

Meeting Minutes



Duty to Cooperate: New Forest District Council & Winchester City Council

Purpose Duty to Cooperate	Date & Time 08/10/2025 - 12:00
Location MS Teams	

Attendees

Name	Organisation	Email
James Smith (JS)	Planning Policy Team Leader / New Forest District Council	[REDACTED]
Peter McGowan (PM)	Senior Policy Planner / New Forest District Council	[REDACTED]
Jessica Heredge (JH)	Planning Policy Officer / New Forest District Council	[REDACTED]
Emma Betteridge (EB)	Principal Planning Policy Officer / Winchester City Council	[REDACTED]
Rosie Rivers	XX / Winchester City Council	[REDACTED]

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Items Discussed

1. Previous meeting minutes

- a. Minutes from the previous meeting were circulated. No outstanding actions identified; Winchester to confirm post-meeting.

2. Update on Local Plan timetables

- a. JS provided an update on NFDC's Local Plan, confirming that the Regulation 18 consultation is scheduled for Cabinet approval on 5 November 2025, with the consultation expected to begin around 17 November 2025 for 6–8 weeks. Local Plan submission still targeted for end of 2026 under current regulations. JS explained that the Regulation 18 document will be setting out spatial options for growth and policy direction.
- b. EB gave an update on Winchesters Local Plan, stating that they had received the Inspector's post-hearing note; EB confirmed that the plan is likely to be found sound subject to main modifications. Main modifications consultation is being prepared; adoption expected early 2026. EB explained that WCC's New Local Plan is underway; a call for sites was issued for housing, employment, and green infrastructure. EB added that there are appeals ongoing testing housing land supply and plan weight.

3. Housing Need and Spatial Options

- a. JS gave an update on NFDC's housing need, confirming a standard method need of 1,511 dwellings per annum (district-wide). When split by dwelling stock in each of the NFDC and National Park planning areas, the need for the NFDC plan area reduces to 1,254 dwellings per annum. The National Park residual is ~257 dwellings per annum. JS stated that the total need over plan period (2025–2043) of ~22,500 homes, and that NFDC have a potential supply of ~15,000 homes, creating a shortfall of ~7,500 homes, should all options come forward. JS noted that this was highly optimistic.

- b. NFDC presented 5 broad spatial options for growth, and noted that the consultation will consult on a number of larger strategic growth options (not allocations).
- c. EB noted that WCC have no definitive housing/employment figures yet due to ongoing workstreams. Following recent examinations, WCC's Inspector confirmed the plan start date as 2024 and recommended the removal of the proposed phasing policy. EB noted that nutrient mitigation and brownfield prioritisation influenced policy changes. Winchester noted the inspector's comment that unmet need should be addressed via Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH), however EB stated that a lack of sub-regional strategy complicates things.
- d. JS noted that NFDC anticipates to formally engage with neighbouring authorities regarding unmet need imminently, once figures have been finalised.

4. Employment

- a. PM explained that the Economic Needs Assessment completed with National Park is nearing finalisation, and has concluded an indicative requirement of up to around 142,600 sqm employment floorspace. PM noted that the existing supply is skewed toward Totton Waterside; and there is a need for balanced distribution. PM noted that mixed-use allocations are expected to help meet employment needs.
- b. PM stated that the Port and Marine Business Need Assessment has confirmed that Solent Gateway 2 (formerly Dibden Bay) is the only viable expansion site for the Port of Southampton.
- c. For Winchester, EB confirmed that their revised employment study brief is currently being drafted; no further progress reported.

5. Environmental Mitigation

- a. On Environmental Mitigation, JS confirmed that NFDC are engaged with the Solent Mitigation Partnership and Natural England. JS noted concerns over cumulative impact of growth on New Forest designated sites, and acknowledged ongoing discussions with Natural England on strategic mitigation and monitoring. JS also noted the issue of backup grazing land availability for New Forest livestock.
- b. EB gave an update for Winchester, stating that Natural England have confirmed high phosphorus levels in River Test SSSI. WCC are awaiting clarity on whether nutrient neutrality will be formally applied. EB noted that Winchester has implemented its own phosphorus/nitrogen mitigation scheme via upgraded sewage treatment works. This scheme has been shortlisted for national environmental awards.

6. Update on any other identified strategic matters

- a. JS gave a brief update on NFDC's Transport Assessment, noting that NFDC have commissioned ITP to undertake transport modelling and assessment. JS noted that this study is in the early stages; potential constraints may emerge depending on growth options progressed.

7. Agreed actions and date of next meeting

- a. Next meeting proposed for early December, due to EB's upcoming departure from WCC. WCC to introduce new DTC lead at this meeting. EB anticipates that they will be able to provide an update on the main modifications consultation during this meeting.

Agreed Actions & Priorities

1. NFDC to circulate meeting invitation for next meeting, agreed to take place in December 2025.

Next Meeting

Both parties in agreement that the next meeting should ideally take place in December 2025 to ensure smooth handover from EB to new DtC lead. NFDC to schedule and circulate agenda.