

COPYTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – TUESDAY MARCH 10TH 2026

Item 14 - To consider and agree a response to the NFDC Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation

BACKGROUND

In early 2025, NFDC started the process of producing a new Local plan to cover the period from 2025-2043.

In April 2025 the Council submitted a response to the Issues and Scope Document Consultation. A copy of the response can be found on the following page of the Council's website:-

<https://www.copythorne.org.uk/planning/>

Work on the review was paused whilst NFDC concentrated efforts on responding to the Local Government Reorganisation ("LGR") plans for Hampshire. Although LGR is still progressing, NFDC has restarted work on the Local Plan Review.

CURRENT POSITION

A consultation on a Spatial Options and Policy Direction Regulation 18 document commenced in early February 2026 and runs until March 20th 2026.

In response to that consultation, I have produced - based on comments made in relation to similar questions in the NFNPA Local Plan Review – a draft set of responses to the 76 questions with the 267 page consultation document. The draft responses document has been shared with all members of council and comments will be gathered in and used to create a final version of the Council's response to be submitted to NFDC before the consultation deadline.

Only a small part of the Parish (on the northern side of the A36) has NFDC as its Local Planning Authority and there are no specific sites within the Parish that are contained within the consultation document. There is though a Strategic Development Growth Option ("SDGO") site for a New Strategic Employment Area identified in Ower/Wigley on the eastern side of Romsey Road (within the Parish of Netley Marsh) that would be likely to impact on the Parish of Copythorne.

The response to the question (no. 11) relating to SDGOs will be discussed at this meeting, along with the responses to five questions (4, 22, 24, 39 & 51) that have a relevance to flooding.

REQUIRED ACTION

1. Members consider and agree the responses to the above six questions at the meeting.
2. Members consider the draft responses to the other questions and provide their comments to the Clerk by March 13th 2026.
3. The Clerk updated the draft responses to the other questions based on comments received and circulates an updated draft document to members on March 16th 2026 for approval by March 18th 2026.
4. The Clerk submits the Parish Council's agreed response to NFDC by the deadline of March 20th 2026.
5. The Clerk adds the Parish Council's response to the Planning Page of the Council's website as soon as it is submitted.

David Rigby
Clerk to Copythorne Parish Council
March 4th 2026

COPYTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL – DRAFT RESPONSE TO NFDC REGULATION 18 LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

1) Does our draft vision align with how you would like the District (outside the National Park) to be as a place to live, work, and visit?

We are very encouraged by this draft vision and fully support the direction it sets out.

The statement presents a clear, ambitious, and inspiring picture, one where the District becomes a resilient, inclusive, and thriving place for everyone. We particularly value the strong emphasis on communities flourishing alongside the protection and enhancement of nature, ensuring that growth and environmental stewardship go hand in hand.

The commitment to sustainable, well-connected development that responds to local needs feels both practical and forward-looking. We also welcome the balanced focus on delivering homes for all, strengthening the local economy, supporting vibrant town centres, promoting healthy lifestyles, and advancing climate action.

Importantly, the vision recognises the distinct identity of the District—from the New Forest National Park and coastline to its historic towns and rural communities—and makes clear that growth will safeguard and celebrate these unique landscapes, heritage, and character.

Overall, we feel this draft vision provides a strong and cohesive foundation for the Local Plan, and we are pleased to endorse it.

2) Do you think we have chosen the right priorities for the Local Plan?

Yes, we believe the right priorities have been identified for the Local Plan.

The focus on delivering sustainable growth, protecting and enhancing the natural environment, supporting vibrant communities and town centres, meeting housing needs, strengthening the local economy, and responding to climate change reflects a clear understanding of the key challenges and opportunities facing the area.

The priorities feel well balanced—ambitious yet realistic—and demonstrate a strong commitment to long-term resilience, inclusivity, and environmental stewardship. Importantly, they align well with the overall vision for the Plan and provide a coherent framework to guide decision-making.

Overall, we are supportive of the chosen priorities and consider them to be appropriate, relevant, and forward-looking.

3) Do you have any comments on the published evidence base studies that support our Local Plan.

Overall, we consider the evidence base to be thorough, well-structured, and clearly presented. The range of studies demonstrates a strong commitment to transparency and informed decision-making, and it is evident that significant care has been taken to ensure the Plan is grounded in robust and up-to-date analysis.

We particularly welcome the way the evidence links directly to the key themes of the Plan, helping to justify the proposed approach to growth, environmental protection, infrastructure, housing, and economic development. This clear alignment gives confidence that the strategy is not only aspirational but also deliverable and responsive to identified needs.

In summary, we are satisfied that the published evidence base provides a sound and credible foundation for the Local Plan and supports the vision and objectives set out within it.

4) Protected nature areas, Green Belt, flood risk, and National Landscapes all help shape decisions about development. How should decisions the Local Plan balance these factors when deciding where and how much new building should happen?

We strongly support the recognition that protected nature areas, Green Belt, flood risk, and National Landscapes must play a central role in shaping decisions about development.

In balancing these factors, we believe the Local Plan should continue to prioritise environmental protection and long-term resilience while directing growth to the most sustainable and appropriate locations. Safeguarding protected landscapes, respecting the function of the Green Belt, and avoiding areas of high flood risk are essential to ensuring that development enhances rather than undermines the District's character and environmental assets.

At the same time, we welcome a balanced and evidence-led approach that identifies suitable sites where development can be accommodated responsibly—particularly in locations that are well-connected, supported by infrastructure, and capable of delivering high-quality, sustainable design.

Overall, we support a strategy that carefully weighs environmental constraints alongside housing and economic needs, ensuring that new building takes place in a way that protects valued landscapes and communities while still meeting the needs of current and future residents.

5) How should the Local Plan help protect and support the New Forest National Park and Cranborne Chase National Landscape? Do you agree with the way we plan to do this?

The Local Plan should continue to play a proactive role in protecting and supporting both the New Forest National Park and the Cranborne Chase National Landscape by ensuring that development avoids harm to their special qualities and setting.

This can be achieved by directing growth away from the most sensitive areas, requiring high standards of design that respect landscape character, and carefully managing impacts such as recreational pressure, traffic, nutrient neutrality, and water quality. Strengthening green infrastructure, supporting habitat restoration, and promoting sustainable transport connections can also help reduce indirect impacts while enhancing biodiversity and resilience.

We agree with the proposed approach to safeguarding these nationally important landscapes. It strikes an appropriate balance between meeting local development needs and recognising the statutory duty to conserve and enhance their natural beauty. The emphasis on mitigation, partnership working, and evidence-led decision-making provides confidence that the Plan will support both environmental protection and sustainable growth.

Overall, we are supportive of the way the Local Plan intends to protect and support these valued landscapes.

6) Do you agree with the broad spatial options for distributing and accommodating development growth within the plan area?

Yes, we broadly agree with the proposed spatial options for distributing and accommodating development growth within the plan area.

The approach appears well considered and appropriately balanced, recognising the need to meet housing and economic requirements while taking account of environmental constraints, infrastructure capacity, and the character of existing communities. The options demonstrate a clear understanding of how growth can be directed towards the most sustainable locations, particularly those with access to services, employment opportunities, and transport links.

We welcome the emphasis on aligning development with infrastructure provision and environmental protection, ensuring that growth is both deliverable and sensitive to local context. Overall, the broad spatial strategy provides a sound and flexible framework for accommodating future development in a way that supports thriving, resilient communities.

7) Do you agree with the approach taken to our spatial development strategy?

We generally recognise the rationale behind the approach taken to the spatial development strategy and appreciate the evidence-led work that underpins it. The emphasis on directing growth towards more sustainable locations, while acknowledging environmental constraints and infrastructure capacity, is positive and reflects good planning principles.

However, while we are broadly supportive of the direction of travel, we consider that careful monitoring and flexibility will be important as the Plan progresses. It will be essential to ensure that infrastructure delivery keeps pace with growth, that environmental impacts are fully mitigated, and that the strategy remains responsive to changing circumstances and local needs.

Overall, we acknowledge the strengths of the proposed approach, but believe its success will depend on effective implementation, ongoing review, and a willingness to adapt where necessary.

8) It is likely that a combination of options will be needed to meet local housing needs. What combination do you think is the most appropriate and why?

We agree that a combination of options will be necessary to meet local housing needs effectively and sustainably.

In our view, the most appropriate approach would be a balanced mix of development within and adjacent to the most sustainable settlements, alongside the optimisation of previously developed land and appropriate small- to medium-scale allocations across a range of locations. This would help distribute growth in a way that supports existing services and infrastructure, strengthens town and village centres, and avoids placing undue pressure on any single community.

Prioritising brownfield land where possible, combined with well-planned urban extensions in sustainable locations, would provide flexibility while protecting the most sensitive environmental areas. A diversified strategy also helps improve delivery resilience, ensuring that housing supply is not overly reliant on one type or location of development.

Overall, we support a blended approach, as it offers the most realistic and balanced way to meet housing needs while maintaining environmental protection, infrastructure capacity, and community cohesion.

9) Do you agree with our proposed approach to the settlement hierarchy?

Yes, we agree with the proposed approach to the settlement hierarchy.

The framework provides a clear and logical structure for directing growth to the most sustainable locations, reflecting the relative size, role, and function of different settlements across the plan area. By aligning development with access to services, facilities, employment opportunities, and transport links, the hierarchy supports both sustainable patterns of growth and the vitality of existing communities.

We particularly welcome the way the approach recognises the need to protect smaller settlements and rural areas from disproportionate development, while still allowing for appropriate, locally responsive growth where it can help maintain community sustainability.

Overall, the proposed settlement hierarchy offers a sound and proportionate basis for guiding future development and we are supportive of its inclusion within the Local Plan.

10) What are your views on the potential approach to defined built-up areas and development in the countryside?

We consider the potential approach to defined built-up areas and development in the countryside to be broadly appropriate and consistent with sustainable planning principles.

Focusing the majority of development within clearly defined built-up areas provides clarity and helps ensure that growth is directed to locations with existing services, facilities, and infrastructure. This approach supports more sustainable travel patterns, reinforces the vitality of settlements, and makes efficient use of land.

At the same time, maintaining a carefully managed policy framework for development in the countryside is important to protect landscape character, agricultural land, biodiversity, and the intrinsic beauty of rural areas. Allowing only limited and well-justified development—such as that which supports rural communities, essential infrastructure, or appropriate rural enterprise—strikes a sensible balance between protection and flexibility.

Overall, the proposed approach appears proportionate and well balanced, safeguarding the countryside while ensuring that built-up areas remain the primary focus for accommodating growth.

11) Do you agree with the potential Strategic Development Growth Options (SDGOs) we are considering as options? Please explain your reason and note which of the SDGO area(s) you are commenting on specifically. Given the position of the Parish of Copythorne in the far north east corner of the NFDC area we feel that it is only appropriate for us to comment specifically on SDGO A which relates to a possible New Strategic Employment Area on land around M27, Junction 2 at Ower. We do though note that SDGO B may be interconnected with SDGO A

The multi-parcel site of SDGO A is actually in the Parish of Netley Marsh, although the road that will be used to access the site forms the boundary between the two parishes.

At this stage, we recognise the work undertaken to identify and assess this potential Strategic Development Growth Options (SDGOs), and we understand the need to explore a range of alternatives to meet longer-term development requirements.

However, without a more detailed understanding of the full evidence base, site-specific constraints, infrastructure implications, and deliverability considerations, we are not in a position to express a position.

We do though have a number of concerns /reservations about SDGO A.

Pages 70 and 71 of the Consultation Document list a number of key site-specific issues and considerations, along with several key infrastructure needs/requirements. All of these are concerns/reservations for us.

To emphasise some of these we make the following comments/observations:

- The site has no viable public transport routes to/from centres of population and without these almost all workers would need to travel by car.
- What might be the access point for SDGO A(iii)?
- The largest (by far) visitor attraction in the New Forest (Paultons Park) is on the opposite of the road.
- Large parts of the site are within Flood Zones 2 and 3 (an issue for the site and the wider river system).
- What enhancements to the River Blackwater (a high flood risk nearby) might be considered?
- Would SDGO B be separated from SDGO A by the M27

We consider that further clarity on environmental impacts, transport capacity, viability, and community implications would be helpful before reaching a definitive view.

In principle, we support the careful and transparent evaluation of reasonable alternatives, and we would encourage continued engagement and robust assessment to ensure that any selected option is sustainable, deliverable, and aligned with the overall vision and objectives of the Local Plan.

We therefore remain open-minded at this stage and look forward to reviewing further detail as the strategy progresses.

12) What do you think about the other potential development sites that we are considering as options?

As mentioned in the pre-amble to our response to question 11, given the position of the Parish of Copythorne in the far north east corner of the NFDC area we do not feel that it is appropriate for us to comment on potential development sites elsewhere.

13) What are your views on our approach to providing homes for all?

We are very supportive of the proposed approach to providing homes for all.

The clear commitment to meeting a wide range of housing needs—across different tenures, affordability levels, and life stages—is both inclusive and forward-looking. By seeking to deliver a balanced mix of homes, the approach recognises the importance of creating diverse, sustainable communities where people can live, work, and thrive.

We particularly welcome the emphasis on affordable housing and specialist accommodation, ensuring that younger people, families, older residents, and those with specific needs are all properly considered within the strategy. This demonstrates a strong understanding of local demographic and economic realities.

14) Do you agree that the Local Plan should provide a mix of homes, including affordable ones for younger people, and more options for older residents and people with additional needs, including those with disabilities.

Yes, we agree that the Local Plan should provide a mix of homes, including affordable options for younger people, as well as a wider range of accommodation for older residents and people with additional needs, including those with disabilities.

A diverse housing mix is essential to creating balanced, inclusive communities. Ensuring that younger people and first-time buyers have access to genuinely affordable homes helps support economic vitality and enables people to remain within their local area. At the same time, providing suitable housing for older residents and those with specific accessibility requirements promotes independence, wellbeing, and long-term community stability.

Planning proactively for specialist and adaptable housing demonstrates a clear commitment to inclusivity and future-proofing the housing stock. Overall, we fully support this approach and consider it a fundamental component of a fair and sustainable Local Plan.

15) Should our affordable housing targets be the same throughout our plan area or vary by location or size of site?

Affordable housing targets should reflect local circumstances rather than apply as a rigid, uniform requirement across the entire plan area.

While a clear overarching target provides consistency and certainty, there is merit in allowing variation by location and, where justified, by site size. Housing markets, viability, land values, and levels of need can differ significantly between settlements, and a degree of flexibility can help ensure that policies remain deliverable while still maximising affordable provision.

A locally responsive approach—grounded in up-to-date evidence—can strike the right balance between ambition and realism. It can also help ensure that smaller sites remain viable and that development continues to come forward, rather than being stalled by overly inflexible requirements.

Overall, we support an approach that maintains strong affordable housing ambitions across the plan area, but allows for proportionate variation where evidence clearly supports it.

16) Do you agree with our proposed approach to enabling affordable housing schemes in rural areas?

We are supportive of the proposed approach to enabling affordable housing schemes in rural areas, provided that they are clearly based on identified local need.

Rural communities can face particular challenges in terms of affordability, and well-designed, small-scale schemes can play an important role in helping local people remain within their communities. Where there is robust evidence of need, enabling appropriate rural exception or community-led schemes can help sustain village services, support local employment, and maintain balanced communities.

However, it is important that such schemes are genuinely needs-led, proportionate in scale, and sensitively located and designed to respect the character of the countryside. Clear eligibility criteria and strong local connection requirements are also essential to ensure that the homes benefit those they are intended to support.

Overall, we agree with the approach in principle, subject to schemes being supported by demonstrable local need and careful consideration of landscape and community impacts.

17) How should the Local Plan provide sites for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople? Do you have any ideas for locations that should be considered?

The Local Plan should provide sites for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities through a clear, evidence-based approach that meets identified needs over the plan period.

This should include allocating suitable, deliverable sites in sustainable locations with access to services, while respecting environmental and landscape constraints. Clear criteria-based policies should also guide any additional proposals to ensure consistency and fairness in decision-making.

Overall, the aim should be to meet identified needs in a way that promotes inclusion, community cohesion, and well-planned development.

We have no suggestions as to possible locations.

18) Do you agree with our ideas for protecting and enhancing nature? Do you think we have missed anything?

Yes, we agree with your ideas for protecting and enhancing nature. The approach appears comprehensive and well aligned with the wider objectives of sustainable development and climate resilience. The emphasis on safeguarding designated sites, strengthening green infrastructure, supporting biodiversity net gain, and enhancing habitats demonstrates a strong commitment to environmental stewardship.

At this stage, we do not consider that any significant elements are missing. The key will be ensuring effective implementation, ongoing monitoring, and partnership working to deliver measurable improvements over time.

Overall, we are supportive of the proposed approach and believe it provides a sound framework for protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

19) Do you agree with our proposed policy approach for Green and Blue Infrastructure?

We are supportive of the proposed policy approach for Green and Blue Infrastructure and welcome the clear recognition of its importance within the Local Plan.

The emphasis on protecting existing assets, improving connectivity, and delivering multifunctional spaces that support biodiversity, climate resilience, recreation, and wellbeing is particularly positive. Integrating green and blue infrastructure into the overall development strategy will help ensure that growth enhances environmental quality and community health rather than placing pressure on it.

While the detailed implementation will be important, the overall direction and ambition of the policy approach are encouraging. We are therefore broadly supportive and consider it a strong and valuable component of the Plan.

20) Do you think our proposed policy approach will help to protect and enhance the natural environment and contribute to improving community wellbeing and public health?

Yes, we believe the proposed policy approach will help to protect and enhance the natural environment while also contributing positively to community wellbeing and public health.

The clear link between environmental quality, access to green and blue spaces, and healthier lifestyles is well recognised, and the policy framework appears to reflect this effectively. By safeguarding natural assets, strengthening green infrastructure, and promoting high-quality, nature-rich environments, the Plan can deliver long-term benefits for both biodiversity and residents' physical and mental wellbeing.

Overall, we are supportive of the approach and consider it well aligned with the wider objectives of sustainability, resilience, and healthier communities.

21) What are your views on the proposed approach to BNG? Should the Local Plan encourage developers to exceed the statutory 10% BNG requirement?

We are very supportive of the proposed approach to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

The inclusion of a clear and robust policy framework to secure measurable biodiversity improvements is both welcome and necessary. Embedding BNG within the Local Plan demonstrates a strong commitment to environmental stewardship and long-term ecological resilience.

We also support encouraging developers to exceed the statutory 10% BNG requirement where possible and viable. Seeking higher levels of net gain, particularly on larger or strategically important sites, can deliver meaningful environmental enhancements and help restore habitats at a landscape scale. However, this should remain proportionate and evidence-led to ensure deliverability is not undermined.

Overall, we consider the proposed approach to be positive, ambitious, and well aligned with the Plan's wider environmental objectives.

22) Should we include a separate policy on rivers and watercourses to address the impacts of development on nutrient neutrality, pollution control and surface water runoff? Is there anything specific you would want to see included within this policy?

Yes, we support the inclusion of a separate policy on rivers and watercourses.

Given the increasing pressures on water environments, a dedicated policy would provide clarity and ensure that issues such as nutrient neutrality, pollution control, and surface water runoff are addressed in a comprehensive and coordinated way. A clear framework would strengthen decision-making and reinforce the importance of protecting water quality and river health.

We would particularly welcome a strong focus on flood risk and the cumulative impact of development on flooding, both on-site and downstream. The policy should promote the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), natural flood management techniques, and measures that slow the flow of surface water. It should also require robust mitigation for nutrient impacts and safeguard ecological status in line with catchment-based approaches.

Overall, a specific policy would be a positive addition to the Local Plan and help ensure that development contributes to healthier, more resilient water environments.

23) What are your thoughts on new developments including features like wildlife corridors and nesting boxes?

We welcome the inclusion of features such as wildlife corridors and nesting boxes in new developments.

These measures help strengthen habitat connectivity, support biodiversity, and ensure that development delivers positive environmental outcomes. When integrated into site design from the outset, they can provide meaningful ecological benefits while also enhancing the quality and attractiveness of new communities.

Overall, we are supportive of this practical and nature-positive approach.

24) What should be our priorities for improving green and blue infrastructure (GBI) in the Plan Area? Are there particular locations or types of provision that should be prioritised?

We suggest the following priorities for improving green and blue infrastructure (GBI) across the Plan Area:

Strengthening Connectivity

Prioritise the creation and enhancement of green corridors that link existing habitats, open spaces, rivers, and coastal areas. Improving connectivity between urban areas and the wider countryside will support biodiversity, active travel, and landscape resilience.

Enhancing River and Water Environments

Focus on restoring and naturalising rivers and watercourses, improving water quality, and integrating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) into both new and existing developments. Catchment-based improvements and natural flood management should be key priorities.

Accessible Natural Green Space

Increase access to high-quality, multifunctional green space within and close to settlements, particularly in areas of higher population density or deficiency. Provision should support recreation, wellbeing, and climate adaptation (e.g. shade and cooling).

Urban Greening

Promote tree planting, street trees, green roofs, pocket parks, and community green spaces within built-up areas to improve air quality, biodiversity, and visual amenity.

Long-Term Management and Stewardship

Ensure that GBI assets are supported by secure funding and clear maintenance responsibilities so that benefits are sustained over time.

In terms of location, priority could be given to:

- Areas with limited existing green space provision
- River corridors and flood-prone catchments
- Strategic growth locations and urban extensions
- Settlements where improved links to surrounding landscapes would deliver both ecological and recreational benefits

Overall, a strategic, connected, and multifunctional approach should underpin GBI improvements, ensuring benefits for biodiversity, climate resilience, and community wellbeing.

25) How should we protect land for back-up grazing land for commoning? Who do you think should be responsible for maintaining an inventory of such land, and how could this be managed?

Land for back-up grazing in support of commoning should be protected through clear policy safeguards within the Local Plan. This could include identifying such land as a distinct designation or constraint, resisting its loss to development unless exceptional circumstances are demonstrated, and requiring appropriate mitigation where impacts cannot be avoided.

An up-to-date and transparent inventory of back-up grazing land would be essential. Responsibility for maintaining this could sit with the local planning authority in partnership with relevant commoning

organisations and land management bodies, ensuring that records are accurate and reflect changing land use patterns. A collaborative approach would help ensure that both planning and agricultural perspectives are properly considered.

In terms of management, the inventory could be reviewed periodically as part of monitoring arrangements, with mapped sites clearly identified and supported by criteria-based policies. Long-term stewardship agreements or land management plans could also help secure continued availability and appropriate use.

Overall, protecting back-up grazing land requires a clear policy framework, robust monitoring, and strong partnership working to ensure the ongoing viability of commoning practices.

26) How can we better manage visitor pressure on sensitive areas in and around the New Forest?

In brief, visitor pressure in and around the New Forest could be better managed through a combination of alternative green space provision, improved visitor infrastructure, and targeted education.

Well-designed Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANG), clear signage and defined paths, and active ranger engagement can help reduce impacts on sensitive habitats. Managing car parking and access points may also assist in spreading visitor activity more sustainably.

Overall, ongoing monitoring and partnership working will be key to protecting sensitive areas while enabling responsible enjoyment.

27) To meet future housing needs, the Council may need to review the current extent of the Green Belt. Are you satisfied that the Council has considered all reasonable options for meeting local housing need, before it considers releasing land from the Green Belt for development?

At this stage, we are not fully satisfied that all reasonable options have been exhausted before considering the release of Green Belt land.

While we recognise the significant challenge of meeting future housing needs, Green Belt serves an important strategic function and any release should clearly be a last resort. We consider that further work could be undertaken to demonstrate that all alternative options—such as optimising previously developed land, increasing densities in sustainable locations, reviewing site allocations, and maximising delivery within existing urban areas—have been fully explored.

A transparent and robust evidence base setting out why non-Green Belt options cannot meet identified needs would provide greater confidence in the approach. Given the long-term implications of altering Green Belt boundaries, it is essential that the case for release is clearly justified and supported by exceptional circumstances.

Overall, we believe more work could be done to ensure that every reasonable alternative has been carefully assessed before proceeding with Green Belt release.

28) Do you have any comments about how grey belt has been assessed in our Green Belt Study (Part 1)?

We welcome the work undertaken in preparing the Green Belt Study (Part 1) and the effort to assess areas identified as “grey belt” in a structured way.

However, given the importance of this issue, it is essential that the methodology and conclusions are clearly explained and fully justified. In particular, the criteria used to define grey belt and assess contribution to Green Belt purposes should be transparent and consistently applied.

Overall, the study provides a useful starting point, but its conclusions will need to be clearly evidenced to ensure confidence in any future decisions.

29) Do you have any comments on how we have applied the outputs of this assessment to the relevant housing options in the Plan Area?

We recognise the effort made to apply the outputs of the assessment to the relevant housing options, and it is helpful to see a clear attempt to link evidence with site selection.

However, without reviewing the full detail of how the assessment findings have been weighed alongside other planning considerations—such as infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, and deliverability—it is difficult to form a definitive view. The balance between technical scoring and planning judgement will be particularly important.

Overall, the approach appears logical in principle, but its effectiveness will depend on the transparency of the decision-making process and how clearly the evidence has informed the final conclusions.

30) Do you think that applying national planning policies that protect important natural/semi-natural areas, like national parks, nature conservation sites, or places with special environmental or heritage value, could prevent or limit development in the District?

Yes, applying national planning policies that protect important natural and semi-natural areas can, by their nature, limit or constrain development in certain parts of the District. Protections for nationally significant landscapes, designated nature conservation sites, and areas of heritage value are intended to safeguard assets of the highest importance.

However, that is both expected and appropriate. These policies provide a clear framework for ensuring that growth takes place in the most suitable and sustainable locations, while conserving the environmental and historic qualities that make the District distinctive.

Overall, while such protections may reduce the amount of land available for development in some areas, they play a vital role in securing long-term environmental quality and ensuring that development is carefully planned and responsibly located.

Maintaining a dialogue with the NFNPA in this context is vitally important.

31) Do you agree with our approach to design and creating attractive places?

Yes, we agree with your approach to design and creating attractive places.

A strong emphasis on high-quality, locally distinctive design is essential to ensuring that new development enhances the character of the area rather than detracts from it. The focus on place-making, active frontages, green infrastructure, walkability, and well-integrated public spaces is particularly positive.

Prioritising good design from the outset will help create attractive, functional, and enduring communities that promote wellbeing and foster a strong sense of identity.

Overall, we are supportive of the proposed approach and consider it an important component of delivering sustainable and successful development.

32) What features matter most to you?

Those that contribute to creating attractive, functional, and sustainable places.

In particular:

- **High-quality, locally distinctive design** that reflects the character and identity of the area
- **Well-designed public spaces** that are safe, welcoming, and encourage community interaction
- **Walkability and active travel connectivity**, with clear, safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists
- **Integrated green and blue infrastructure**, including trees, landscaping, and accessible natural spaces
- **Good layout and permeability**, avoiding car-dominated environments
- **Climate-responsive design**, incorporating energy efficiency and sustainable drainage

Overall, the most important features are those that ensure developments are not only visually appealing, but also healthy, inclusive, and resilient places to live.

33) Should we allow higher-density housing in some areas?

Higher-density housing can be appropriate in certain locations, particularly in town centres or areas well served by public transport and local services.

However, density should be guided by local context and design quality. It is important that development respects character, protects amenity, and is supported by adequate infrastructure and green space.

Overall, a balanced and context-led approach to density would be appropriate.

34) How should we use design codes to guide development? How can we involve local communities in this to ensure new places reflect local aspirations and character?

Design codes should be used as clear, practical tools to guide the form, layout, appearance, and quality of new development. They should set out expectations around scale, materials, street design, green infrastructure, parking, and public spaces, while remaining flexible enough to allow for creativity and site-specific responses.

Codes work best when they are area-specific and visually clear, using diagrams and examples to provide certainty for applicants and decision-makers. They should reinforce local distinctiveness rather than promote uniformity, ensuring development reflects the character and setting of different settlements.

To involve local communities, engagement should take place early in the preparation of design codes, not just at application stage. Design workshops, online mapping tools, and visual preference surveys can help residents express what they value about their area and what they would like to see in future development. Involving town and parish councils, community groups, and local businesses can also help capture a broad range of views.

Overall, design codes should combine professional expertise with meaningful community input to create well-designed places that genuinely reflect local aspirations and character.

35) Should the Local Plan set minimum space standards for new homes? If yes, what should this and should there be exceptions?

Yes, the Local Plan should set minimum space standards for new homes to help ensure good quality, liveable accommodation.

Aligning with nationally described space standards would provide clarity and consistency, while supporting health, wellbeing, and long-term adaptability.

Limited flexibility could be considered in genuinely exceptional circumstances, but this should be clearly justified. Overall, clear minimum standards would help maintain housing quality across the Plan Area.

36) Are there particular locations or types of landscape features you think are especially important to safeguard or improve?

Yes, areas adjoining the New Forest National Park are especially important to safeguard and, where possible, enhance.

Land on the edge of the National Park plays a vital role in protecting its setting, tranquillity, and landscape character. These transitional areas often function as important buffers, helping to soften the impact of development and maintain the sense of separation between settlements and the wider countryside.

Particular attention should be given to safeguarding key views, woodland edges, heathland interfaces, river corridors, and areas that support habitat connectivity. Strengthening green infrastructure and landscape planting in these locations can also help manage recreational pressure and support biodiversity.

Protecting and enhancing land adjoining the National Park should be a clear priority within the Local Plan.

37) How important is it to include parks, trees, and water features in new developments?

It is very important to include parks, trees, and water features in new developments.

These elements make a meaningful contribution to physical and mental wellbeing by providing spaces for recreation, relaxation, and social interaction. Access to green and blue spaces is closely linked to improved health outcomes and overall quality of life.

In addition, trees and water features support biodiversity, help manage surface water, reduce urban heat, and enhance the overall character and attractiveness of a place.

Integrating parks, trees, and water features should be a fundamental part of creating healthy, sustainable, and desirable communities.

38) Do you agree with our policy approaches for climate change? Is there anything else you would like to see considered here?

Yes, we agree with the proposed policy approaches for climate change.

We strongly support the LCWIPs and would like to see more done to expand them.

The focus on reducing emissions, improving energy efficiency, supporting renewable and low-carbon energy, and embedding resilience into new development is both appropriate and necessary. Integrating climate considerations throughout the Local Plan provides a strong and consistent framework for sustainable growth.

In addition, continued emphasis on climate adaptation would be beneficial—particularly in relation to flood risk, overheating, water efficiency, green infrastructure, and nature-based solutions. Supporting sustainable transport and encouraging behaviour change through good design will also be important.

Overall, the approach is positive and forward-looking, and we are supportive of its inclusion within the Plan.

39) Do you agree with our approach to flooding and coastal change? Is there anything we have missed?

Broadly, yes, we agree with the proposed approach to flooding and coastal change.

The emphasis on avoiding high-risk areas, applying the sequential approach, and requiring sustainable drainage is appropriate and reflects good planning practice. A proactive and precautionary strategy is essential given the increasing risks associated with climate change.

In addition, it will be important to ensure that river and surface water flooding are given sufficient attention, particularly in areas such as Ower where these issues are known to arise. Other areas of the parish within the National Park that adjoin Bartley Water and the Cadnam River are also affected. Ongoing monitoring, catchment-based solutions, and the integration of natural flood management measures could further strengthen the approach.

Overall, the direction of travel is positive, and with continued focus on localised flood risks, the policy framework should provide a sound basis for managing future challenges.

40) Do you agree with our approach towards managing pollution, environmental risks and public health?

Yes, we agree with the proposed approach towards managing pollution, environmental risks, and public health.

These are important issues that have a direct impact on quality of life and long-term sustainability. A clear policy framework that seeks to prevent harmful impacts from development, protect air and water quality, and minimise environmental risks is both necessary and appropriate.

We are supportive of the approach and recognise its importance in safeguarding the health and wellbeing of existing and future communities

41) Do you agree with our proposed policy approach to improve health and wellbeing?

Generally, yes, we agree with the proposed policy approach to improving health and wellbeing.

The recognition that the built environment plays a key role in supporting physical and mental health is welcome. Measures that promote active travel, access to green space, good design, and community facilities are all important in creating healthier places.

Overall, the approach is positive and appropriately reflects the link between planning, quality of life, and long-term wellbeing.

42) What do you think about our proposed policy on contaminated land?

We are supportive of the proposed policy on contaminated land.

Ensuring that land is suitable for its intended use and that any contamination is properly investigated and remediated is essential for protecting public health, groundwater, and the wider environment. A clear and robust policy framework provides certainty for developers while safeguarding communities.

Overall, the proposed approach is appropriate and represents an important component of responsible and sustainable development.

43) How should the Local Plan seek to meet the identified need for business land/floorspace? Are there any business sectors we should focus on?

The Local Plan should seek to meet the identified need for business land and floorspace through a balanced and flexible approach.

This could include safeguarding existing employment areas, allocating new sites in sustainable and accessible locations, and supporting the intensification or redevelopment of underutilised employment land where appropriate. Providing a range of site sizes and types—such as small units, flexible workspaces, and larger strategic sites—will help cater to different business needs and support resilience in the local economy.

In terms of sectors, it would be sensible to focus on those that align with local strengths and future growth opportunities. This may include small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), rural and land-based businesses, green and low-carbon industries, tourism-related enterprises, and knowledge-based or professional services. Supporting homeworking and flexible workspace provision could also be beneficial.

Overall, the Plan should promote a diverse and adaptable employment offer, ensuring that business growth is supported in a way that complements environmental protection and sustainable development objectives.

44) Do you agree with our proposed approach to retaining existing employment sites? Do you think there are circumstances where we should allow redevelopment or alternative uses to be considered?

Yes, we agree with the proposed approach to retaining existing employment sites.

Safeguarding employment land is important to support local jobs, economic resilience, and a balanced community. Protecting these sites helps ensure that opportunities for business growth are not unnecessarily lost.

However, there may be limited circumstances where redevelopment or alternative uses could be considered—particularly where it has been clearly demonstrated that the existing employment use is no longer viable or sustainable. In such cases, robust marketing evidence and viability assessment should be required to justify any change.

We support a strong presumption in favour of retaining employment sites, with flexibility only where there is clear and compelling evidence that the current use cannot reasonably continue.

45) How should we encourage the use of local employment in new developments? Are there any measures that would be most effective in supporting local employment and skills?

The Local Plan can encourage local employment by requiring Employment and Skills Plans for major developments, setting out commitments to local labour, apprenticeships, and training opportunities.

Developers could also be encouraged to work with local colleges, job centres, and training providers to help residents access new roles. Supporting local supply chains and providing flexible workspace within developments would further strengthen opportunities for local businesses.

Overall, clear policy expectations combined with partnership working are likely to be the most effective approach to supporting local employment and skills.

46) How should the Local Plan support the rural economy, including agriculture, commoning, and rural enterprise? Are there specific measures or types of rural development you would like to see encouraged or restricted?

The Local Plan should support the rural economy by providing a positive and flexible policy framework that recognises the importance of agriculture, commoning, and small rural enterprises to the character and sustainability of the area.

This could include supporting farm diversification where it remains compatible with landscape character, enabling appropriate rural workspaces, and facilitating infrastructure that helps agricultural and commoning activities remain viable. Encouraging low-impact rural enterprise, land-based businesses, local food production, and sustainable tourism can also strengthen rural communities.

At the same time, development should be proportionate in scale and carefully located to avoid harm to landscape character, biodiversity, and tranquillity. Large-scale or visually intrusive development in open countryside should be restricted unless there is clear justification and mitigation.

Overall, the Plan should strike a balance—supporting innovation and economic resilience in rural areas while safeguarding the environmental qualities that underpin the rural economy itself.

47) What are your views on the proposed approach to supporting port and marine industries, including the Solent Freeport and Solent Gateway 2? Are there particular issues or opportunities you think should be addressed?

As a parish that is not directly impacted by the proposed approach to supporting port and marine industries, including the Solent Freeport and Solent Gateway 2, we do not have detailed comments on the specifics.

However, in principle, supporting investment and growth in these sectors can provide important economic benefits at a strategic level. It will be important that any expansion is carefully managed to address environmental impacts, transport implications, and potential effects on nearby communities and designated landscapes.

Whilst we are not directly affected, ensuring that economic opportunities are balanced with environmental protection and infrastructure capacity will be key to the success of this approach.

48) How do you think the Local Plan can best support the vitality and viability of town and village centres? Are there particular uses, improvements, or initiatives you would like to see prioritised?

The Local Plan can support the vitality and viability of town and village centres by promoting a flexible, mixed-use approach that allows centres to adapt to changing needs.

Encouraging a diverse mix of uses—such as retail, cafés, community facilities, leisure, and residential above shops—can help increase activity and footfall. Supporting the reuse of vacant units and allowing flexibility between compatible uses will also be important.

Public realm improvements, good accessibility, and support for local businesses and events should be prioritised. Overall, a people-focused and adaptable approach through engagement with local residents (of all ages) and businesses will help maintain vibrant and successful centres.

49) Do you agree with the proposed approach to supporting tourism and visitor facilities?

Yes, we agree with the proposed approach to supporting tourism and visitor facilities.

Tourism plays an important role in the local economy, and a clear policy framework that supports appropriate visitor accommodation and facilities is welcome. Ensuring that development is sustainable, well-located, and sensitive to environmental constraints is particularly important.

Overall, the approach strikes a sensible balance between supporting economic benefits and protecting the area's natural and community assets.

50) What are your views on the proposed approach to existing infrastructure and the provision of new infrastructure?

We are supportive of the proposed approach to existing and new infrastructure.

It is essential that infrastructure keeps pace with development, and the recognition of this within the Plan is welcome. However, delivery will need to be sustained and aligned with the timing of growth to ensure communities are properly supported.

Overall, the approach is positive, provided infrastructure provision is coordinated and delivered in a timely manner.

51) What types of infrastructure (physical, green/blue, or social) do you think should be prioritised to support new development in the Plan Area?

A balanced range of infrastructure should be prioritised to support new development.

Physical infrastructure such as transport, utilities, and sustainable drainage is essential to ensure growth is functional and well connected. Green and blue infrastructure, including accessible open space and flood management, should also be a priority to support wellbeing and climate resilience.

Social infrastructure, particularly healthcare, education, and community facilities, is equally important. Overall, infrastructure should be delivered in a timely and coordinated way alongside development.

52) What approaches would you support to ensure infrastructure keeps pace with growth?

To ensure infrastructure keeps pace with growth, we would support a clear and coordinated delivery framework.

This could include strong use of planning obligations and developer contributions, clear phasing policies linking development to infrastructure triggers, and regular monitoring of delivery through the Plan period. An up-to-date Infrastructure Delivery Plan should sit alongside the Local Plan to provide transparency and accountability.

Close partnership working with infrastructure providers, service authorities, and neighbouring councils will also be important to align funding and timing.

A proactive, plan-led approach with clear milestones and monitoring will be key to ensuring infrastructure is delivered alongside development rather than after it.

53) How can we best involve local communities and service providers in planning for and delivering the infrastructure needed to support new development?

Local communities and service providers should be involved early and throughout the plan-making process.

Public consultation, workshops, and engagement with parish councils can help identify local priorities, while service providers should contribute to the preparation and regular review of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan to ensure realistic planning for capacity and funding.

Overall, early engagement and ongoing partnership working will be key to delivering infrastructure that meets local needs.

54) How should we improve public transport and connectivity across our Plan Area? Are there specific services, routes, or areas you feel should be prioritised?

Improving public transport and connectivity should focus on making services more reliable, frequent, and better integrated.

Priority should be given to strengthening links between key settlements, town and village centres, employment areas, and healthcare facilities. Enhancing east–west connectivity, improving rural bus services, and ensuring safe and convenient interchange with rail services would be particularly beneficial.

Investment in active travel routes—such as safe walking and cycling connections to transport hubs—should also form part of a coordinated strategy. Overall, a joined-up and accessible network will be essential to reducing car dependency and supporting sustainable growth.

This is a subject that needs close co-operation with the NAFNPA and neighbouring authorities.

55) How can the Local Plan best support safe and accessible walking and cycling routes? Are there particular locations or types of infrastructure you think should be prioritised?

The Local Plan can best support safe and accessible walking and cycling routes by embedding active travel requirements into the design of all new developments.

Priority should be given to creating continuous, well-lit, and clearly defined routes that connect homes with schools, town and village centres, employment areas, healthcare facilities, and public transport hubs. Safe crossings, segregated cycle lanes where appropriate, and traffic calming measures should also be encouraged.

Particular attention should be paid to closing gaps in existing networks, improving routes to rail stations and bus stops, and enhancing connectivity between settlements and surrounding green spaces. The interaction between NFDC and NFNPA when planning such routes is critical

A coordinated and design-led approach that prioritises safety and convenience will help make walking and cycling realistic choices for everyday journeys.

56) What measures would help encourage a shift away from private car use towards other transport options including active travel and public transport? How can different forms of transport be better integrated?

Encouraging a shift away from private car use will require better public transport, safe walking and cycling routes, and development located close to services and facilities.

Improving reliability and frequency of buses and rail, alongside secure cycle parking and safe links to transport hubs, will help make alternatives more attractive. Travel plans for major developments and coordinated timetables can also support change.

Overall, a well-integrated and convenient transport network will be key to promoting more sustainable travel choices.

57) Do you agree with our approach to updating parking standards and increasing provision for electric vehicle charging?

Yes, we agree with the proposed approach to updating parking standards and increasing provision for electric vehicle charging.

Ensuring parking standards reflect current needs, while supporting more sustainable travel choices, is important. At the same time, expanding electric vehicle charging infrastructure will help facilitate the transition to lower-emission transport and future-proof new development.

The approach is positive and aligns well with wider climate and sustainability objectives.

58) Are there particular standards or locations you think should be prioritised?

Priority should be given to ensuring new residential developments include appropriate provision for electric vehicle charging.

In terms of location, town and village centres, transport hubs, and employment areas should be prioritised for public charging infrastructure.

Parking standards should remain context-led, reflecting access to public transport and local services to balance sustainability with practical needs.

59) How can we ensure new development is well connected to sustainable transport options and doesn't significantly worsen existing traffic congestion and/or air quality?

New development should be located in accessible areas close to services and public transport to reduce reliance on private cars.

Strong walking and cycling links, safe access to bus stops and rail stations, and robust travel plans for major schemes will be important. Transport assessments should also address cumulative impacts on congestion and air quality, with mitigation secured where necessary.

A coordinated and infrastructure-led approach will help ensure growth does not significantly worsen traffic or environmental conditions.

60) How can we best involve local communities and stakeholders in planning for transport improvements and infrastructure delivery?

Local communities and stakeholders should be involved early in planning for transport improvements.

Public consultation, engagement with parish councils and local groups, and clear communication about proposals and timescales will help identify priorities and build trust. Transport providers should also be involved from the outset to ensure coordination and deliverability.

Early and transparent engagement will be key to successful infrastructure delivery.

61) How should we manage schemes like bikes, e-bike and e-scooter hire schemes, so they encourage active travel but are kept in appropriate places and do not obstruct streets or public spaces?

Bike, e-bike, and e-scooter hire schemes should include clearly designated parking or docking areas to prevent obstruction of footways and public spaces.

Agreements with operators should require proper maintenance and prompt removal of poorly parked vehicles, supported by monitoring - and penalties - where necessary.

Overall, clear controls and defined parking locations will help support active travel while keeping streets safe and accessible.

62) What features or improvements would make informal open spaces in your local area more attractive to you and more accessible for you?

Informal open spaces would be more attractive and accessible with a combination of small but meaningful improvements.

Well-maintained paths, better lighting where appropriate, and clear signage can improve accessibility and safety. Additional seating, tree planting, and natural landscaping would enhance comfort and visual appeal. Improved maintenance, including litter management, is also important.

Ensuring step-free access, good connections to surrounding neighbourhoods, and safe crossing points would make spaces more inclusive. Overall, simple enhancements focused on usability, safety, and greenery would make informal open spaces more welcoming and better used.

63) How important is it to provide for a range of play spaces in all new developments?

It is very important to provide a range of play spaces in all new developments.

Access to safe, well-designed play areas supports children's physical health, social development, and overall wellbeing. A variety of spaces for different age groups—including informal natural play as well as equipped areas—helps ensure inclusivity and long-term use.

Integrating play spaces into the heart of developments, within easy and safe walking distance of homes, should be a key priority in creating family-friendly and sustainable communities.

64) Are there particular types of play spaces or open space facilities you feel are missing or needed in your area? (for example, in relation to all inclusive - disabled access, more space for girls, improved pathways, natural play areas?)

There is a need for more inclusive and varied play spaces.

In particular, fully accessible equipment and step-free access should be prioritised to ensure children with disabilities can participate. More informal and natural play areas—using landscaping, timber features, and open space—would also be beneficial.

Consideration should also be given to spaces that appeal to older children and teenagers, as well as designs that feel welcoming and safe for girls. Improved pathways and seating for parents and carers would further enhance accessibility and usability.

Overall, a more inclusive and diverse range of play and open space facilities would be welcome.

65) Are the existing facilities in play areas and/or open spaces adequate? (For example, in areas such as parks, open spaces and commons)

Some older play equipment and infrastructure would benefit from updating or refurbishment. Modernising facilities, improving accessibility, and ensuring ongoing maintenance would help keep these spaces safe, inclusive, and attractive for continued use.

Overall, while provision is generally sufficient, targeted investment in upgrading older areas would be welcome.

66) Are there any particular types of open spaces you feel are either missing, inappropriate or inadequate in your area? (For example, this may include parks, woodland, gardens or other forms of green or blue spaces such as streams, river or coastal access)

Provision is generally good, but there is always scope for improvement in certain areas.

In particular, more accessible natural green spaces within easy walking distance of residential areas would be beneficial. Enhanced woodland paths, better access to river corridors, and improved connections between existing open spaces could strengthen usability and enjoyment.

There may also be opportunities to provide more informal spaces for teenagers and young adults, as well as quieter areas for relaxation and wellbeing.

While the range of open space is broadly appropriate, improving accessibility, connectivity, and variety would further enhance provision.

67) Do you support the protection and improvement of existing playing pitches, and the creation of new facilities where there is evidence of need?

Yes, we strongly support the protection and improvement of existing playing pitches, along with the creation of new facilities where there is clear evidence of need.

In our parish in particular, such facilities are sadly lacking, and additional provision would greatly benefit children, young people, and the wider community. Ensuring that pitches are well maintained, accessible, and supported by appropriate changing and parking facilities will also be important.

Overall, safeguarding and enhancing sports provision should be a clear priority within the Local Plan.

68) How important is it to ensure access to high-quality, affordable indoor sports and leisure facilities for all residents?

It is very important to ensure access to high-quality, affordable indoor sports and leisure facilities for all residents.

While some level of travel to reach larger facilities is understandable, this must be supported by reliable and accessible transport provision, particularly in areas where services are limited. Without good transport links, access can become a barrier for young people, older residents, and those on lower incomes.

Overall, affordability, quality, and connectivity should all be considered to ensure facilities are genuinely accessible to everyone.

69) How can we improve access to high-quality, affordable indoor sports and leisure facilities for all residents across the Plan Area?

Access could be improved through better public transport links to key leisure and sports facilities, particularly from rural areas and smaller settlements, like Copythorne.

Reliable, affordable, and well-timed services would help ensure that young people, older residents, and those without access to a car are not disadvantaged. Coordinating transport routes and timetables with peak usage times, such as evenings and weekends, would also be beneficial.

Overall, improved connectivity is key to ensuring facilities are genuinely accessible to all residents across the Plan Area.

70) Are there any gaps in indoor sports or leisure provision in your area that you would like to see addressed?

There do not appear to be significant gaps in indoor sports or leisure provision in our area.

As per the answer to the last question, the main issue for those without a car is access rather than availability. Improving transport links and connectivity to existing facilities would make a meaningful difference and help ensure they are accessible to all sections of the community. Better access would address most of the concerns.

71) Do you have any other comments or suggestions about how the Local Plan should address open space, play, sports, and recreation needs in the Plan Area?

No further comments at this stage. Please see previous responses for our views on open space, play, sports, and recreation provision.

72) Do you agree with the suggested policy direction for heritage?

Yes. The protection of our built environment is very important in maintaining local character, distinctiveness, and a sense of place. A clear and robust policy approach will help ensure that heritage assets are properly safeguarded while allowing for sensitive and well-designed development where appropriate. We strongly support a strong emphasis on conserving and enhancing the historic environment within the Local Plan.

73) National guidance sets the overall approach to non-designated heritage assets. How can the Local Plan give appropriate consideration to these?

The Local Plan can give appropriate consideration to non-designated heritage assets by allocating sufficient resources to identify, assess, and protect them.

This could include maintaining and regularly updating the local list, encouraging towns and parishes to recommend additions to the local list (like the NFNPA does) ensuring that applications affecting such assets are supported by proportionate heritage assessments, and providing specialist conservation advice where needed. Clear policy wording will also help ensure that their significance is properly taken into account in decision-making.

Adequate resourcing and consistent application of policy will be key to ensuring these important local assets are safeguarded.

74) Are there any key heritage considerations that you feel we have omitted?

We don't think so.

75) What can the Local Plan do to protect arts and cultural venues like museums, exhibitions and theatres?

The Local Plan can protect arts and cultural venues by clearly identifying and highlighting them within policy, recognising their importance to community life and local identity.

Policies could promote their retention, resist unnecessary loss, and support their enhancement or sensitive expansion where appropriate. Encouraging their inclusion within town and village centres and supporting mixed-use developments that incorporate cultural space would also be beneficial.

Overall, actively promoting and valuing these venues within the planning framework will help ensure they continue to thrive.

76) Do you have any other comments or suggestions about how the Local Plan should address arts and culture in the Plan Area?

We support the proposed policy direction for arts and culture and have no further comments at this stage.

The New Forest Association of Local Councils ("NFALC") is keen to ensure that we do as much as possible to promote local arts and culture, it is part of our local heritage.

Recognising and promoting the value of cultural facilities within the Local Plan is welcomed and will help ensure they continue to contribute positively to community life across the Plan Area.