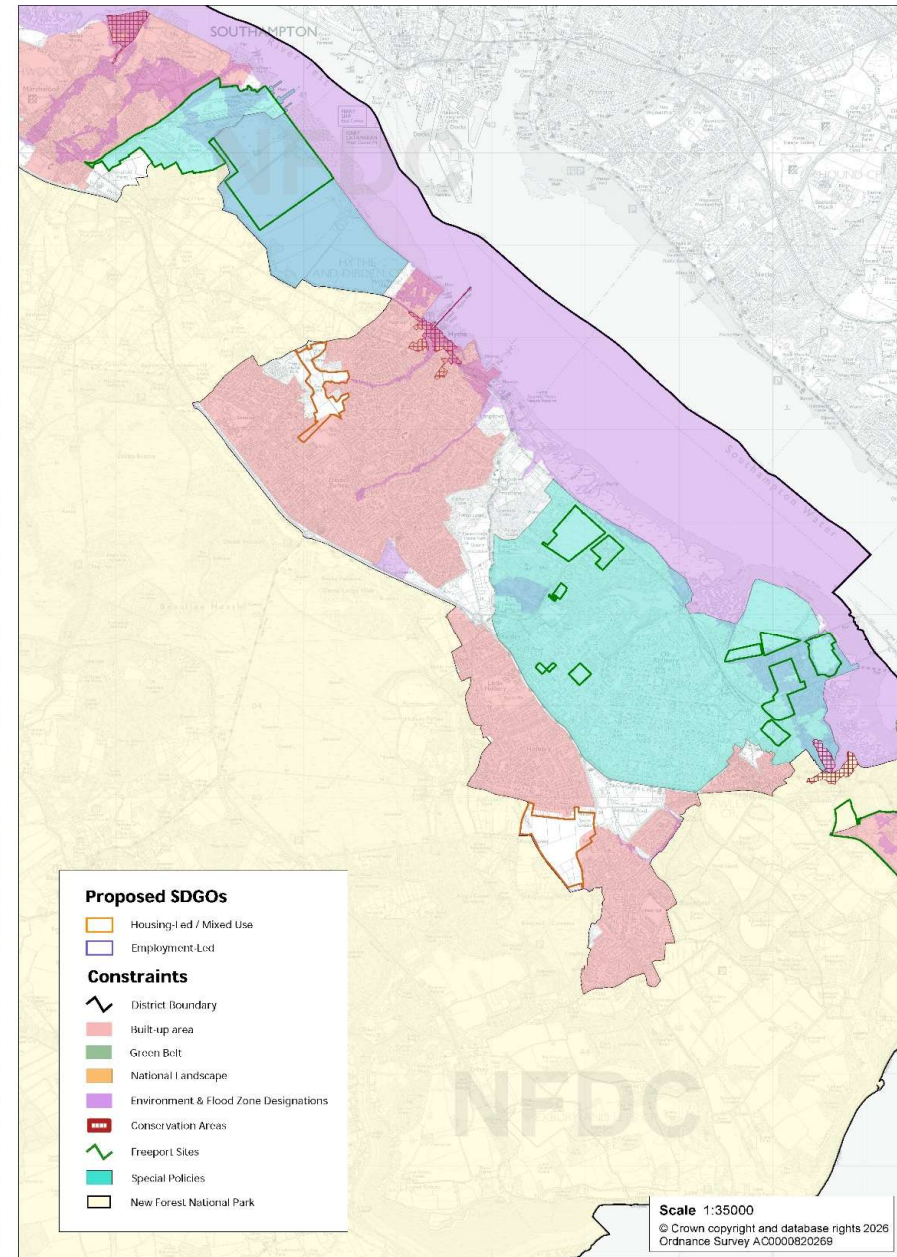
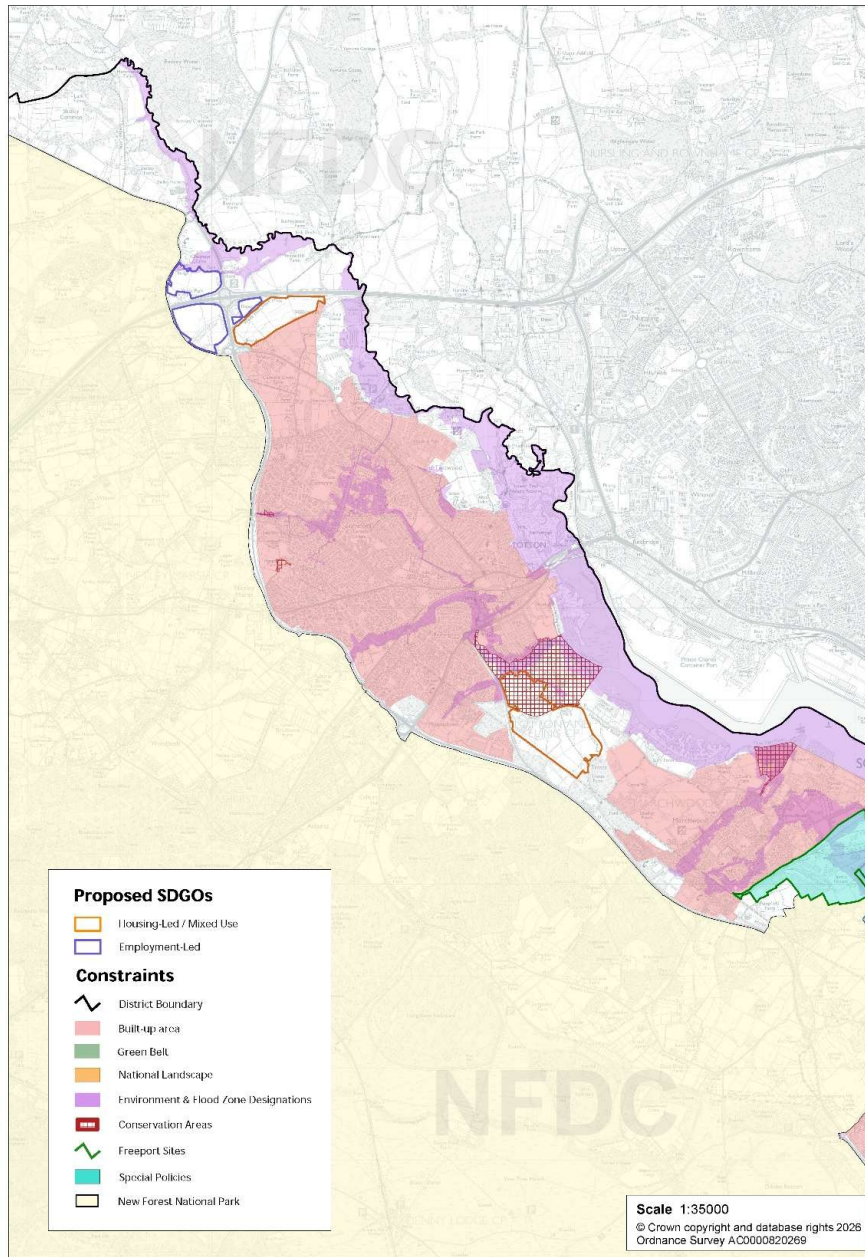
Strategic Development Growth Options (SDGOs)

- 15 broad areas (100+ dwellings) identified for testing
- Include potential expansions at: Totton, Hythe, Holbury/Blackfield, Lymington, Everton, Hordle, New Milton, Ringwood, Fordingbridge and a potential new settlement at Downton
- Some lie in Green Belt or Grey Belt areas
- Each SDGO assessed for:
 - Deliverability, access & infrastructure
 - Landscape impact & relationship to National Park
 - Ecology (including international sites)
 - Heritage, flood risk, viability
- **These are options, not proposals.**

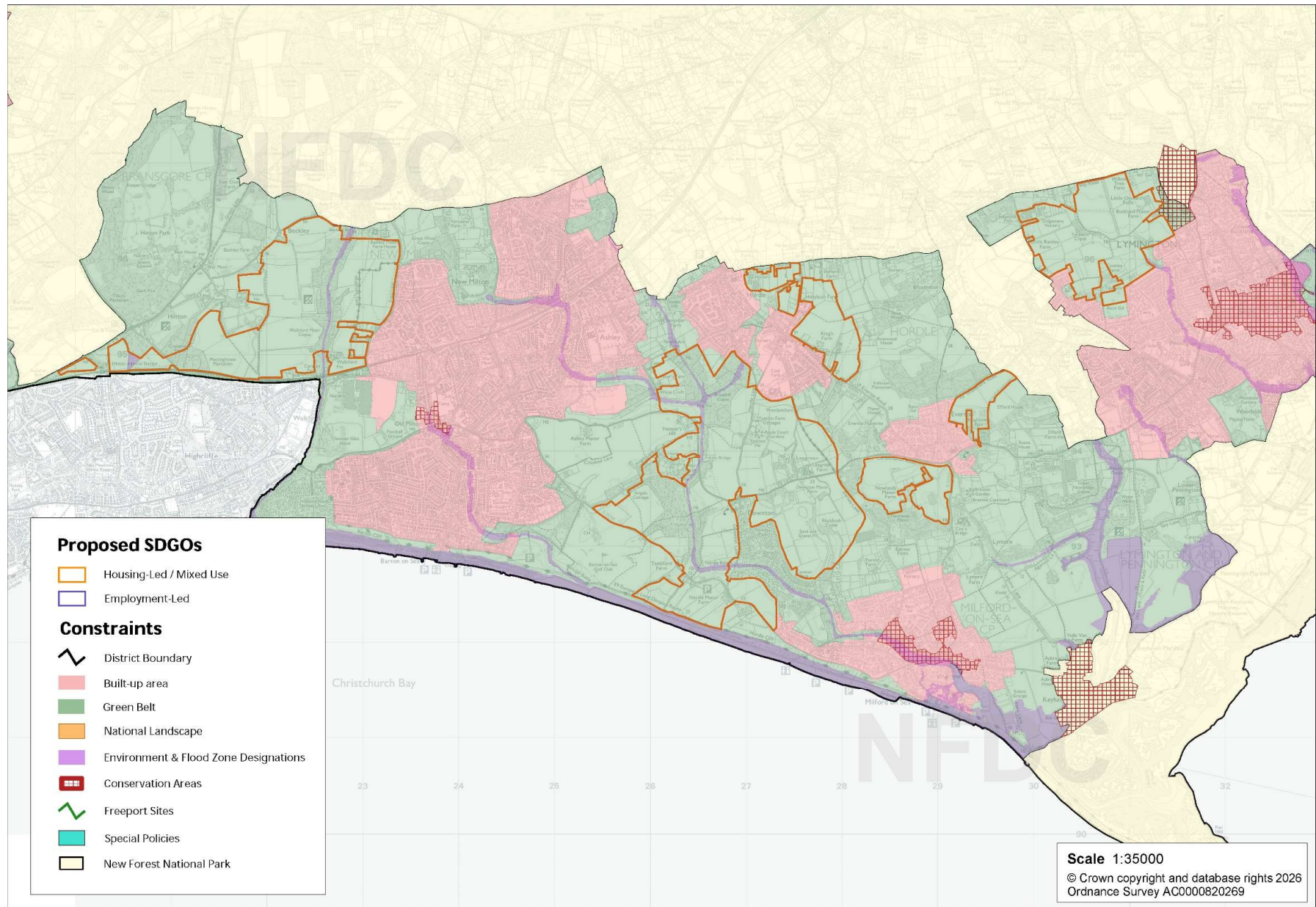


Local
Plan

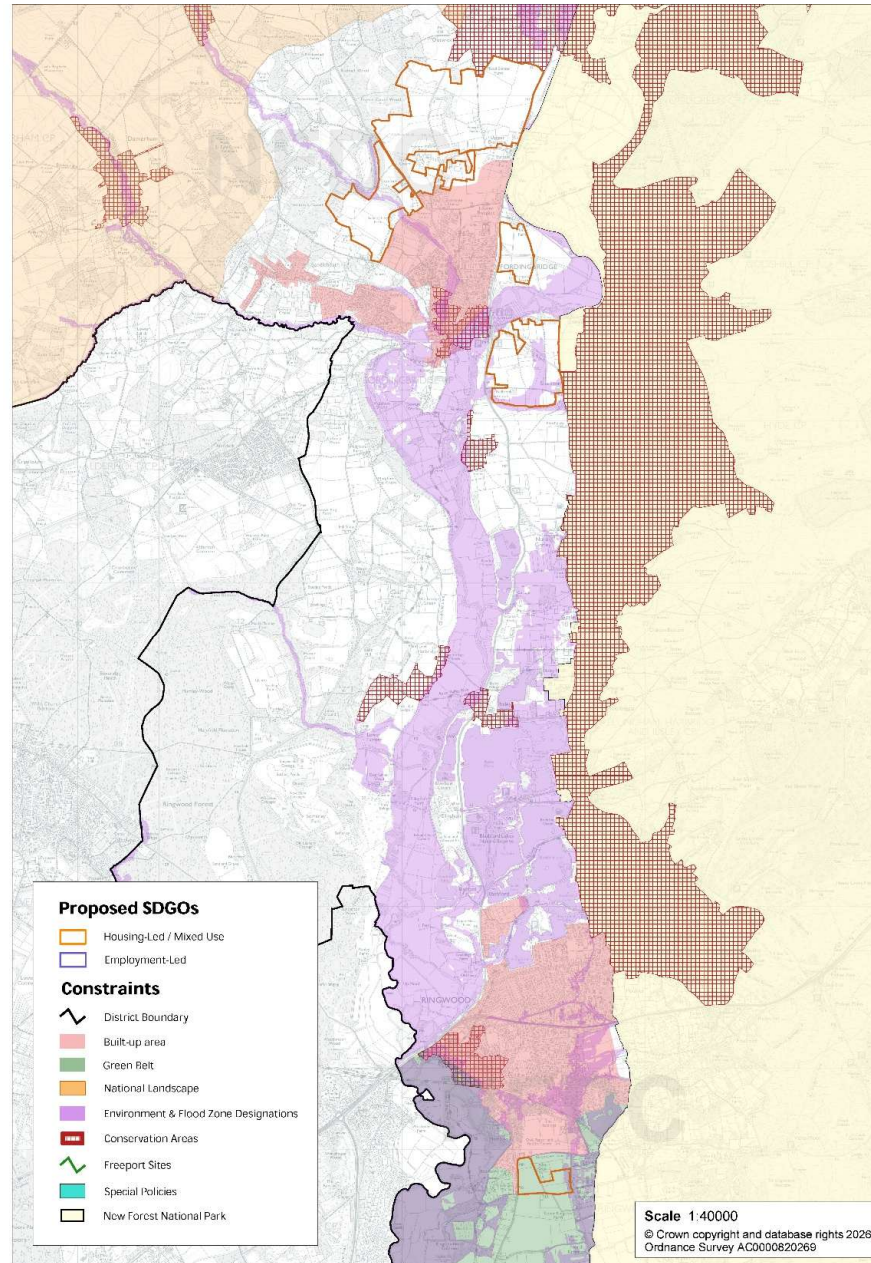
Totton and the Waterside



Coastal Towns



Avon Valley & Downlands



Environment & Protected Landscapes

- This is a plan built around environmental limits
- 57% of the Plan Area affected by NPPF Footnote 7 constraints
- Strong duty to further the purposes of:
 - New Forest National Park
 - Cranborne Chase National Landscape
- The plan will contain the following requirements:
 - Avoid & mitigate impacts on international sites (New Forest, Solent, River Avon)
 - Alternative Natural Recreational Greenspace (ANRG) and/or potential new country parks
 - 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (statutory)
 - Strengthened ecological corridors, waterbody protections, and LNRS alignment



Local
Plan

Green Belt & Grey Belt

- 21% of District is Green Belt
- National policy requires review due to high unmet housing need
- Grey Belt = Green Belt parcels making limited contribution to key GB purposes
- Sequential approach must be followed:
 - Brownfield
 - Grey Belt
 - Other Green Belt
- Green Belt release only possible if:
 - Locations are sustainable
 - “Golden Rules” met (high affordable housing, green space, infrastructure)
 - Effects on the remaining Green Belt are acceptable



Local
Plan

Design, Placemaking & Standards

- We want to create a plan that raises quality & supports character by:
 - Landscape-led, locally distinctive design
 - Design codes being produced for consistent expectations
 - Higher densities possible alongside high-quality design and appropriate landscapes
 - Minimum space standards under consideration
 - Stronger requirements for:
 - Green & blue infrastructure
 - Sustainable drainage (SuDS)
 - Walking/cycling connectivity
 - Tree-lined streets and nature-positive design



Local
Plan

Infrastructure & Community Facilities

- The plan will identify and cost infrastructure needed to support growth, including:
 - New schools, GP/dentistry capacity, community hubs
 - Transport upgrades, public transport & active travel networks
 - Utilities, flood mitigation & climate adaptation
 - Sports, play and open space
 - Digital connectivity
- This will feed into:
 - Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)
 - Updated Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)



Local
Plan

Backup Grazing – A Unique Feature of the New Forest

- Essential to Commoning: Backup grazing land is critical to the traditional practice of commoning, allowing livestock to be removed from the open Forest during winter or poor weather, ensuring animal welfare and pasture recovery.
- Ecological & Cultural Value: These areas support biodiversity, maintain landscape character, and uphold centuries-old cultural heritage unique to the New Forest.
- Mostly on Whiteland: Unlike designated conservation areas, most backup grazing land lies on unconstrained 'whiteland', making it vulnerable to development pressures despite its strategic importance.
- Planning Implications: Loss of backup grazing undermines the viability of commoning, which in turn threatens the ecological balance of the Forest. It is not just a land-use issue—it's a systemic environmental and cultural risk.
- Policy Gap: National planning frameworks (e.g. NPPF) do not currently recognise backup grazing as a protected land use, requiring local policy innovation and robust evidence to safeguard it



Local
Plan

How you can get involved – what we need you tell us

We have a number of drop in events, which we would like your help to promote, and to hear your feedback. But key points we want to hear include:

- Does the draft vision reflect your community's priorities?
- Which spatial options do you support or oppose — and why?
- Which SDGOs raise opportunities or concerns locally?
- Should the settlement hierarchy be updated?
- Thoughts on the approach to:
 - Green Belt / Grey Belt
 - Nature protection & ANRG
 - Biodiversity Net Gain
 - Flood & coastal resilience
 - Design & densities
- What local infrastructure must be prioritised if growth occurs?
- What is missing or needs strengthening?



Local
Plan

Consultation event dates

8 drop in events held so far, two dates left:

Town/Parish	Date & Time	
Hythe	6 th March	1-7pm
Hordle	9 th March	1-7pm

Around 450 people have visited us so far and over 100 responses received



Questions?





New Forest
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Local Plan

