

An Action Plan for New Milton and Barton-on-Sea 2005 - 2015



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Acknowledgements

This Action Plan has been produced by the New Milton Town Project Officer in conjunction with the New Milton Town Partnership and the community of New Milton and Barton on Sea.

Those on the five working groups (Environment, Social & Community, Transport & Accessibility, Economy and Young People – see Appendix VIII) deserve special recognition and thanks for all their time, given wholly voluntarily, and their valuable input during the various stages of the Healthcheck including help with the consultation events and data analysis of the questionnaire survey.

Officers from the Economic Development Office, Hampshire County Council, the New Forest District Council, Business in the Community and New Milton Town Council were particularly helpful and supportive, giving their time, support and expertise generously.

Hampshire County Council has worked with the Countryside Agency to develop the Hampshire Market Town Project which actively supports and encourages small rural towns in the county. As part of this project, Hampshire County Council secured funding from the Countryside Agency for a Town Partnership Officer for New Milton, who helped bring individuals and organisations together to form the New Milton Town Partnership.

Tourism South East organised and ran a Tourism Workshop which was well attended by local providers. As a result of this, valuable insight

was gained into the needs of the Tourism sector and this is reflected in the formation of the New Milton Community Tourism Group within which Tourism South East has retained an advisory role.

Critical to the success of this project is the support of the town's community to develop a real **partnership** to bring about this regeneration and development; we feel that a genuine commitment to the needs of the community is best achieved by bringing together all aspects of the community involving local people - residents and local businesses, local government, relevant agencies and experts who can help make our vision a reality. By working together we will help create prosperity within the town and give the community a real sense of identity, pride and belonging.

The South East Economic Development Agency (SEEDA) has been successfully approached for funding for the Streetscape Project (combined projects 2-6) and has agreed to make a grant of £240,000, of which £195,000.00 is for the Streetscape Project. This vital funding has not only enabled the main project to go ahead but has also provided £15,000.00 per annum for three years towards the costs of a Town Development Officer, to be recruited in January 2006.

It is important to recognise the role played by the Town Council and in particular that of the late Councillor Mike King, whose drive and commitment ensured the launch of the original Town Project.

Executive Summary

This Action Plan is the result of a local initiative to revitalise our town, aimed at putting New Milton and Barton-on-Sea, and the surrounding area, on the map as a social and economic hub. It provides a summary of the research and processes involved in developing this Action Plan, and a formal statement of our proposals for the development and improvement of New Milton as a Market Town and gateway to the New Forest.

Our Action Plan has been produced as a result of the co-operative work of the New Milton Town Partnership (formerly the New Milton Town Project Group) that has been conducted since March 2002 and supported by New Milton Town Council, New Forest District Council, Hampshire County Council, Business in the Community and the Countryside Agency. In addition, a number of volunteers from the local community of New Milton and Barton-on-Sea have also been invaluable to the project, having given a huge amount of time and energy to the process.

The objectives of the Partnership are

- 1. Establish what is important to New Milton people in the long term**
- 2. Identify what would improve their quality of life**
- 3. Develop an Action Plan for improvements in the area**
- 4. Ensure the designated actions take place and monitor and report progress.**

One of the first tasks for New Milton Town Partnership is to implement and oversee a major project comprising of Project 2, Weekly Street Market/Occasional Farmers' Market, Project 3, Annual Events Programme, Project 4, Marketing & Business Support Project, Project 6, Visitor Information and Signage Project, Project 7, Town Centre Streetscape Plan and Feasibility Study, and Project 8, New Milton Design Statement (see pages 28/29). Work is currently underway on a number of these projects and most of them are on-going. SEEDA has provided funding of £240,000.00 both towards this major project and to assist with the provision of a Town Development Officer from January 2006, for which the Partnership needs to source match funding.

This document contains a comprehensive appraisal of the town's strengths and weaknesses, as well as an assessment of the opportunities and threats to New Milton. The Delivery Programme (which has already started and will continue to be implemented between now and 2015) outlines a broad range of projects and actions that will help to secure New Milton and Barton-on-Sea's (and the surrounding area) future as successful and sustainable communities.

It is important to stress that this document is a 'working document' – the process of revitalising New Milton as a market town and gateway to the New Forest will be an on-going task and regular reviews will take place to ensure that the actions and projects we propose to deliver continue to meet the needs of all aspects of the local community. To this end, we actively encourage and value continued input from all groups within the local community.

Introduction

Background

England has a rich heritage of small market towns that are extremely important for rural areas, often acting as service centres for the surrounding countryside. But the growth of out-of-town shopping centres and the decline of local services, such as local bank branches, have affected the ability of many small towns to act as centres for their rural hinterland. The government in its Rural White Paper reinforced the need to develop market towns as service centres and the focus of economic, social and environmental regeneration in rural areas.

A national project was launched by the Countryside Agency in 2000 to help identify market towns throughout England that had the potential to act as service centres that could serve the modern countryside. New Milton was selected as one such market town.

The New Milton Town Partnership (the Partnership) is a local initiative to revitalise our town, aimed at putting New Milton, Barton-on-Sea and the surrounding area back on the map as a social and economic hub and to improve quality of life for all members of the community.

Throughout this document 'New Milton', unless otherwise stated, relates to New Milton and Barton on Sea and the surrounding hinterland (including Ashley and Bashley).

The Partnership aims to regenerate the town to help create a vibrant, balanced and inclusive community in New Milton, Barton-on-Sea and the surrounding area where businesses are helped to thrive and the quality of life is improved for local residents, whilst retaining the best of its past. Our vision is to **'build an inclusive community with a vibrant economy, where it is good to live, work, visit and invest'**.

New Milton – Past & Present

The parish of New Milton falls within the New Forest District in the county of Hampshire, the largest shire county in England of which 90% is

rural land. New Milton is situated in the far south west of the county, just a couple of miles from the sea and surrounded by the New Forest, which has recently been awarded National Park status.

Although New Milton celebrated its Centenary in 1996, the land on which it stands has a much older history. It was the arrival of the railway station in 1896 which created a geographical and topographical shift, as the older hamlet of Milton moved gradually and almost imperceptibly north and east to reflect the tide of progress and prosperity.

The area is remarkable in that, within one parish, evidence has been found relating to almost every period of pre-history. The Roman army of General Vespasian was certainly in the area around 43AD, and various Roman relics have been found locally. Hunting, fishing and farming were the obvious means of livelihood of the Germanic inhabitants of the area during Milton's first millennium.

Milton and its surrounding villages and manors were listed in the Domesday Book (1086). The name Milton derives from Middletune, meaning middle farm. The Jutish or Saxon settlement was in the midst of other tuns, namely Barton, Wootton, Chewton and Becton. Milton is one of only a handful of Hampshire villages with a storehouse of mediaeval deeds.

Today, New Milton is made up of an interesting combination of rural and urban development. The periphery of the town is mainly given over to agriculture/horticulture and there are several agricultural contractors, but New Milton also has a history of light industry and has seen some successful national companies (like McCarthy & Stone, Parker Baths and Setmaster Ltd) start their business in our town. There are three industrial estates on the western side of town and other small industrial operations elsewhere on the periphery. New Milton offers space and facilities to attract other business to move to the area.

There is a busy town centre with a wide selection of retail outlets and service industries catering for the majority of the needs of the local



population. More recently, it has initiated a weekly street market that has proved very popular with local residents (Project 2). The population at the first census (1801) was a mere 522; now, over 200 years later, it has risen to just under 18,700 (23,753 including Barton-on-Sea).

Major expansion through house building activities took place during the 1980s and 1990s in particular, with many incomers choosing to retire in the New Forest area. This contributed to the current population imbalance with about 39% of the community in New Milton being retired. In addition, the transport infrastructure did not develop hand in hand with the construction activities, and consequently there are poor transport links for local residents unless they go by train or use private transport (Projects 11, 12, 13).

That said, the location of the town makes it an ideal base for discovering the central south coast; Bournemouth, Christchurch, the New Forest National Park, and the historic cities of Salisbury and Winchester are all within easy reach. New Milton is served by trains directly to and from London (Waterloo), Bournemouth and Southampton Airport. There are several local attractions such as Barton cliff tops and beach

along Marine Drive and Ballard Lake on the other side of town. Other popular attractions like Broadlands and Beaulieu are within a 30 minute drive of the town (Projects 9, 10).

New Milton boasts the world-renowned Chewton Glen Hotel, an internationally acclaimed 5 Crown Hotel with full conference facilities, lying on the western outskirts of the town and which attracts many prestigious visitors from all over the world. In addition to various small hotels and guest houses within the area, there are three holiday parks, Bashley Park to the north of the town, Naish Holiday Village on the western boundary and Stanley Holiday Centre on the north-eastern boundary.

With all this in mind, we believe that we have an infrastructure that could be used to promote our market town as a tourist destination. Through the development, funding, initiation and completion of the following projects, it is hoped to encourage visitors to stay longer in New Milton, its neighbours and surrounding areas thus improving facilities and quality of life in the hinterland. Such an initiative will benefit all the local community, from residents to local business (Projects 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10).

New Milton - Key Facts

New Milton covers an area of approximately 2110 hectares and comprises five wards: Milton, Fernhill, Barton, Becton and Bashley.

This section provides a summary of the key facts about New Milton; more detailed information can be found in Appendix I (New Milton Town Snapshots) and Appendix III (New Milton Town Healthcheck Reports).

Population

The present population of the parish of New Milton and Barton-on-Sea is 23,753 (18,697 excluding Barton), of which 95.8% comprises an urban population. This total is made up as follows:

| | |
|--------------|---------------|
| Barton | 5,056 |
| Bashley | 2,740 |
| Becton | 4,751 |
| Fernhill | 5,746 |
| Milton | 5,460 |
| Total | 23,753 |

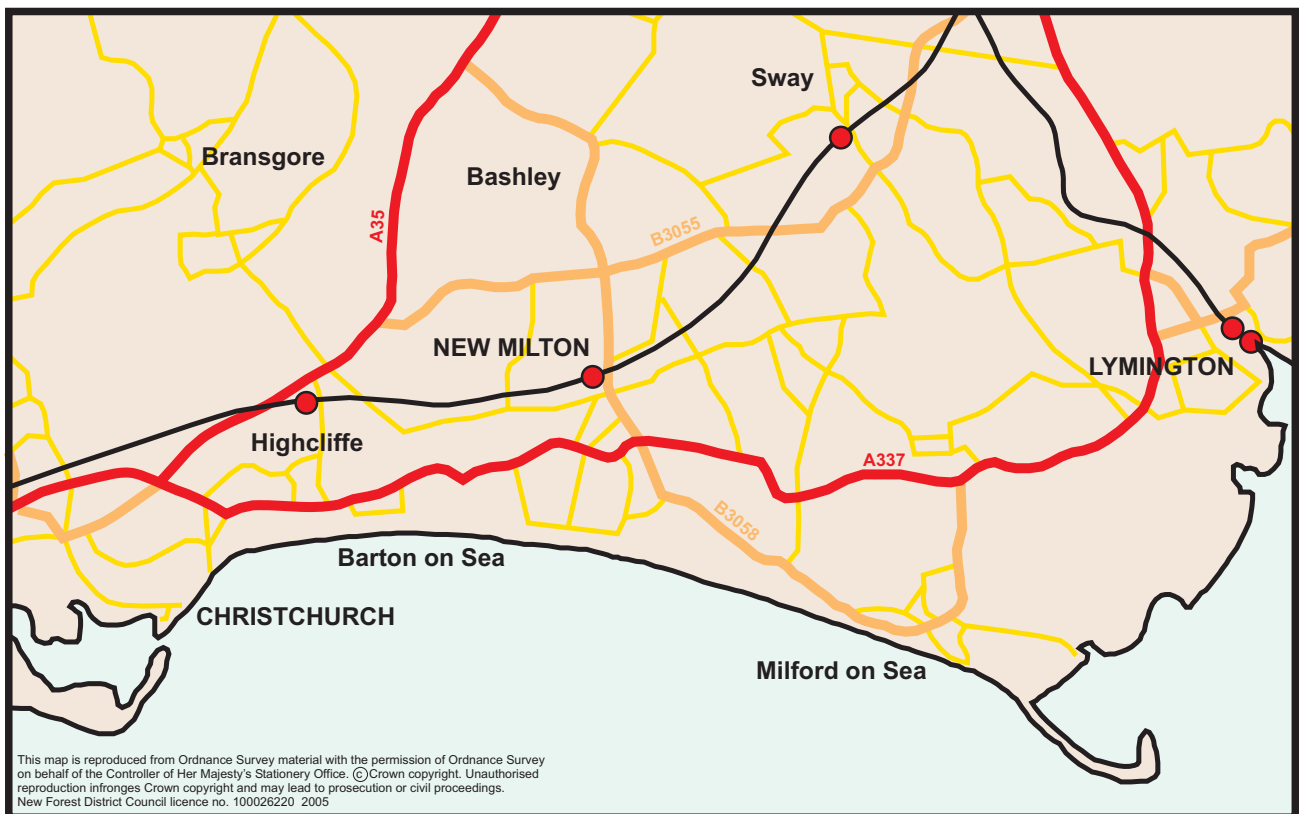
Source 2001 Census

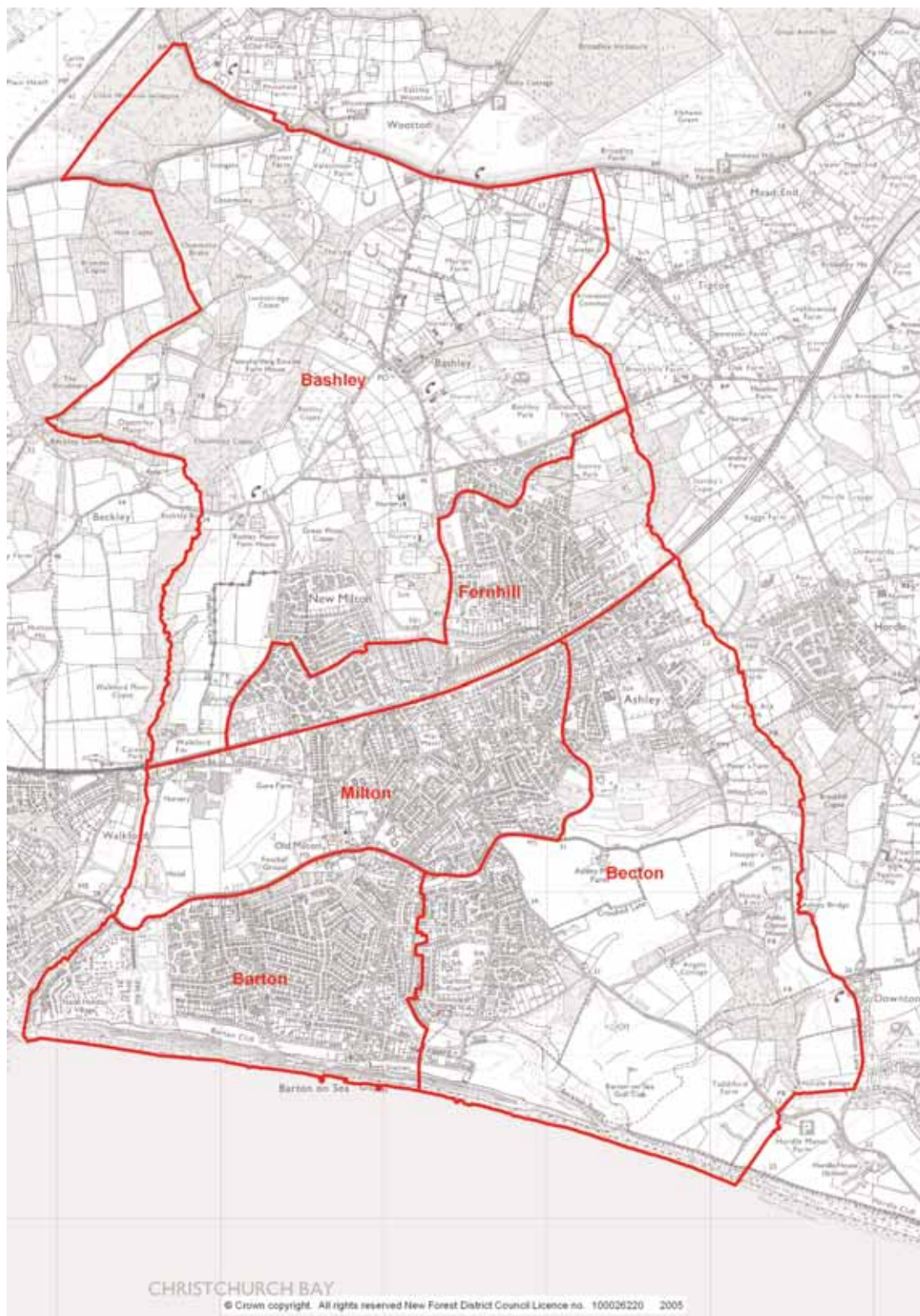
The total population of the New Forest is 172,735. *Source Mid Year Population Estimates 2003*

The town's population has been increasing by between 1.5% and 2% per year for the last 10 years and has grown by approximately 4000 in that time. However, community facilities and

infrastructure have not grown to match the population leading to public transportation difficulties for all, whether working or not, and to a lack of dynamism and vitality. With parts of the parish recording the highest levels of child poverty in the New Forest as well as high levels of unemployment, high rates and housing prices, certain sections of the community have been marginalised and excluded (Projects 16, 17, 19).

The percentage of the population of retirement age (over age 60) in New Milton is 39%, which is higher than the average for the New Forest which is 27.2% and significantly higher than the national average. This contrasts sharply with the population of New Milton below the age of 16 which represents just over 13.5% of the total population in the town. This figure is below the average for both the New Forest and the national average.





Housing

Lack of affordable housing is a considerable problem in New Milton; at the time of the Healthcheck in summer 2002, the lowest priced leasehold property available was £70,000 - the lowest freehold property was £100,000. The average house price was £234,277 (£183,990 for a semi-detached property) and the average price for a flat, £109,876 (Source: www.landreg.gov.uk), an increase of over 50% in a two year period.

Consequently, lack of starter homes is a big problem; however, there is much accommodation available for the elderly and this is exacerbating the population imbalance.

There is a significant level of second home and holiday home ownership in New Milton. In 2002 there were just over 400 second homes in the town, and this figure is the highest in the New Forest District (Lymington and Milford were second and third respectively).

Health & Public Safety

Hospitals: There are three health centres but no hospital in town. There is an ambulance station next to the police station and there are three community hospitals – Lymington, Milford and Ashurst – with the main hospitals being in Southampton, Bournemouth and Poole.

Fire Station: New Milton fire station is a 'D' class area which means that one unit should reach the scene within 20 minutes.

Police: There is a police station sited in Old Milton Road but it is only manned during daytime working hours (9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday). At other times, New Milton is served by Lymington Police Station.

Community Safety Officers:

There are two Community Safety Officers dedicated to New Milton and they work, in pairs, seven days in every fourteen on a variable rota: either 11.30-23.00 or 08.00-19.30.

There is a Community Safety Working Panel which has been set up by New Milton Town Council to specifically address Crime and Disorder issues and to work with existing agencies and organisations in order to reduce crime, youth nuisance and anti-social behaviour problems in the town and to thus support the New Milton Town Partnership in their work.

Schools

There are two infant and two junior schools in New Milton and some pupils attend Tiptoe school just outside the parish. There is one secondary school - Arnewood School 11 -18 Technology College - and two independent schools, Ballard and Durlston Court.

Sport & Leisure

Sport is relatively well catered for in New Milton with a Recreation Centre, swimming pool, cricket, football and rugby grounds, etc. However, there are gaps in provision e.g. hockey and table tennis.

There is no cinema as such in New Milton, the nearest being Christchurch or Lymington. However, Forest Arts has a theatre and facilities to show films which they do approximately five times a season, matinee and evening, giving fifteen different films and thirty showings per annum (Project 20).

There is one reasonably stocked library in the town centre, but it is a branch of the main library which is in Lymington.

Culture & Heritage

Although the town is relatively new, there are still some well-preserved buildings, of which over 50 are listed. Unfortunately, the town centre of New Milton was spoiled during the sixties and seventies by some unsympathetic development (Projects 7, 8).

New Milton is home to some unique sites including the internationally renowned fossil beds at Barton (Barton Cliffs are listed as a Site of Special Scientific Interest), and has a selection of landmarks, both natural and man-made (Projects 6, 9, 10).

The Healthcheck

The overall objectives of the Healthcheck process were to:

- obtain base line information and data about New Milton.
- identify the strengths and weaknesses of the town and its hinterland.
- and to provide a basis for creating an action plan.

This market town initiative kicked off with an open meeting that was held in March 2002 and was attended by over 60 people representing a wide range of business and community organisations in the town.

Methodology

The Healthcheck (see Appendix II) sought to gather information covering all aspects relating to the quality of life in New Milton and included both qualitative and quantitative findings. Vital to the quality of the Healthcheck was involvement by the wider community to ensure that all views were gathered and taken into account at each stage when putting together the Action Plan. Consultations were carried out with key stakeholders, hard-to-reach groups, hinterland communities such as Ashley and Barton-on-Sea and service providers to identify issues and solutions (and the potential for joint working practices). The process can be broken down as follows:

Stage 1

In March 2002 the New Milton Town Project Group was formed. This was made up of a partnership of local groups of people from within the community, representing the business, public and voluntary sectors active in New Milton. The aim was to create a focus for community-led action and ensure that all sectors of the New Milton community were committed to working together to secure a bright future for the town.

Stage 2

During March – December 2002, the Town Project Group signed up to the Countryside

Agency's 'Market Town Initiative' and carried out a 'Healthcheck' of New Milton, which brought together information in the form of a factual 'Snapshot' (see Appendix I) and 'Healthcheck Reports' (see Appendix II). Using the Countryside Agency's national 'Healthcheck' methodology, 23 volunteers spent six months during 2002 examining the current economic, social and environmental health of New Milton. The volunteers split into working groups around the themes of Economy, Transport & Accessibility, Environment and Social & Community.

Stage 3

In January 2003 a Town Project Officer was appointed to work with the Town Project Group to produce an Action Plan for New Milton. During the following months, the Town Project Group examined the strengths and weaknesses



of New Milton (SWOT analysis) based on the information discovered in the Healthcheck process.

The group then organised a public community consultation road show entitled 'Your Town, Your Say' which toured New Milton (see Appendix IV). A questionnaire was drawn up designed to test popular opinion on the key

issues that had emerged from the Healthcheck reports (see Appendix IV). Almost 900 people completed questionnaires about the town and the future for New Milton. Based on the results and information gained during this process, the Town Project Group worked on creating a long-term vision for the town.

It was also realised at this stage that more work needed to be done to engage young people in having a say in the future of their town. The project officer began work with the schools and youth service to get ideas and input from younger residents.

Stage 4

Having identified key issues of concern to local residents, the challenge was then to identify practical steps that could be taken to tackle these issues. Working in topic groups, the volunteers came up with a list of projects ideas. These ideas were investigated in more detail and work carried out to identify potential project partners and funding opportunities.

In November 2003 a draft Action Plan was drawn up, comprising 30 separate projects that local residents wanted to see happen in the town . A Town Project Open Day was organised to publicise the results of the public consultation, feature the models made by local schools and list the issues and project ideas that had been identified from the work so far. The event attracted 226 people with several expressing interest in joining the Town Project Group.

Stage 5

Having identified the projects designed to help improve the vitality of New Milton and the surrounding hinterland, projects were prioritised based on what could be achieved in the short, medium and long term. The projects are listed on page 27 and are shown as traffic lights, green for go ahead now, amber medium term and red requiring longer term partnership and resourcing.

Stage 5 is all about putting the plan into action, and already several projects are well underway.

Key Findings

The Healthcheck (see Appendix II) proved an invaluable starting point in helping the Town Project Group complete an audit of New Milton. Following this, the SWOT analysis, envisioning and community consultation work proved invaluable in helping us find out more about the community's perception of New Milton and also the community's aspirations.

The process has helped us to understand how our local community would like to see the development of the town in the short to medium term as well as identify some immediate improvements that could be quickly implemented to improve the quality of life in the town.

The key topic areas covered by this process were :

- Economy
- Environment
- Transport & Accessibility
- Social & Community

These followed the guidelines and question sheets set out in the Countryside Agency's Market Town Tool Kit. The group also decided to look at two other areas in more detail

- Young People
- Tourism

To find out more about the aspirations of young people a workshop event was organised and run by pupils at Arnewood School. In addition Planning For Real work was carried out at New Milton and Ashley Junior Schools (see Appendix VI).

Tourism was identified as an issue in the Healthcheck and SWOT analysis. The Town Project group thought it important to find out from the local tourism sector what they felt were the key tourism issues facing the town and engaged the support of Tourism South East to help achieve this end (see page 37 and Appendix VII).



Economy

- Employment

A lack of a diverse range of skilled jobs locally has led to an outflow of qualified workforce from the area. There is also a lack of childcare facilities and this was identified as a key factor in preventing parents from returning to work (**Projects 1, 4, 5**).

- Retail & Town Centre

The retail centre of the town does not meet the needs of all sectors of the community, particularly the younger consumers. There is a disproportionately high number of charity shops which negatively affects the 'image' of the town, and the town centre shuts down completely at night as there is a lack of leisure and entertainment facilities, particularly for the youth and families. A large number of respondents favoured a weekly market in New Milton (**Projects 2, 19, 23, 24, 25, 28**).

- Commercial & Industrial Property Needs

There is a shortage of available industrial space for both start-up businesses as well as existing businesses; available land for expansion is strictly limited with just 4.9ha

available for industrial or business use. This creates problems for successful businesses who find it difficult to expand, and has led to some total relocation.

The appearance of much of the commercial property looks old and tired and would require substantial reinvestment to regain the image that should be promoted. Retail and commercial rents, however, are competitive (**Project 4**).

- Business Support

There is a general lack of support for small businesses in New Milton and there is neither an operative base for business support services nor a Chamber of Commerce, which has had to close owing to lack of support (**Project 4**). Broadband take up has been low in the area.

Environment

- Town Entrance Points

It was felt that significant improvements needed to be made to the key entrance points into the parish, eg tree planting at Gore Road and environmental improvement to the station yard. Links between the town centre and the surrounding countryside are poor; signage, both within the town to venues such as Forest Arts, and to attractions on the doorstep, such as Barton is exceptionally poor; there is considerable support to improve cycle and footpath links (**Projects 6, 7**).

- Insensitive Development

Insensitive, high-density development has eroded much of the character of New Milton. The town centre itself, although containing some fine period buildings, has been spoiled during the 1960s and 1970s by unsympathetic development. The survey showed strong support for protecting, retaining and improving the character areas of the town (**Project 8**).

- Outdated Town Centre

The general consensus was that the appearance of the main shopping street in the town centre was both tired and dated, with



poor pavements and access, and a lack of cohesion in street furniture etc. Upgrading of street furniture would be highly desirable, as would replacement of pavements and a little refurbishment of some of the original buildings on the Western side of Station Road (**Project 7**).

- Barton Sea Front

Public opinion felt that Barton Sea Front was run down and failed to maximise its potential as a key amenity asset for the town. Barton Cliffs are of archaeological importance, hence their SSSI designation, and this should be capitalised upon (**Projects 9, 20**).

- Ballard Water Meadows

Ballard Lake and Water Meadows were identified as a key environmental asset, which should be protected and enhanced for the benefit of the community and tourists (**Project 10**).

Transport & Accessibility

- Traffic Congestion

Traffic flow in New Milton was one of the key issues highlighted in the survey. A number of

junctions and bottlenecks (eg Station Road, Old Milton Road, Gore Road and Spencer Road) were identified. There is also a need to identify and signpost routes for different road users, eg heavy commercial vehicles and cycle routes (**Project 11**).

- Transport Information

There is a need to improve information about public transport which is currently fragmented. It was generally felt that the town would benefit from a single source of readily accessible information relating to all forms of public transport, including phone numbers, to help people plan their journeys (**Project 12**).

- Transport Integration

A lack of co-ordination between the different transport providers in and around New Milton was identified. There is a need to synchronise bus and train times to create a fully integrated transport system (**Project 13**).

- Car Parking

Another key issue for residents is a need to review parking times for the spaces in existing car parks and key roads, as well as to create more parking spaces (or make better use of existing spaces and the viability of park and ride schemes). A need to review the number and location of parking spaces for the disabled was also identified (**Project 14**).

- Pedestrians

Several poor crossing points were identified (eg the central traffic lights at the Ashley Road/Old Milton Road/Station Road junction where the pedestrian phase of the lights is slow, Arnewood Medical Centre and Ashley Crossroads). Many pavements are uneven and there is a lack of access/crossing points especially for the elderly and disabled. In addition, there is a need for better signage of facilities in and around town, eg library, toilets, council offices, recreation ground and bus terminal. Our survey showed support for a pedestrianisation scheme for Station Road (**Projects 7, 15**).

Social & Community

- Population

A high proportion of the population is of retirement age and this has resulted in an emphasis in services and facilities which cater for this age group. There are not enough low cost facilities for young people in the town. There are also pockets of deprivation whose needs require proper identification (**Projects 17, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28**).

- Housing

Local housing is very expensive with high levels of second home ownership leading to a lack of affordable housing in New Milton. A 2001 survey within the New Forest District concluded that household income needed to be £30,000 pa to buy and £20,000 to rent; however, 68% of household incomes in New Milton are under £30,000 (47% under £20,000). There is no provision specifically to meet the housing needs of the younger community.

- Community Buildings

Some of the buildings are in a poor state of repair, or out of date, and do not meet the needs of all sectors of the community; there is no Community Centre as such although there is a Community Association (membership only) and a Memorial Hall (**Project 16**).

- Sport & Leisure

Most sports are well catered for in New



Milton but there are some exceptions, eg table tennis and hockey. The 'Rec' (the Recreation Ground) which is a key central open space in New Milton, would benefit from a facelift (**Projects 18, 24**).

- Crime

Crime statistics are low based on national statistics but in the context of the New Forest, New Milton is near the top of the crime figures. Our survey indicated that most people felt that crime was a key issue for the town, not helped by the fact that New Milton Police Station is only manned during the day time. A number of respondents favoured introduction of CCTV to try and help reduce vandalism and graffiti (**Project 26**).

- Key Services

There is a lack of provision of many key services, eg job centres, for residents of New Milton, who are forced to travel outside the parish to access these services. Although the Healthcheck did not highlight any particular issues about healthcare services, the survey results suggest that not all residents are happy with the level of healthcare – there is an issue of access to NHS dental services across the New Forest and hospital services are all located outside the parish, making access difficult without private transport (**Projects 17, 19**).

- Community Spirit

Although there are a lot of active community organisations in New Milton, it was widely felt that there was a need to promote a greater sense of pride and community spirit in New Milton (**Projects 7, 16, 27**).

- Entertainment

With the exception of Forest Arts and a few pubs and restaurants, the town centre shuts down at night due to the lack of entertainment and leisure facilities, and the need for a cinema or similar facility was one of the most commonly made observations in our survey (**Projects 20, 25**).

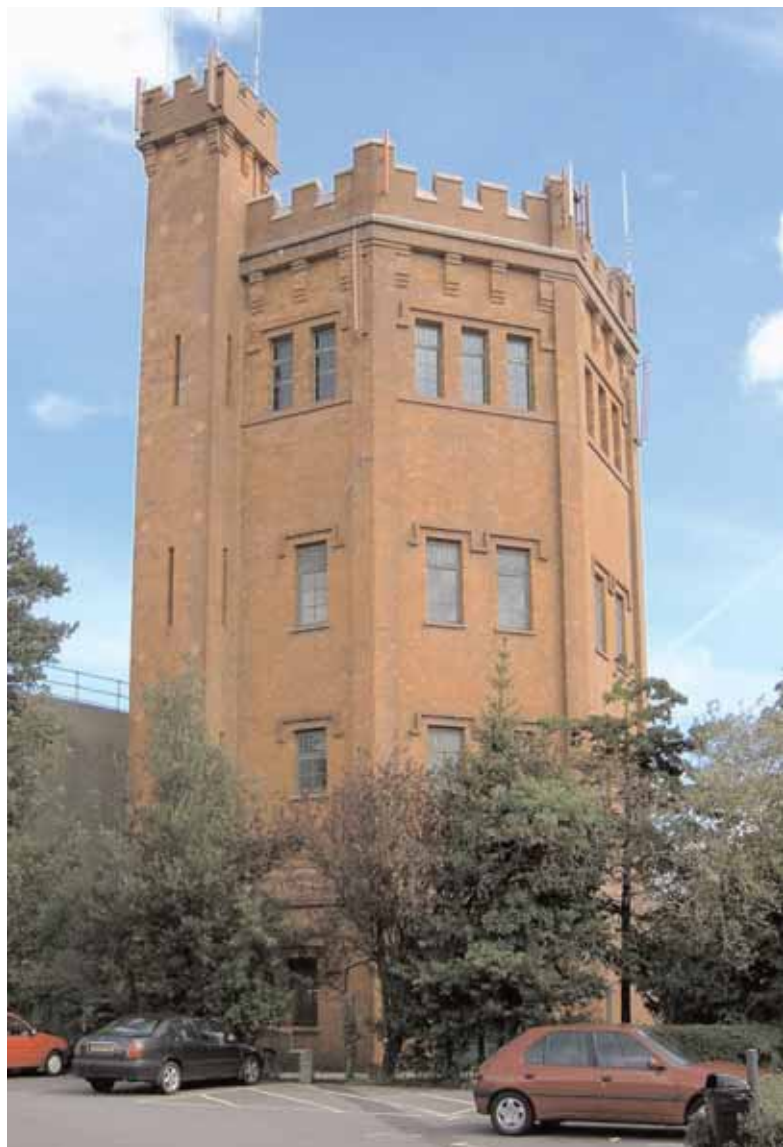
Young People

- Entertainment & Leisure
Children complained about the lack of things to do and a lack of evening entertainment (**Projects 25, 27, 28, 29**).
- Retail & Town Centre
There is a lack of appropriate shopping for the young people and it was felt that the existing shops should be more 'young people' friendly (**Project 23**).
- Sports Facilities
A need for more accessible and affordable sports facilities was identified (**Project 24**).
- Services
A focus for young people's services (eg advice on careers, personal issues, etc) should be established (**Project 27**).
- Personal Safety
Issues such as bullying were of concern (**Project 26**).
- Recreational Facilities
It was felt that there was a lack of stimulating places to play across the parish (**Project 28**).

Tourism

New Milton does not have either the quaint feel or character of a traditional New Forest market town. It is, however, a service centre and gateway for both staying and day visitors. The real challenge is to direct visitors from the service hub to the coastal part of the town and hinterland, specifically Barton-on-Sea. There is real opportunity to develop the tourism product along the seafront, targeting niche markets; water and wind sports enthusiasts, palaeontologists, walkers, cyclists, etc. The Town and hinterland also act as a natural gateway into the New Forest and provide a great base for both staying and day visitors; this could be further exploited.

- Information and Signage. Poor signage and information throughout the town at key access points; the railway station, car parks



and the high street would benefit from such improvements (see Project 6, details in Appendix X).

- Visitor Information Centre. There has been informal provision of visitor information but this was not an adequate service.
- Accommodation. There is adequate accommodation provision, but this needs to be better packaged with things to see and do in order to lengthen the visitor stay.

Analysis of Health Check Findings

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis is a method for describing a proposition in terms of those factors that have the most impact. Completing a SWOT analysis helps to identify ways to minimise the effect of the town's weaknesses whilst maximising its strengths.

A Town Project Meeting and Visioning Workshop was held on 26 February 2003. The workshop style session, facilitated by the Town Project Officer and attended by 25 people, concentrated on undertaking the SWOT analysis and developing a vision for the town.

The results of the SWOT analysis can be broken down as follows (fuller details can be found in Appendix IV):

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|--|--|
| Shopping centre (independence, variety) Mainline railway Location between South Coast & New Forest Sports facilities Environmental features e.g. Barton cliffs Active voluntary sector Accommodation supply and visitor attractions (natural and built) Forest Arts' full professional programme of shows | Insensitive development (7, 8) Poor traffic flow (11) Car parking (14) Lack of services for young people (23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 30) Lack of Town Centre entertainment (20) No focal point for town (2, 7, 17) Deprived communities within the parish (17, 19, 27) Low proportion of industries in growth sectors (4) Lack of affordable housing Poor image for town centre - tired, dated (2, 4, 6, 7, 8) |
| Opportunities | Threats |
| Tourism (2, 3, 4, 5, 6) Technology (4) Expand retail services (eg street market) (2, 4) Involve young people in developing and improving services, eg cinema (20, 23, 25) Develop/improve station area Town Plan Group and Chamber of Commerce New Forest National Park Develop young people's fora at Forest Arts Barton-on-Sea | Coastal erosion Population pressures Strain on infrastructure Cost of living vs low wage economy 'Brain Drain' (working population moving out of New Milton) Traffic congestion Nuisance crime/drug abuse New Forest National Park |

The Vision

It is vital to have a vision for a number of reasons, not least because it sets out the direction for the project and guides future action; it expresses a collective desire and identifies desirable change. Following the analysis of New Milton's strengths and weaknesses in March 2003, the Town Project Group worked on a long-term vision for the town. The visioning process for New Milton gathered ideas and information from worksheets and from this the Committee brainstormed some key words to develop a vision statement.

'To build an inclusive community with a vibrant economy, where it is good to live, work, visit and invest'.

The overall vision for our town is that;

By 2015, New Milton will realise its full potential as a vital and vibrant town, meeting the needs of both residents and local business, and as a strategic visitor gateway for the New Forest and the South Coast.

Within the overall vision, the Action Plan for New Milton is designed to achieve:

- Ensuring a vibrant and attractive town centre at the hub of the communities of Milton, Ashley, Barton, Fernhill and Bashley.
- Meeting the needs of people of all ages and abilities within the community for education, entertainment, health, housing, jobs, social and training opportunities.
- Ensuring a town which promotes a flourishing commercial sector and integrated mix of services at all times that is friendly for residents and visitors alike, whilst remaining sympathetic to the area's coastal and forest environment.
- A well-maintained infrastructure to provide a clean, safe environment in both town and countryside which residents and visitors can enjoy.
- The development of New Milton as a centre of excellence for Sports, Arts & Crafts, Information Services and Local Governance.

Strategic Aims & Objectives

Key to the success of the Action Plan is the development of a strong, and inclusive, partnership to promote New Milton and to deliver the projects identified in the Action Plan.

Based on the information and key findings that had been gathered during the Healthcheck process, an agreed set of strategic aims were formulated. These provided the focus around which the individual projects were clustered:

- Develop & Support the Local Economy
- Improve & Protect the Environment
- Improve and promote Transport & Accessibility
- Improve Recreational, Social and Cultural Amenities
- Meet the Needs of Young People

A major Project (Projects 2-6) has been developed which will have a profound impact upon all aspects of the Strategic Aims and Objectives. The Streetscape Project, Phase I of which is about to commence, will, in its completion, fundamentally underpin the Vision and will provide the foundations on which to build a vibrant and inclusive town. The Streetscape, whilst outlined primarily under the Environmental section, encompasses also Economy, Tourism, Transport and Accessibility, and will help improve Recreational, Social and Cultural Amenities and, through all this, will help meet the needs of young people.

Develop & Support the Local Economy

Aim: To support the local economy so as to provide opportunities for local businesses, including national and international companies represented locally, to thrive and provide a good range of local job opportunities, whilst minimising the growth pressures in New Milton (eg housing, infrastructure).

Objectives: Establish full time, day care nursery to enable parents to return to work/study. (Project 1)
Establish a weekly street market to invigorate the local economy and increase footfall in the town

centre. (Project 2)

Compile an annual events programme to bring the local community together and to attract visitors. (Project 3)

Re-brand New Milton to attract a wider diversity of businesses (industrial and retail) and create more local job opportunities. (Project 4) The major Streetscape Project will revitalise and update the tired appearance of Station Road.

Establish a training opportunity scheme to offer employment, training, new skills and qualifications. (Project 5)

Improve visitor information and signage throughout the town (Project 6)

Improve & Protect the Environment

Aim: To develop and maintain New Milton's natural, historical and architectural heritage by ensuring that new developments respect the character and history of the area and meet the needs of the local community.

Objectives: Commission a Streetscape Plan for New Milton to improve the appearance and accessibility of the town centre. (Project 7)

Produce a Town Design Statement to influence new development in New Milton and protect historic and character buildings in the town, and ensure that the impact on the environment will be an important consideration in every planning decision. (Project 8)

Develop, improve and protect Barton Sea Front and the clifftops. (Project 9)

Protect and enhance Ballard Lake and Water Meadows. (Project 10)

Improve Transport & Accessibility

Aim: To provide for the transport needs

of New Milton reducing the dependence on private transport and making the town more accessible to both residents and visitors.

Objectives: Develop an integrated traffic flow and accessibility plan. (Project 11)

Provide a source of readily accessible transport information. (Project 12)

Establish a Transport Forum to improve public transport integration. (Project 13)

Develop an integrated parking management plan. (Project 14)

Improve pedestrian access to the town, especially for the elderly and disabled. (Project 15)

Improve Recreational, Social and Cultural Amenities

Aim: To develop New Milton as a vibrant town that offers a good range of conveniently located shopping, leisure and community amenities appropriate to their needs for all local residents and visitors to enjoy.

Objectives: Provide an open Community Centre that co-ordinates existing facilities and services to ensure they are meeting the needs of all sectors of the community and widen service provision. (Project 16)

Undertake intensive 'community capacity' building work on key housing estates in New Milton to rebuild their communities and help find solutions to local problems. (Project 17)

Redesign the existing recreation ground to increase its utilisation and meet the needs of all members of the community. (Project 18)

Provide video conferencing facilities in the Town Hall enabling

members of the community to access key services such as employment and benefit advice locally. (Project 19)

Provide a regular cinema/film venue in town, accessible to all. (Project 20)

Improve information flow about the town and community activities by providing signage e.g. town map, information and environmental notice boards, highway signage. (Project 21)

Meet the Needs of Young People

Aim: To improve recreational and social opportunities for young people and to encourage them to remain in and contribute to the community.

Objectives: Work with young people to produce a teen magazine written by, and for, young people to develop a wide range of skills, eg writing, computer skills, fund raising. (Project 22)

Develop a local facility to enable young people to purchase, sell or swap designer clothing and goods. (Project 23)

Develop a system to provide low-cost access to sporting facilities thereby widening access to more young members of the community. (Project 24)

Establish a central 'drop in' facility (with evening provision) offering low-cost refreshments

and access to information and advice. (Project 25)

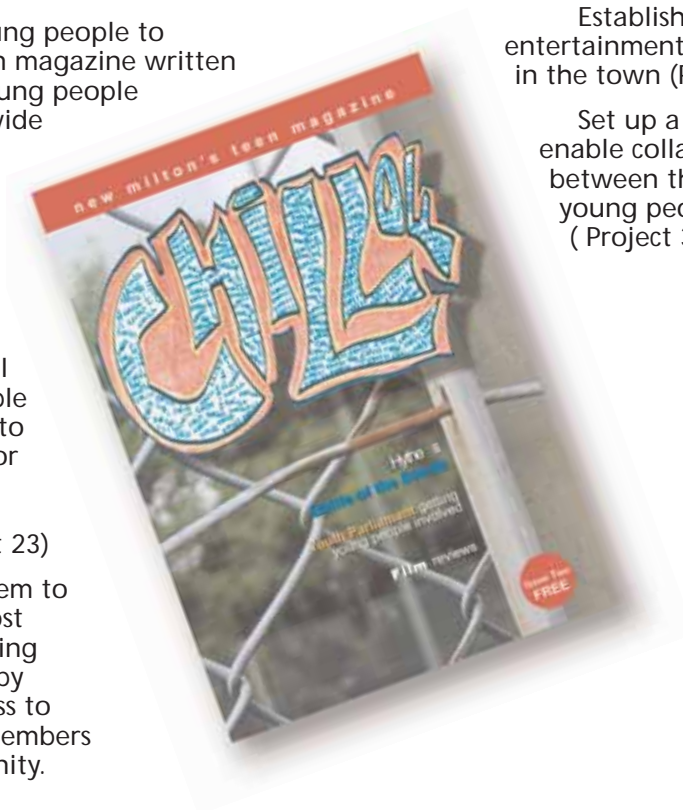
Offer targeted sessions on personal safety concentrating on issues such as bullying and developing confidence and self-esteem. (Project 26)

Establish a Family Centre run by, and for, families in New Milton providing supportive learning space for adults and children to run a range of social, creative and personal projects. (Project 27)

Develop and implement a long-term programme to increase and improve opportunities and places to play throughout New Milton for children of all ages. (Project 28)

Establish a programme of entertainment for young people in the town (Project 29)

Set up a Youth forum to enable collaboration between those working with young people in the parish (Project 30).



Community Involvement

New Milton has a diverse community and the Town Project Group went to great lengths to ensure that a wide range of groups was not only consulted during the Healthcheck process, but that these groups should have the opportunity to participate in any decisions that are made, both now and in the future.

A number of events took place during 2003 to ensure that representation and feedback from key community groups were obtained and documented. These events fell into three broad categories:

- General
- Young People
- The Business Community

General

'Your Town, Your Say' Survey

During the period March – December 2002, the Town Project Group carried out a Healthcheck of New Milton which brought together information on the four key issues in the town. The results of the Healthcheck were gathered from extensive research based on the recommended questions by the Countryside Agency's Healthcheck guide and surveys from the local community.

In response to the findings of the Healthcheck, a questionnaire was designed and printed to gather broad opinion on the identified key issues. This was sponsored by Mitchell's Estate Agency, and entitled 'Your Town, Your Say'. The questionnaire was distributed in a variety of ways. It was printed in the local paper 'The New Milton Advertiser', sent out via pupils at Arnewood school and volunteers ran stalls at 5 local community events during the summer. In addition there were strategic collection points throughout the town including points at Ashley and Bashley. To encourage a good response a £50 prize was offered. A considerable amount of publicity was given to the project through the local press, Roadshow Events and a window display in the temporary Visitor Centre right in the centre of town.

There were 15 ways by which the questionnaires could be returned, the most popular being via the local supermarkets (22%), Arnewood School (17%), Road show Events (12%) and by post (11.5%). (A full copy of the questionnaire and the results from the survey can be found in Appendix V.) People were also able to email their responses as the questionnaire was featured on the web site www.newmilton.info.

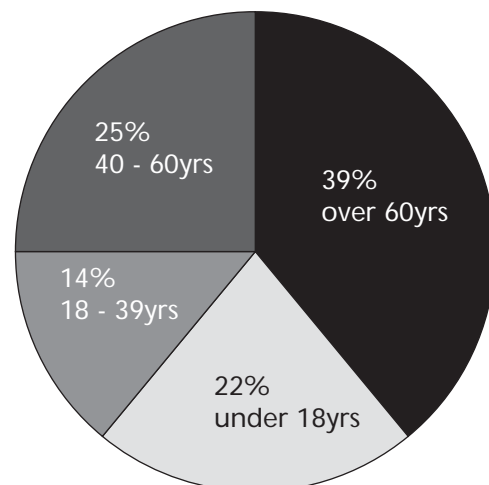
The Results

Almost 900 people responded to the survey providing a cross section of age groups. The combined responses provided a summary of their likes and dislikes about New Milton.

The results were collated by volunteers and entered onto an Excel spreadsheet. This enabled full analysis of the structured questions 1 – 36.

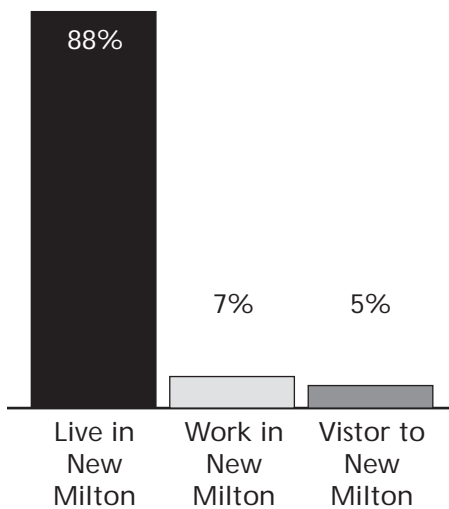
Many people also took the opportunity to write further comments. These proved more difficult to analyse but were recorded and helped to identify some of the 'hot issues' that people felt very strongly about.

The pie chart provides a breakdown by age category of respondents and shows that a reasonable cross section of age groups within the community was achieved.



Questionnaire respondents by age category

Key to ensuring the questionnaire's validity as a representative view of the community was the type of respondents. As can be seen from the diagram below, the majority of respondents lived in New Milton, with only a small percentage representing visitors to, or those who work in, the town.



Type of respondents

Open Day Event

The Your Town Your Say surveys were collected by the end of July 2003. It took a further 3 months to collate all the data and get the results into publishable form. A Town Project Open Day was organised for Saturday 15th November 2003 to publicise the results of the questionnaire survey, show other work that had been taking place with the schools and involve those people who had expressed an interest in the project throughout the consultation period.

Displays were put together by the graphic team at NFDC and the schools put on show the large scale models they had made of parts of the town. Members of the Town Project Group were on hand to talk to people and collect their ideas and views about the work that had been carried out so far.

The event attracted 226 people with several expressing interest in joining the Town Project Group.

Reaching Other Groups

Other market towns have found groups such as older people and younger people harder to reach for their Healthcheck. In light of this, we went to great lengths to make the 'Your Town, Your Say' survey available to these particular sectors of the community, as well as those with physical disabilities.

The Town Project Officer consulted the following groups amongst others:

Arnewood, Durlston Court, Ashley Junior, New Milton Infants' and Junior Schools

Ashley Baptist, New Life, Churches, Parochial Church Council

Barton & District Business & Professional Women, Women's Institute

Disabled Groups and Clubs

Children & Families Forum and other Children's



and families groups, pre-schools

Community First

Dial a Ride

Forest Arts

Hampshire Constabulary

Hampshire County Youth Service Youth Centre

Jubilee Fund, Lions, Rotary and New Milton
Probus Clubs

Local hotels and restaurants

Local shops, banks, solicitors & businesses

New Milton & District Chamber of Commerce

New Milton Community & Residents Associations

New Milton District Guide Association

New Milton Memorial Centre

New Milton Recreation Centre

Participatory Needs Assessment

Sports Organisations such as Rugby club

St. John's Ambulance

The Labour Party

The questionnaire was also promoted via the web site with an email option through which we had 22 (3%) responses.

Young People

Schools 'In your Neighbourhood' Project

This was a joint project run by Ashley Infants School and New Milton Junior School, funded by a £5,000 BT Schools Award enabling them to buy ICT equipment which would be of use for the

project and would also benefit the school as a whole.

Two classes of Year 5 pupils initially kick-started the project in June 2003 (approximately 60 pupils). Working with Community Action Hampshire, the Play Development Officer from the District Council and the New Milton Town Project Officer, the pupils carried out survey work and constructed a large scale model of the neighbourhood around their school using the 'Planning for Real' methodology. The idea of the model was to provide a tool for people to comment on what they liked and disliked about the local area.

Having made the model, the pupils also designed posters to advertise a consultation event, 'Planning for Real', for the local community, set to coincide with the school summer fair on 5 July 2003. In preparation for the event, pupils worked with a market researcher from Southampton University to design a questionnaire.

The consultation event was a great success with 100 questionnaires completed. Year 6 took up the task of analysing the results and preparing a presentation which included video links to show in 'real life' what people liked and disliked about the local area.

Pupils from Ashley school presented their work to the Town Mayor, chairman of the Town partnership and the Town Project Officer in June 2004.

Youth Workshop

The Town Project Officer organised an open meeting for all those involved with working with young people in New Milton. Young people from Arnewood also attended. The discussion centred



on how best to get the views from young people about the future of New Milton. The clear message was that any initiative should be set up and run by young people themselves.

The Town Project Officer worked with 6 pupils from Arnewood school to organise a day long workshop event aimed at gathering the views of 9-11 year olds attending the three local junior schools

The workshop was held on 6 October 2003: 50 young people took part and six pupils from Arnewood ran the event. The day was structured into three workshop sessions which looked in



detail at three different geographical areas of the Town; the shopping centre, recreation ground and centre of Ashley. Models and maps of these areas were available to aid discussion in the working groups. Pupils were asked to identify places they liked and disliked and come up with ideas for improving the areas they didn't like.

The results of the workshop can be found in Appendix VI.

Business

Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber of Commerce, which was set up in April 2003, held a number of events at which the project (and the survey) was promoted.

Business in the Community (BiTC) programme

New Milton is one of only six towns in the South East to have been chosen to take part in a new BiTC programme which aims to explore how businesses can play a part in the regeneration of market towns.

With the help of BiTC and led by Gary Day of McCarthy & Stone, we held a 'Seeing is Believing' visit on 27 May 2004, that was designed to complement and develop the ideas that came from the Healthcheck. The aim of the event was to bring together a group of local decision-makers from a range of organisations to produce a clear, simple vision of New Milton's future from a business perspective. It presented an opportunity to get feedback on their needs as businesses in New Milton, as well as their support.

Market Town Mystery Visitor Town Evaluation

Prepared by external consultants on behalf of Tourism South East and New Milton Town Council, the exercise was designed to be an objective evaluation of how New Milton might appear to a visitor experiencing the town for the first time. It measured the range of facilities that a visitor might wish to use during their stay and the value for money they represented.

Data collected was both quantitative and qualitative, using a detailed checklist. A full copy of the report can be found in Appendix VII.

Tourism Workshop

A Tourism South East Workshop targeting local stakeholders was held at the Chewton Glen Hotel on 18 March 2004 to discuss the findings of the mystery visitor town audit and to bring together people running tourism businesses in the town. It sought to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and to develop a tourism vision and action plan. As a result of the workshop, those present formed into the New Milton Community Tourism Group to take forward tourism related projects using the Tourism Guidance Notes for direction and linking in with the wider Town Action Plan (see Appendix VII).

The Action Plan

The objective of the Action Plan document is to summarise the key issues identified in the Healthcheck reports and the 'Your Town, Your Say' survey, and to articulate the vision and strategic aims and objectives of the New Milton Town Partnership.

The Action Plan, to be implemented over the next ten years, contains outlines for a variety of projects needed to secure a thriving and sustainable future for New Milton. It forms a document which all project partners can sign up to, setting out a clear direction for the future work of the Partnership.

This document is primarily for members of the Partnership as well as for funding bodies (HCC, NFDC, NMTC, SEEDA etc) and potential sponsors (by way of funding or skills and expertise) of the projects. A copy will be held in the Town Hall and New Milton Library and is available to the general public to view, but there is also a summary document available for local residents.

Methodology

In order to develop our Action Plan, the results of the feedback and questionnaires were analysed at length. Although there were hundreds of comments and ideas from respondents, some key issues frequently emerged.

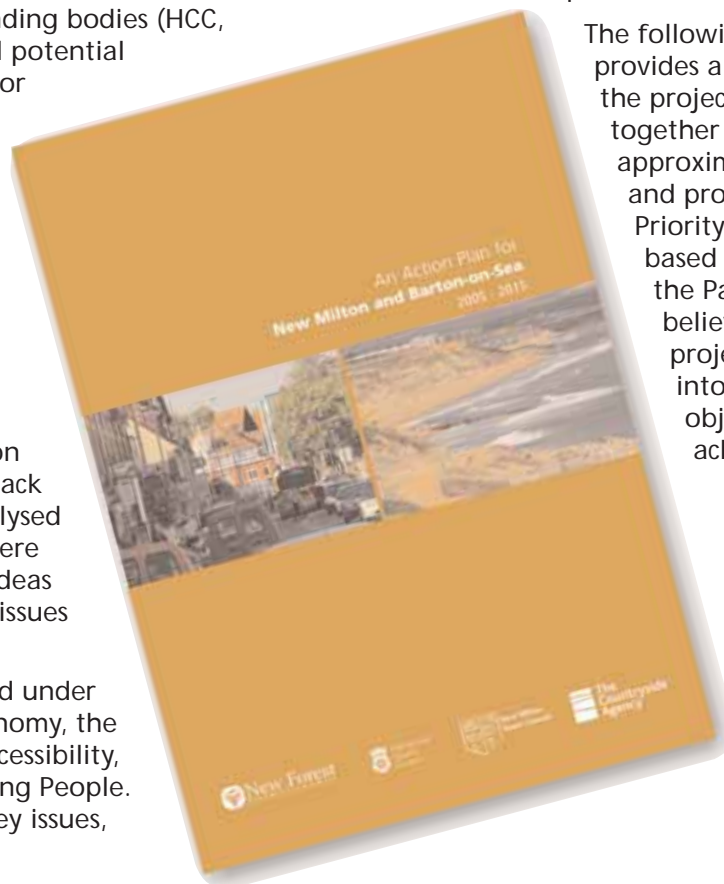
The working groups reformed under the five key areas of the Economy, the Environment, Transport & Accessibility, Social & Community and Young People. Each group considered the key issues,

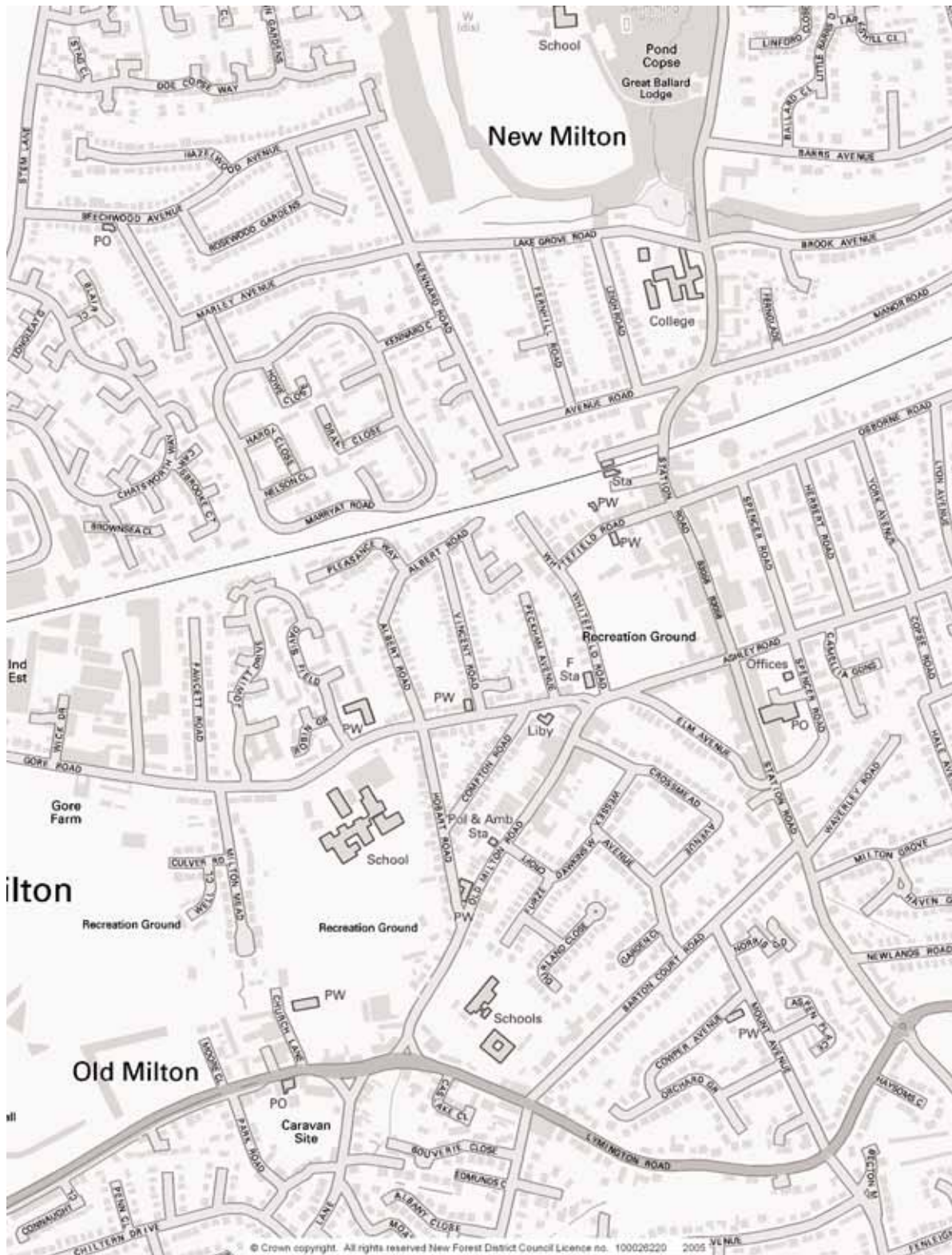
identified potential actions to tackle these issues and refined these to project proposals. A list of 30 projects (see Project List Summary overleaf) were identified.

The projects were designed to address all the issues that had been identified and to ensure that the strategic aims and objectives of the Action Plan are achieved.

Sub Groups (see Appendix VIII) and champions for each project, wherever possible, were appointed. It was recognised that it will be crucial to deliver some quick wins to engage local community support and so the projects were also prioritised.

The following table provides a summary list of the projects proposed, together with approximate timescales and project leaders. Priority has been set based on how quickly the Partnership believes that these projects can be put into motion and its objectives achieved.





Project List Summary

| Project No | Area of Interest | Project Name | Priority | Project Phase |
|------------|--------------------|--|----------|---------------|
| 1 | Economy | New Milton Children's Day Nursery | 1 | Active |
| 2 | Economy/Tourism | Weekly Street Market / Occasional Farmers Market | 1 | Active |
| 3 | Economy/Tourism | Annual Events Programme | 1 | Active |
| 4 | Economy/Tourism | Marketing and Business Support Project | 1 | Concept |
| 5 | Economy/Tourism | Training Opportunity Scheme | 3 | Concept |
| 6 | Economy /Tourism | Visitor Information Points & Signage | 2 | Feasibility |
| 7 | Environment | Town Centre Streetscape Plan and Feasibility Study | 2 | Active |
| 8 | Environment | New Milton Town Design Statement | 1 | Active |
| 9 | Environment | Barton Sea Front Environmental Improvement Scheme | 2 | Concept |
| 10 | Environment | Ballard Water Meadows | 2 | Concept |
| 11 | Transport | Congestion and Traffic Flow | 1 | Active |
| 12 | Transport | Transport Information | 1 | Active |
| 13 | Transport | Transport Integration | 3 | Concept |
| 14 | Transport | Car Parking | 2 | Concept |
| 15 | Transport | Pedestrians | 2 | Concept |
| 16 | Social & Community | Centres for the Community | 1 | Feasibility |
| 17 | Social & Community | Inclusive Communities | 2 | Active |
| 18 | Social & Community | REC'creation | 2 | Concept |
| 19 | Social & Community | Telly Talk | 1 | Active |
| 20 | Social & Community | The Milton Movies | 2 | Feasibility |
| 21 | Social & Community | NOTICE New Milton | 1 | Feasibility |
| 22 | Young People | Chill Magazine | 1 | Active |
| 23 | Young People | Young Peoples Swap Shop | 3 | Concept |
| 24 | Young People | Target Sport | 3 | Concept |
| 25 | Young People | The Caff | 3 | Concept |
| 26 | Young People | Personal Safety | 3 | Concept |
| 27 | Young People | Family Centre/Youth Annexe/Detached Youth Team | 2 | Active |
| 28 | Young People | Places to Play | 1 | Active |
| 29 | Young People | D.I.S.C.O. | 2 | Active |
| 30 | Young People | New Milton Play and Youth Forum | 1 | Active |

Denotes Short Term (within one year)
 Denotes Medium Term (two to three years)
 Denotes Long Term (more than three years)

Project Details

Economy

1. New Milton Children's Day Nursery

To establish an all day nursery in New Milton to enable working parents to have access to full time professional nursery based childcare.

To create employment and training opportunities in the childcare sector and enable parents to return to work or study.

2. Weekly Street Market / Occasional Farmers' Market



To establish a weekly street market in South Station Road, which would be run by market operators, and overseen by New Milton Town Council.

In addition, to work with Hampshire Farmers' Markets to establish a programme of Farmers' Markets in New Milton, starting with two scheduled for 2004.

3. Annual Events Programme

To compile an annual events programme that would communicate details of all events happening in the local area throughout the year. This would be attractively presented and would be distributed widely to holiday sites and TICs Hampshire-wide. The aim is to co-ordinate activities in New Milton to help raise its visitor profile, as well as giving locals better information about local events and activities.

4. Marketing & Business Support Project

To 're-brand' New Milton to attract a wider range and diversity of businesses, both retail and industrial, to widen the economic base and create more local job opportunities. There are two elements to the project:

To provide accessible information and effective marketing tools to sell New Milton as a destination to the wider business community, eg a web-based information site about local business opportunities

To provide support for fledgling businesses, eg young enterprise. Practical support might include grants, rate reductions and a mentoring scheme.

5. Training Opportunity Scheme

To establish a local training brokerage scheme to offer employment, training, new skills and qualifications to:

- School leavers
- Unemployed
- People wanting re-training.

The scheme would offer 'on the job' training through practical work experience, concentrating on local trades and skills needed.

6. Visitor Information and Signage Project

To install Visitor Information Points at key areas in the town e.g. Barton Cliffs and improve signage throughout the town.

Environment

7. Town Centre Streetscape Plan & Feasibility Study

To employ design consultants to come up with landscape design plans to set out possible streetscape options for Station Road, New Milton. To obtain funding and undertake a programme of physical improvements to the town centre.

8. New Milton Town Design Statement

To produce a Town Design Statement that sets out guidance on design details, densities etc, to influence new development proposed in New Milton parish, and to get it adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance, and, in addition, to influence the Local Plan .

9. Barton Sea Front Environmental Improvement Scheme

To implement plans for improvements to Naish Farm and Barton on Sea. These improvement plans include:

- Improved access to beach
- Environmental improvements to cliff top
- Develop interpretation panels (fossils, military history), information points and amenity facilities (improved toilets etc)
- Extending the Solent Way – long distance trail from Milford on Sea along the sea front to link through to Dorset
- Improve the beach area for amenity users and increase stability of the cliffs.
- Planting and landscaping of the under cliff.

10. Ballard Water Meadows

To enhance and protect Ballard Water Meadows by:

- Drawing up a Management Plan for the site, incorporating: habitat improvements, access improvements, amenity facilities (seating, dog bins etc) and on-site interpretation



- Getting the area designated in the Local Plan either as a Local Nature Reserve or as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.
- Setting up a local Friends Group to steward the site.

Transport & Accessibility

11. Congestion & Traffic Flow

To conduct a detailed review of all aspects of the town's accessibility, ie pedestrian, traffic (public and private), and parking (on and off street), and to develop an integrated traffic flow and accessibility plan.

12. Transport Information

To provide a source of readily accessible transport information – this would include agreement on what information should be provided, its format and a process that ensures the information is well maintained and up to date.



13. Transport Integration

To instigate a Transport Forum to identify and represent all service providers and users, with a view to improving integration and making New Milton more 'visitor friendly', benefiting both the town and the local economy generally.

14. Car Parking

To develop an integrated and effective parking management scheme that takes account of all users.

To lobby for increased parking provision in New Milton.

15. Pedestrians & Cycling

To identify specific actions and an overall plan that will improve pedestrian and cycle access in and around New Milton.

Social & Community

16. Centres for the Community

To provide an open Community Centre and co-ordinate existing facilities, and the services they provide, to ensure they are meeting the needs of all sectors of the community, and to improve the awareness by the general public of the facilities available for community use in New Milton.

17. Inclusive Communities

To undertake intensive community capacity building work on key housing estates in New Milton, which have been identified as being areas of 'social deprivation'.

18. REC'creation

To rejuvenate the Recreation Ground by providing an outdoor space that meets the needs of all sectors of the community and which will enable it to become the 'social heart' of New Milton.

19. Telly Talk

To provide video conferencing facilities for key services such as employment and benefit advice, enabling members of the community and the general public to interface with

staff from partner organisations without the need to travel to Totton, Lyndhurst or Lymington.

20. The Milton Movies

To provide a regular cinema/film venue in New Milton, which is accessible to all

21. NOTICE New Milton

To improve information flow about community activities and events throughout the parish

To increase understanding of key features of the area

To increase awareness of local environment

To improve signage for key services in and around New Milton.

Young People

22. Chill Magazine

To work with young people in New Milton to produce a 'teen magazine', which will be produced three times a year, and which will be written by young people for young people.

23. Young People's Swap Shop

To identify and establish a local facility to enable young people to purchase, sell or swap designer clothing and goods.

The project would encourage 'youth enterprise' and fill an identified gap in the local retail market.

24. Target Sport

To enable/widen access to sporting facilities, clubs and facilities within and close to New Milton (with particular focus on young people), by developing a system allowing reduced price/low-cost access to them. Ideas could include: sports vouchers, open days, taster sessions, etc.

25. The Caff

To establish a 'drop in' café facility, staffed by appropriate adults and based centrally in town. It would offer low-cost refreshments



and access to information and advice, and would be open in the evenings. Young people could also utilise the café as a communication point with New Milton Town Council.

26. Personal Safety

The aim of this Project is to make young people feel safer living in New Milton. It proposes to offer targeted sessions on personal safety to young people in New Milton, concentrating on issues such as bullying, developing self-confidence and self-esteem. Young people will learn new skills and learn how to manage themselves in order to avoid situations that could lead to harm to themselves, or to others.

27. Family Centre / Youth Annexe / Detached Youth Team

This is a voluntary/community project run by, and for, families in the New Milton area. It will provide supportive learning space for adults and children, and a range of social, creative and personal opportunities and projects.

In addition, the Centre will have a Youth Annexe, which will be the base for a detached youth work team.



28. Places to Play

To conduct a play audit of New Milton, looking at existing sites where children play and identifying areas/places where there are few opportunities for play

To draw up a long-term programme to improve opportunities and facilities for children of all ages to play throughout the parish

To implement the programme in a phased improvement scheme to create an improved range of play spaces in the parish.

29. D.I.S.C.O.

To provide a programme of evening entertainment during the school holidays for 9 – 11 year olds in New Milton.

Discos would be organised by willing pupils at Arnewood School and would be held at the Memorial Hall. Tickets would be priced at reasonable rates, such that the revenue generated would fund the events (including the future purchase of equipment), with any surplus going towards funding other youth projects in the town, eg Chill magazine.

30. New Milton Play and Youth Forum

To establish a forum for people working with children and young people in New Milton to provide the opportunity for:

networking and information sharing about projects,

supporting new and existing projects,

creating a focus for multi – agency and community involvement in youth work

involving young people in planning services

avoiding duplication

Implementation

Legal Structure of the Town Partnership

The legal structure of the New Milton Town Partnership is that of a charitable unincorporated association and is therefore a membership organisation. The key advantages, and the reasons for the structure, are that it is simple and flexible, and it is financially less demanding.

New Milton Town Partnership

In March 2002, a steering group made up of a partnership of local groups of people from within the community, representing the business, public, community and voluntary sectors active in New Milton was established. The group was called the New Milton Town Project Group.

Following the completion of the Healthcheck and the drafting of an Action Plan for New Milton that identified 30 separate projects for the town, the Town Project Committee agreed that the Town Project Group should be dissolved at the end of April of 2004. It was decided that the Town Project Group would be replaced by a charitable association, to be called the 'New Milton Town Partnership' which would act as the new vehicle that would deliver the project's long-term aims.

In June 2004, the New Milton Town Partnership (the Partnership) was established, and an Executive Committee was appointed. Membership of the Partnership is voluntary and is open to residents of, or anyone owning a business or property or having a main place of work within, the parish.

The constitution of the New Milton Town Partnership was agreed in July 2004.

In September 2004 the application for charitable unincorporated status was approved and the New Milton Town Partnership is registered as charity no.1105860.

The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee will be made up of a minimum of seven members (but not more than ten members) being:

- The honorary officers (chairman, vice-

chairman, secretary and treasurer)

- One member nominated by the Town Council each year
- A minimum of three, but not more than five members, elected at the annual general meeting and who will hold office from the conclusion of that meeting.

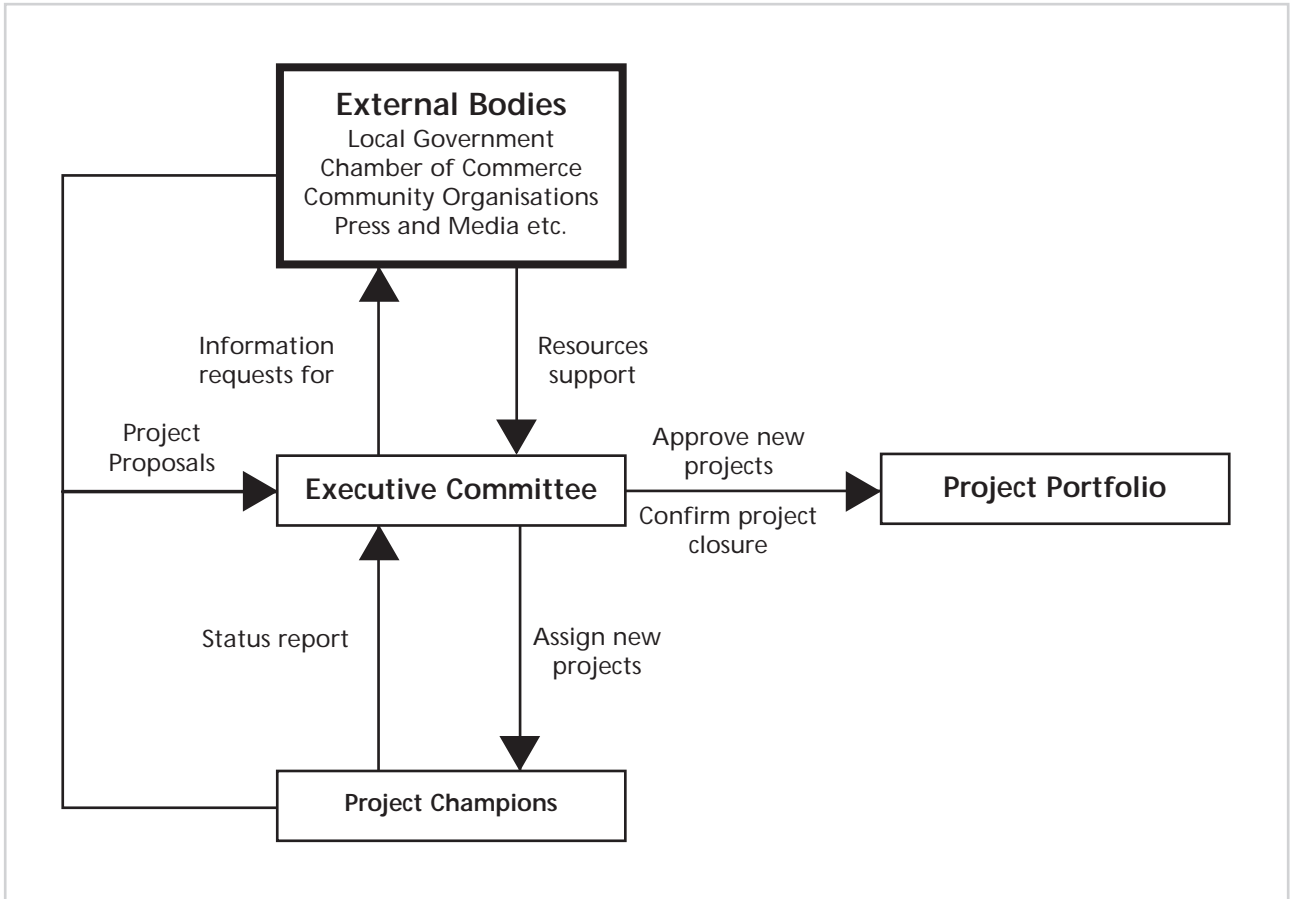
The current Executive Committee is as follows:

| Role | Member | Area of Interest |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Chairman | Robin Ede | Transport |
| Vice Chairman | Rupert Davies | Economy |
| Treasurer | John Evans | Economy |
| Secretary | Steve Davies | Transport |
| | Colin Christmas | Publicity |
| | David Hall | Transport |
| | Neil Tungate | Environment |
| | Sandy Fagan | Social & Community |
| | Clive Rigden | Social & Community |
| Town Council Representative | Wyn Davies | Economy |
| Co-opted member | Helen Wallis-Dowling | Young People |

See Appendix IX for details of background of Committee members

Organisation and Communication

The role of New Milton Town Partnership is both consultative and dynamic enabling the Vision for the Town, as outlined on P.18, to be achieved. The Partnership will allow the Town Council access to major economic benefits by facilitating, through the Partnership's charitable status umbrella, finite funding streams focussing on identified strategies in conjunction with other partnerships, developers and authorities. Finance is required to achieve not only capital projects, but also on-going community plans and objectives to support community involvement raised by socio-economic issues demanding funding. The Partnership will ensure that Projects are defined and identified on an on-going basis, with some of that process coming from community consultation and some from



evaluation of the outcomes of current projects. Inherent to the Projects' development process may be, in certain circumstances, fundraising, with appropriate advice, support, funding applications and activities being carried out by the Town Project Officer and the Executive Committee. The Partnership will also ensure that the projects are implemented by placing a Champion at the head of each one with a strict follow-up monitoring process in place. This process is outlined below in more detail. The Partnership's role will also encompass the lobbying and targeting of influential groups (e.g. councils, government, environmental organisations and fundraising bodies).

The role of the Town Project Officer, funded by the Countryside Agency and Hampshire County Council, comes to an end in December 2005 but there is still a need for this role. Therefore, from January 2006, New Milton Town Partnership will engage a part time Town Development Manager. This role is essentially different to that of the Town Project Officer (see Appendix IX for definition) and the Partnership has already sought and received a large part of the funding from SEEDA for the three years starting in January 2006.

The Executive Committee is responsible for maintaining the Project Portfolio. Project proposals will be reviewed by the Committee and approved only if it can be demonstrated that the outcome will provide a significant contribution to the "Vision".

Clear communications systems are being established between the Executive Committee and individual project co-ordinators in order to monitor the progress of individual projects in the Action Plan.

The Project Portfolio will be available for public inspection.

The Executive Committee will activate projects by assigning a Project Champion as and when appropriate.

The Executive Committee may suspend or close an active project if it is considered appropriate e.g. resources have been depleted.

Project Champions will be responsible for the day-to-day project tasks. They will organise the project team and report to the Executive Committee.

Project Teams will vary in numbers in line with the size and complexity of the project objectives. In order to provide better and more responsive control and support, large project teams will be avoided by creating sub-projects wherever possible. For very small projects the team may be a single member i.e. the Project Champion.

Project details will be drawn up by the Town Project Officer working in close collaboration with individual Community Champions. For all projects the project details will contain information on:

- Project details – name, summary description, objectives
- Funding requirements and possible funding sources
- Evidence of need for project
- Key project partners
- Links with local strategies / initiatives

As projects come on line, further details will be added

- Actions
- Milestones
- Outputs
- Outcomes
- Costs

Apart from the role of the Executive Committee as detailed above, the Partnership will support each project in the following ways:

- Monthly consultation and meetings if necessary with Town Project Officer
- Sourcing funding streams through Town Project Officer
- Interface with New Milton Town Council where necessary
- Advice and support in line with the latest developments in the field and best practice
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Publicity and promotion as appropriate

Appendix X lists the project details prepared to date. The Action Plan is a working document and project details will change as progress is made or obstacles encountered.

Evaluation

Evaluation is an essential element of good project management to assess the degree to which the stated objectives have been achieved in the context of their outcomes. It is an ongoing process which is critical in order to highlight any deviations from the Action Plan (and identify remedial actions if needed) and to analyse whether value for money was achieved. It can also provide valuable lessons for the future.

A baseline, against which the outcomes can be measured, is key to effective evaluation. A number of approaches will form part of the evaluation process:

- Review (and updating as necessary) of baseline
- Analysis of monitoring and cost information
- Review of relevant reports and publications,

including published socio-economic and other data

- Targeted consultations and surveys
- Focus/group meetings

The Action Plan is a 'working document' for New Milton – it is therefore proposed that it will be reviewed regularly. As projects are completed and the outcomes measured, new projects can be added that respond to the changing needs of its residents, and to external factors which may affect both existing projects and the community as a whole.

Community Involvement

There is a danger that if it is not involved in the Partnership projects, or if there is little evidence of early tangible results, the local community could become disenchanted with both the Partnership itself and the projects it is running. This can be avoided by effective promotion, feedback and publicity. This should encourage more involvement and membership of the Partnership will be open to residents, or anyone owning a business or property or having a main place of work within the Parish boundary.

The first step to improving communications has been the setting up of a web site

www.newmiltontownpartnership.org.uk

Resources

Staff Resources

The only part-time staff member will be the Town Project Officer (with funding secured until December 2005). It is therefore vital that the Partnership offers as much support as possible in implementing the Action Plan. Given that their time, together with that of each of the project champions, is voluntary, it will be important to strike a balance between a schedule that can deliver some quick wins to engage local community support and one that is realistic but that ensures continued momentum.

From January 2006, a Town Development Officer will be recruited to take over the role of the Town Project Officer for a three year period. Part

funding of this post from SEEDA of £15,000.00 per annum has already been secured and a further £5,000.00 per annum has been promised by New Milton Sand and Ballast, both for a three year period. New Milton Town Council have formally agreed to continue to provide all office facilities for the next three years as currently enjoyed by the Town Project Officer. This 'in kind' provision has been accepted by SEEDA as £5,000.00 per annum match funding. Hampshire County Council are also providing services to assist with the employment of the Town Development Officer which is acceptable as match funding. The Partnership is actively seeking the remaining funding from other sources (Appendix IX).

Funding

One of the key reasons for setting up the local charity was to enable the Partnership to apply for outside funding for the projects identified in the Action Plan.

Each project will require resources; these will vary enormously from £1,000 required to print each copy of Chill magazine to the Town Centre improvement project which will require substantial sums to implement. Individual funding packages will need to be developed which identify appropriate funding sources. Each project will be researched and, with advice from the external funding officers at HCC and Community First, applications will be made for all available grants.

The Town Partnership has already begun to develop expertise in this area and has attracted funding from Connexions, Leader Plus, Landfill Tax credits and commercial sponsors. In addition the Partnership is investigating setting up its own Community Bond scheme to encourage local residents to invest in projects which improve their town

Communications Strategy

Fundamental to the success of the Partnership on every level is a sound communications strategy. The Partnership will evolve or has already evolved the following:

- **An Identity** with uniform representation, headed paper, a logo, a website and a newsletter.
- **External Contacts** with responsibility per committee member to resolve conflicts, head Project Groups, liaise with Councils, increase membership, liaise with the business and private communities.
- **Internal Contacts** with responsibilities to be drawn up, maintain a circulation list, liaise with Project Groups, supply regular updates, hold monthly meetings.
- **Press Relations** to be maintained with the New Milton Advertiser & Lymington Times, New Forest Post and Daily Echo.
- **Formal Documents** Constitution, Action Plan, Project Schedule, Community Publication Plan, Business Plan.
- **Project Reviews** - common format.

The Town Project Officer is at present the lynchpin for communication in the organisation and will be responsible for liaising with the Project Champions on behalf of the Partnership and will monitor progress on a monthly basis and report back in writing to the Executive Committee and the Town Council. The Town Project Officer will have at least fortnightly meetings with the Chairman of the New Milton Town Partnership to discuss on-going issues and close contact will be maintained by telephone and e-mail with the Chairman and the Executive Committee. The Chairman of the Partnership will hold monthly meetings with the Mayor and Town Clerk, to keep them informed of issues, and the Town Project Officer will generally keep the Town Clerk informed on an on-going basis.

The Executive Committee will, normally, meet once a month, but with possible exceptions in August and December/January. The Executive Committee will hold an Annual General Meeting of the Partnership in May which will be open to the Public, plus, normally, three additional public meetings during the year. Communication of progress to the public is essential as is the public's participation in decision-making processes. To

this end, an additional Information and Consultation Event will be planned each year where the public will have the opportunity to review progress and put forward their ideas and comments.

A designated member of the Executive committee will attend all the Town Council meetings and will be charged with reading out the Minutes of the meetings of the New Milton Town Partnership and highlighting any changes that have occurred since the previous meeting. Minutes of the Town Council meetings shall be distributed to the Executive Committee of the Partnership and Minutes of the Partnership meetings shall be sent to the Town Council. The Town Project Officer will ensure that the New Milton Town Council is consulted on appropriate matters, and will be responsible for liaising with the Press, will maintain contact with Community groups and will seek to include the 'hard-to-reach' sectors of the community.

Links to key agencies and related strategies

The Partnership has worked with many agencies and organisations both local and national to develop this Action Plan. We will further these links in the implementation of the individual projects.

Key Agencies

New Milton Town Council (NMTC)

The Town Council itself has grown out of humble beginnings as part of Lymington Borough Council to its present day status of a town with Mayoral status and continues to evolve as it seeks Quality Status.

New Milton Town Council owns many of the key sites within New Milton and will, therefore, be a key partner in delivering a number of projects in the Action Plan, including the New Milton Town Streetscape Plan and the Town Design Statement, and the environmental improvement projects for Ballard Water Meadows and Barton Sea Front.

The Council can support applications for funding from other agencies; indeed, in some instances, it may be important to demonstrate that applications to third parties have the support of the Town Council.

In addition, they have provided free office space, computing and administration facilities to the Town Project Officer.

New Forest District Council (NFDC)

The New Forest District Council will be another key partner that can support applications to other bodies, and they have also offered assistance in kind by way of technical support. The New Milton Town Streetscape Plan is an example of a project in which it is involved (funding has been secured for streetscape improvements – paving, street trees, seating, litter bins etc - to enhance New Milton High Street, for example), as well as its involvement in the Community Tourism Group, helping to promote New Milton.

Hampshire County Council (HCC)

Hampshire County Council, through the Economic Development Team have established

the Hampshire Market Towns Project. This project has supported the New Milton Town Partnership throughout its history from helping with the Healthcheck to part funding the Town Project Officer (who is an employee of HCC)

As with other councils, a number of its responsibilities are directly relevant to the results of the Healthcheck including roads, transport, broadband and education.

The external funding officers within Economic Development have also provided funding advice and good links have been made with Hampshire Fayre and Hampshire Farmers' Markets who have supported two food festivals and farmers' markets in the town.

Hampshire County Council Youth Service (HCCYS)

The Town Project Officer worked with HCCYS to involve young people in the Town Project. This has resulted in the development of a number of projects. Young people have produced their own magazine 'Chill' to give a greater voice to young people in the town.

Hampshire County Council Education

The local schools have been very involved in the Town Project. The two junior schools both ran a year long 'In Your Neighbourhood' initiative. A grant of £5,000 was awarded by BT to help develop this project using video and IT skills – the Town Project Officer worked with two local junior schools to build models of key areas in New Milton and organise consultation events run by the children.

In October 2003 pupils from Arnewood School ran a youth workshop for pupils from New Milton, Ashley and Ballard schools. They presented their ideas to the Town Project Group, many of which have been included in this Action Plan.

Chamber of Commerce

Although the Chamber of Commerce in New Milton had only recently been re-established and had limited resources, it has made a significant contribution to the Healthcheck in helping identify issues and build communications with

the business community. The Town Project Officer worked closely with the Chamber of Commerce to organise two food festivals in the town and the Chamber was successful in securing Leader Plus grants for these events. Unfortunately, the Chamber has since been disbanded again.

Business in the Community (BiTC) and Local Business Support

New Milton was selected as one of six market towns in the South East to take part in the BiTC rural initiative. With their support, a 'Seeing is Believing' visit was organised in May 2004, aimed at engaging local business in helping and supporting several of our projects. Key contacts were made with local business leaders who we hope to engage in the delivery of this Action Plan

The project has already attracted support from a number of local businesses - New Milton Sand & Ballast contributed £500.00 to general running costs, and has pledged £5,000.00 per annum for three years towards the costs of the Town Development Officer; Mitchell's Estate Agency sponsored the production of the 'Your Town, Your Say' questionnaire Survey and Chewton Glen Hotel hosted a tourism workshop held in February 2004. New Milton Town Partnership consider it essential to the success of their objectives to help develop and support local businesses. A projected outcome for the major Streetscape Project is the attraction of more customers and more businesses into the town. A Training Project is also being developed (Appendix X).

New Milton & Barton-on-Sea Residents' Association

There is a very active residents' association in New Milton and, as representatives of the local community, they will provide considerable valuable input into various issues, eg planning, transport and care. They have helped to pass on information about the Town Partnership via their newsletter Focus.

The Countryside Agency (CA)

The Countryside Agency have provided joint three year funding (with Hampshire County Council, New Milton Town Council and New Forest District Council) for New Milton's Town Project Officer (Jan 2003 – Dec 2005)

They have provided advice and ideas to the partnership via the Market Towns and Beacon Towns programmes and also funded a trainer to work with the Town Project group on drawing up their vision.

South East Rural Towns Partnership (SERTP)

Committed to working positively with local communities and partnerships to deliver improved services and quality of life in rural towns across the region, the SERTP offers support, ideas and practical case studies to the Partnership. Learning from others has been part of the process that the Town Partnership has embraced. Members have attended regional training courses and linked with other towns to share experiences e.g tour of Alton as part of the planning for the street market project .

Action for Market Towns (AMT)

AMT is the national membership organisation dedicated to promoting the vitality and viability of small towns like New Milton. They can provide us with a better understanding of issues affecting small towns nationally, and support and assist us in tackling the challenges we will face.

South East England Development Agency (SEEDA)

In 2004 SEEDA launched its Small Rural Towns programme. New Milton Town Partnership applied, through NFDC, to SEEDA as a source of financial support for its economic projects and successfully secured £240,000.00 for its major Streetscape project and the Business Development Plan, which will help fund the Town Development Officer over the next three years. It will be important to have detailed discussions at an early stage to establish which projects fit its new priorities and how best to secure funding.

Tourism South East

Tourism South East have supported the town in exploring opportunities to build on the tourism potential of New Milton. They funded a Mystery Visitor survey (see Appendix VII) on the tourism potential of New Milton and Barton-on-Sea, and supported a workshop held at Chewton Glen Hotel. As a result of this workshop, a tourism sub group was formed to take forward tourism projects. Tourism South East retain an advisory role within the Community Tourism Group.

There are a number of other strategies developed outside the New Milton Healthcheck process that cover similar issues and geographical areas. It will be important to identify any common ground relating to these projects and, where possible, adopt joint approaches, thus saving money and time (and unnecessary duplication).

Key Strategies

Community Strategy

The Community Strategy in Hampshire, developed by the Hampshire Strategic Partnership (HSP), provides a framework for all other plans and strategies in Hampshire.

The Local Government Act 2000 stipulated that County and District Councils should produce a 'Community Plan' for their areas. The preparation and implementation of the community plan should be through a broadly based partnership of local organisations and agencies working together with other public and community bodies as well as the private sector wherever possible. In Hampshire there are eleven LSPs (Local Strategic Partnerships) developing community strategies; the 'Changing Lives Partnership' is the New Forest LSP.

Their community strategy document 'Changing Lives - The Community Strategy for the New Forest District' focuses on improving the quality of life for present and future generations. Many of the themes are common to both their Community Strategy and our own Action Plan, so it makes sense to work with the Changing Lives Partnership where appropriate. This is the first

Action Plan to be accepted by the New Forest Changing Lives Partnership and is being treated as a pilot.

The Local Plan

The New Forest District Local Plan was adopted in November 1999. Work started on a review immediately because there is a new strategic planning framework in the Hampshire County Council Structure Plan 1996-2011. Since then, there has also been new government planning policy and there have been changes in local circumstances.

This is a key document because it outlines proposals for, and the control of, development in built-up areas outside the New Forest such as New Milton and Barton-on-Sea, and the surrounding wards.

The basic strategy takes an integrated approach to promoting a high quality and sustainable environment, which conserves and enhances the district's special environmental qualities while also addressing the needs of the people who live and work in the district. The three main elements then are:

- Developmental restraint
- Meeting local needs
- Conserving and enhancing the environment

The Town Design Statement and Town Centre Improvement Project will be of particular relevance to the Local Plan.

Other Key Strategies

Hampshire County Council Rural Transport Strategy

Hampshire County council has produced a strategy for rural transportation and our Transport Integration project needs to be in line with that. Funding has been secured from HCC towards the Transport Information Project (Project 12) and further funding will be sought.

New Forest Transport Strategy

Planning for the transport needs of both urban and rural communities has been radically changed. Hampshire's New Forest Transport Strategy focuses on an area of around 670 square kilometres, including open forest, towns and villages.

The New Forest District advocates the development of integrated (ie road, rail, cycling, walking etc) transport systems and greater co-ordination between land use planning and transport planning. Any measures and initiatives which emerge from the New Forest Transport Strategy cannot be considered in isolation and may impact New Milton.

Car Parking & Traffic Management

The New Forest District Council has recently reviewed the way it manages its Off-Street Car Parks. As a result they have introduced a time clock system. Car parking is an issue that will not go away in New Milton and we need to work with all providers to ensure well managed and adequate parking in the Town.

Several projects have been introduced to address all these issues (Projects 11, 12, 13, 14, 15).

The Community Safety Partnership

The Community Safety Partnership involves representatives from the district and county council, police, social services, health chiefs, the national probation office, fire service, youth workers and specialist drug workers.

The partnership is working together to reduce crime and disorder, lessen the fear of crime, and improve community awareness of crime and disorder and the effects of anti-social behaviour.

Specific targets for the next two years include:

- Reducing vehicle crime
- Easing the fear of crime
- Supporting young people
- Tackling hate crime such as domestic violence
- Reducing anti social behaviour
- Increasing road safety

- Reducing the impact of drug and alcohol related crime
- Dealing effectively with criminal damage

New Milton Town Partnership is supporting the Community Safety Partnership through its work with young people and transportation projects as well as through its overall vision.

New Forest Sports & Recreation and Play Development Strategies

It is crucial to acknowledge the importance of play in the overall development of young people, particularly the link that play provides in the accumulation of skills for sport. New Milton Town Partnership's close links with Hampshire County Council, the New Forest District's Sports & Recreation Strategy and their Play Development Strategy will ensure that New Milton is considered in any initiatives.

Hampshire County Youth Service (HCYS) Strategic Development Plan

The aim of the HCYS Strategic Development Plan is to establish opportunities which are challenging, supportive, exciting and fun for young people, enabling them to learn, develop and respond to change.

Their purpose is to:

- create opportunities to encourage young people to achieve their potential as empowered individuals and members of groups and communities
- support young people during the transition to adulthood
- provide learning opportunities, which challenge young people to respond critically and creatively to their everyday experiences and to the wider world around them
- promote the influence of young people, their involvement in decision making and active citizenship.

These are all relevant to some of the Partnership's projects for young people.

Coastal Towns Strategy

New Forest District Council has 60 km of coastline, extending from Chewton Bunny, Christchurch Bay in the west to Redbridge, Southampton Water in the east. This stretch of coastline, which includes Barton cliff tops, has a wide range of important natural features that include soft cliffs, spits and barrier beaches, salt marshes and mudflats and fossils. These dynamically evolving environments are also of international importance for nature conservation.

The NFDC Coastal Group has developed specialist expertise in coastal processes, coastal engineering, beach and cliff monitoring, hydrographic surveying, salt marsh management, hydrodynamic and sediment transport modelling, and Geographic Information Systems, in order to improve decision making, understand the implications associated with management of the coast and to provide and maintain coastal defences in a cost-effective and environmentally acceptable way. This expertise will be vital in helping New Milton with its environmental project for Barton-on-Sea.

Tourism & Visitor Management Strategy

As with its Transport Strategy, the New Forest sets out wide-ranging objectives that seek to safeguard its unique nature for future generations to enjoy. As a key gateway to the New Forest, New Milton must understand the impact that this strategy may have on our town, and seek to exploit any initiatives that could encourage visitors to our town. With the support of Tourism South East, NMTP will seek to develop the potential that this offers.