



## Council

**Date:** Thursday, 14 October 2021  
**Time:** 6.30 pm  
**Venue:** Teams Live Meeting  
**Membership: (Quorum 21)**

The Council membership is listed on the following page.

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**Chief Executive:** Matt Prosser, County Hall, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ

**For more information about this agenda please contact Democratic Services Susan Dallison [susan.dallison@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:susan.dallison@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)**

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Due to the current coronavirus pandemic the Council has reviewed its approach to holding council meetings. Members of the public are welcome to view the meeting on line by using the following link to access the meeting. [Link](#)

Members of the public wishing to view the meeting from an i phone, i pad, or android phone will need to down the free Microsoft Team App to sign in as a guest. It is advised to do this at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the meeting. Please note that public speaking has been suspended however public participation will continue by written submission only. Please see detail set out below.

### **Recording, photographing and using social media at meetings**

Dorset Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it carries out its business whenever possible. Anyone can film, audio-record, take photographs, and use social media such as tweeting and blogging to report the meeting when it is open to the public, so long as they conform to the Protocol for filming and audio recording of public council meetings.

A recording of the meeting will be available on the council's website after the event.

## Membership of Dorset Council

Anthony Alford	Stella Jones
Jon Andrews	Andrew Kerby
Rod Adkins	Paul Kimber
Michael Barron	Rebecca Knox
Peter Barrow	Noc Lacey-Clarke
Shane Bartlett	Howard Legg
Pauline Batstone	Robin Legg
Derek Beer	Cathy Lugg
Richard Biggs	Laura Miller
David Bolwell	David Morgan
Alexandra Brenton	Louie O'Leary
Cherry Brooks	Jon Orrell
Piers Brown	Emma Parker
Ray Bryan	Mike Parkes
Andrew Canning	Andrew Parry
Graham Carr-Jones	Mary Penfold
Simon Christopher	Bill Pipe
Kelvin Clayton	Valerie Potheary
Susan Cocking	Byron Quayle
Robin Cook	Molly Rennie
Tim Cook	Belinda Ridout
Toni Coombs	Mark Roberts
Janet Dover	Julie Robinson
Jean Dunseith	Maria Roe
Mike Dyer	David Shortell
Beryl Ezzard	Jane Somper
Tony Ferrari	Andrew Starr
Spencer Flower	Gary Suttle
Les Fry	Clare Sutton
Simon Gibson	Roland Tarr
Barry Goringe	David Taylor
David Gray	Gill Taylor
Matthew Hall	David Tooke
Paul Harrison	William Trite
Jill Haynes	Daryl Turner
Brian Heatley	David Walsh
Ryan Holloway	Peter Wharf
Ryan Hope	Kate Wheller
Robert Hughes	Sarah Williams
Nick Ireland	John Worth
Sherry Jespersen	
Carole Jones	

# AGENDA

Page No.

## 1 APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

## 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest.

## 3 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive any announcements from the Chairman of Council.

## 4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

A period of 30 minutes is allocated to receive and respond to questions and statements on the business of the Council in the following order:

(a) Questions and statements from Town and Parish Councils;

(b) Questions and statements from those living or working in the Dorset Council area;

A person or organisation can ask either 2 questions, or 2 statements or 1 question and 1 statement at each meeting.

**\*\*Important\*\*The full text of the question or statement must be received by 8.30am on Monday 11 October 2021 and each question or statement is limited to 450 words.**

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic public speaking has been suspended, however questions and statements will be published on the website and the Chairman of Council will decide whether a question or statement is to be read out aloud in whole, in part or not at all in the meeting. The Chairman will invite the relevant member to respond to the questions and statements at the meeting.

Details of the Council's procedure rules can be found at:

[Temporary Council Procedure Rules](#)

## 5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

A period of 15 minutes is allocated to receive and respond to petitions in accordance with the council's petitions scheme.

A period of 15 minutes is allocated to receive and respond to

deputations in accordance with the council's constitution.

The petitions scheme and procedures relating to deputations can be viewed at:

[Temporary Council Procedure Rules](#)

## **6 ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS FROM THE LEADER OF COUNCIL AND CABINET MEMBERS**

To receive any announcements and reports from the Leader of Council and members of the Cabinet.

## **7 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

To receive questions submitted by councillors. The deadline for receipt of questions is 8.30am on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

## **8 DORSET COUNCIL PLAN 7 - 48**

To consider a report of the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Change.

## **9 RETURN TO IN PERSON FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS 49 - 68**

To consider a report by J Andrews, Service Manager, Democratic & Electoral Services

## **10 DISPENSATION FOR NON ATTENDANCE AT COMMITTEE MEETINGS 69 - 72**

To consider a report by S Dallison, Team Leader Democratic Services.

## **11 APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY MEMBERS TO PARISH COUNCILS 73 - 76**

To consider a report by J Mair, Corporate Director, Legal & Democratic Services

## **12 URGENT ITEMS**

To consider any items of business which the Chairman has had prior notification and considers to be urgent pursuant to section 100B (4) b) of the Local Government Act 1972. The reason for the urgency shall be recorded in the minutes.

## 13 EXEMPT BUSINESS

To move the exclusion of the press and the public for the following item in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph x of schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

The public and the press will be asked to leave the meeting whilst the item of business is considered.

**There is no exempt business.**

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## **Recommendation to Full Council from the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Change**

### **Dorset Council Plan**

#### **For Recommendation to Council**

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr P Wharf, Corporate Development and Change

**Local Councillor(s):** All

**Executive Director:** Matt Prosser, Chief Executive

**Report Status:** Public

#### **Recommendation to Full Council**

- (a) That the updated Dorset Council plan, as set out in appendix I of the report to Cabinet 5 October 2021, be adopted.
- (b) That authority be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Change, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive for the final design of the plan.

#### **Appendix**

Cabinet report of 5 October 2021 including appendix (i) to (iii) as set out below

- i. Updated council plan text
- ii. Original council plan
- iii. Relevant minutes of the People and health Overview Committee (2 September 2021) and Place and Resources Overview Committee (17 September 2021)

**Extract from the draft notes from the meeting of Cabinet members held on 18 May 2021.**

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment set out the recommendation to Full Council in respect of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy Consultation Results. In presenting the strategy he referred to the following: -

- The main area of concern remained around the target for the Council to achieve a Carbon neutral position.
- This was set at an achievable and realistic date of 2040.
- Where appropriate and in response to public consultation, discussions with Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee and individual members, the strategy and action plan documents had been amended.
- Highlighted that the strategy was a living document and a short survey remained open for the public to continue to make comments.
- Further investigations and developments would continue as technologies developed.
- There was a growth in the detail in respect of Hydrogen energy
- If adopted and as set out in the Council Plan, the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy document would impact on what and how the council provided its services in the future.
- The Council was awarded £19 million by Government to spend on properties within the Dorset Council area to reduce carbon emissions and running costs.
- He thanked officers for their work on the document and consultation process.

Following discussion at Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 12 May 2021 and having heard the committee debate, the Executive Director for Place confirmed that he was making the following recommendation:

“That Cabinet consider the outcomes of the consultation and amendments to the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and Action Plan and recommended its final approval to Full Council”.

In making this recommendation, the Executive Director confirmed that the recommendation sheet and the extract notes of the informal meeting of Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee were circulated to Cabinet as a supplement to this meeting.



The Chairman invited the Chairman of the Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee to address the meeting:

- He confirmed that the scrutiny committee discussed the report, acknowledging the budget implications and potential impact on the council tax for the residents of Dorset.
- If the targets of the strategy were brought forward on a quicker timeframe, that cost burden on the taxpayer could be quite significant.
- Overall, the scrutiny committee was satisfied the target dates were achievable.
- Funding needed to be timetabled with performance deadlines and strategic project dates for officers to be able to deliver the strategy.
- He suggested that the scrutiny committee carry out quarterly performance reviews.
- 

The Chairman invited non-executive members to ask questions of the Portfolio Holder: -

- Misgivings were expressed that further work was required on adaptations, other greenhouse gases and ecology. But minor changes had been welcomed.
- Most consultees were content with the overall targets.

Following debate and the opportunity to ask questions, the Portfolio Holder advised that he intended to recommend that the Dorset Council Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy be considered by Full Council for adoption.

Cabinet confirmed that they supported this recommendation.

### **Recommendation to Full Council from the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment**

That the Dorset Council Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and Action Plan be considered by Full Council for adoption.

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# Cabinet

## 5 October 2021

### Dorset Council Plan

## For Recommendation to Council

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr P Wharf, Corporate Development and Change

**Local Councillor(s):** All

**Executive Director:** M Prosser, Chief Executive

Report Author: Becky Forrester

Title: Business Partner

Tel: 01305 2249821

Email: [rebecca.forrester@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:rebecca.forrester@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

**Report Status:** Public

**Recommendation:** That the Cabinet:

- i. Make any final amendments to the draft wording of the updated council plan, attached at appendix 1, and recommend it to full council for adoption on 14 October
- ii. Note the contribution to the updated council plan from the two Overview Committees
- iii. Discuss and agree the name of the plan, following a recommendation by the Place and Resources Overview Committee on 17 September 2021; and
- iv. Delegate responsibility for the final design of the plan, and the summary 'plan on a page' version, to the portfolio holder for corporate development and change, in consultation with the Leader and Chief Executive.

**Reason for Recommendation:** To provide clarity about this council's priorities following the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **1. Executive Summary**

Dorset Council's first council plan was adopted in January 2020, before COVID-19 struck. In the summer of 2021, Cabinet asked for the plan be updated, steered by the two Overview Committees, to reflect the impact and implications of the pandemic.

On 26 July 2021 members of the Overview Committees held a joint informal workshop to review the draft Council Plan, with a specific focus on COVID-19 recovery. It was discussed again at their formal meetings on 2 and 17 September. The minutes of those discussions are attached at appendix 3.

## **2. Financial Implications**

None in relation to this report.

## **3. Well-being and Health Implications**

Health and well-being are integral elements of the plan, and feature particularly in the 'strong and healthy communities' and 'staying safe and well' priorities.

## **4. Climate implications**

It is recommended that climate and ecology become one of the main priorities of the council following the adoption of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and Action Plan in July 2021.

## **5. Other Implications**

None.

## **6. Risk Assessment**

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

## **7. Equalities Impact Assessment**

An equalities impact assessment was undertaken when the plan was first adopted in January 2020.

## **8. Appendices**

- i. Updated council plan text
- ii. Original council plan
- iii. Relevant minutes of the People and Health Overview Committee (2 September 2021) and Place and Resources Overview Committee (17 September 2021)

## **9. Background Papers**

[2020-01-28-cabinet-Dorset-plan-report.pdf \(dorsetcouncil.gov.uk\)](https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/media/2020-01-28-cabinet-Dorset-plan-report.pdf)

## **10. The evolution of the council plan – January 2020-October 2021**

- 10.1 The first ever Dorset Council plan was agreed by the Cabinet in January 2020, following informal workshops with councillors, and engagement with residents and partners. This was before the COVID-19 struck, and the original plan (attached at appendix 2) makes no reference to the pandemic as a result.
- 10.2 In the summer of 2021, Cabinet asked that the council plan be updated, with support from the two Overview Committees, in their policy-making capacity. An informal session was held with the Overview Committees on 26 July 2021, and the output from the meeting – the updated draft plan – was reported to their Committees on 2 September and 17 September.
- 10.3 The minutes of those discussions are attached at appendix 3. In summary, key feedback from the People and Health Overview Committee (2 September) was that:
  - The plan is long and needs a summary version
  - The correlation between Dorset’s challenges and the council’s priorities and actions needs to be clearer
  - Dorset’s major challenges – the low wage/low skilled economy, lack of social mobility, unaffordable housing, the outward migration of younger people and inward migration of older people – are not all fully addressed by the plan
- 10.4 Key feedback from the Place and Resources Committee (17 September) was that:
  - The size of the council – the fifth biggest by size and eight biggest by population – should be made clearer

- There should be a link to the council's research database, [Dorset Insights](#)
- Naming very local areas of deprivation could be unhelpful and should be removed
- The plan should be called either the 'Dorset Council Plan' or 'Dorset Council's Corporate Plan'. Cabinet is asked to agree one of these options.

10.5 Both Committees expressed a desire for climate and the ecology to become a key priority, following the council's adoption of a Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and Action plan in July 2021 and its commitment to become carbon neutral by 2040.

Please do not delete the footnote.

**Footnote:**

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

Proposed options for a new name (made by the Place and Resources Overview Committee on 17 September 2021):

- **Dorset Council Plan**
- **Dorset Council Corporate Plan**

# Welcome

This is the Dorset Council Plan, which sets out our ambitions up to 2024. It incorporates the political vision of your councillors, and was originally developed in 2019 following a conversation with residents, town and parish councils, and representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The Plan has been updated to reflect what we have learnt from responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many organisations in Dorset stepped up to support our local communities through this incredibly difficult time. Our communities have never worked more closely together. Organisations across all sectors responded quickly, with selflessness, conviction and bravery, creating a 'one team' and 'Dorset Together' approach to supporting the most vulnerable children and adults. We are immensely grateful to them all, and we are keen to keep this spirit of shared responsibility alive and build on these partnerships as we, hopefully, move towards recovery.

It is clear that in addition to recovering from COVID-19 the climate and ecological emergency must inform the council's decisions and actions for the foreseeable future. A climate and ecological strategy and action plan were agreed in July 2021, and we have committed to becoming carbon neutral organisation by 2040 and a carbon neutral county by 2050. We will need to work closer than ever with you, our residents and partners, to achieve those goals.

We must all challenge ourselves to do more to protect our environment, and this will involve some difficult conversations about the nature of Dorset's economic growth. COVID-19 has highlighted the need to maximise technology, so we need to drive the rollout of full fibre technology and 5G to enable people to effectively work from home, travel less, and access opportunities online.

We must work closely with children, young people and families to safeguard their future environment and help them to recover from the impacts of the pandemic. We want to help raise aspirations and improve education, health and wellbeing, particularly in the most deprived areas of the county. If we want our young people to stay in Dorset, we must give them something to stay for, so we will also focus our energies on developing suitable housing, and supporting skills and training.

The council predicted an overspend from the outset of the pandemic and our response has added significant financial pressure. A combination of cost increases and lost income were the principal causes. Our latest assessment is that the impact of the pandemic on the council will have been in the region of £15m.

In response, the council has developed a four year medium-term financial plan which sets out our budget demands, pressures and risks. We will champion the interests of Dorset, advocate nationally the need for better funding, and work with our partners for the benefit of our county. Dorset Council is the fifth largest unitary authority in England by size, and the eighth largest by population. We want to work with like-minded authorities to get our voices heard nationally.

I would like to take this opportunity to urge you, if you have any questions, comments or concerns, to make contact with your local Dorset Council ward councillor. They are there to represent your area and respond to your queries and concerns. Please keep them informed about the issues that affect you and your communities, so we can continue to make Dorset a great place to live, work and visit.

Spencer Flower  
Leader



# Understanding Dorset

## Population

Dorset Council area has a population of 378,500 residents, 29% of whom are aged 65 and older (compared to 18% in England and Wales).

Dorset is an attractive place, and many people choose to retire here. It has a large population of older people, and relatively low birth rates. Currently there are over 7,000 people in Dorset living with dementia, and the number is increasing. Younger people often move away from the area. The population continues to grow slowly, driven by people moving into the county and longer life expectancy. The greatest part of population growth is among over 65s. Dorset's working age population is expected to see a marginal decline over the next 25 years.

The Dorset rural idyll can conceal hidden deprivation however. There are significant areas of deprivation, mostly in urban areas (mainly Weymouth and Portland) and also in the east of Dorset, in Ferndown, Wimborne, and Verwood. There is also significant rural deprivation, due largely to isolation and difficulty accessing housing, transport and essential services. Crime is generally low in Dorset, although anti-social behaviour and rural crime are an ongoing problem. The council's focus on economic growth, suitable housing, strong and healthy communities and staying safe and well aim to address the opportunities and challenges this presents.

The population is predominantly white British, with 4.4% of our residents from ethnically diverse communities.

## Natural, geological and historic environment

Dorset's natural environment is a great asset.

95 miles of coast in Dorset and Devon are classified as a UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site – the only one in England. Over half of Dorset is covered by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designation; 7% of Dorset is protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest; and Dorset has one of the largest areas of protected lowland heath in Europe.

These designations together mark Dorset as a special place but also present challenges in terms of available land for delivering housing and employment development.

Dorset also has a rich historic environment, with one in twenty of all the protected ancient monuments in England, a well preserved pre-historic landscape and around 10,000 listed buildings. This is reflected in the council's 'climate and ecology', 'unique environment' and 'suitable housing' priorities.

## Economy and infrastructure

Employment in Dorset is high but, like the UK, our economy has a productivity gap. Manufacturing, health, retail, education and hospitality are all big employers in Dorset. 20,000 businesses are based in Dorset: 86% are micro firms and fewer than 1% are large firms. Dorset's economy is worth around £8.1 billion and provides 147,000 jobs. Dorset has an above average number of advanced engineering and manufacturing businesses. But there is also a continuing seasonal, low skill, low wage economy with tourism and agriculture significant industries. The area is rich in valuable minerals, including stone, sand/gravel and oil.

Earnings are below average and house prices are high with affordability issues for many young people and keyworkers. In 2021, lower end house prices were more than ten times higher than lower end earnings in Dorset.

Dorset has no motorway but over 2,500 miles of roads. 96% of premises in the Dorset Council area have access to superfast broadband. 3.1% of premises in the Dorset Council area have access to full-fibre broadband. These issues are reflected in our 'economic growth' and 'suitable housing' priorities.

## The pandemic in Dorset

Up to the end of May 2021, 528 people in Dorset have sadly died within 28 days of a positive COVID-19 test. In excess of 25,400 people in Dorset (approximately 7% of our population) were shielding, and the council and its partners provided a wide range of support to our communities, including:

- We handled 34,559 calls through our COVID-19 contact centre, coordinating food parcel and prescription deliveries, practical help with everyday tasks and befriending
- We administered £250 million of government grants to support local businesses
- We accommodated 49 rough sleepers and homeless households as part of the “everyone in” initiative
- We delivered 2,025 food packages and helped local COVID-19-19-19 support groups
- We worked with partners to provide vaccines xxx (likely to be over one million by October?)
- Vaccinated 91% of care home staff including agency staff had their first vaccine

The COVID pandemic has changed how we live, work and think, locally, nationally, and globally. This is reflected in six priorities outlined below.

More data about Dorset can be found at [Dorset Insights - Dorset Council](#).

## Partnership working

The pandemic has changed how we live, work and think, and one thing it has proved is just how much more we can achieve by working together, across sectors and organisations, to protect those in greatest need. Hundreds of organisations responded to the crisis, including voluntary and community groups, town and parish councils, nurseries, schools and colleges, health and social care providers, registered housing providers and the police, not to mention residents. We need to keep that energy and spirit of collaboration alive as we move towards a ‘new normal’, and focus on delivering the priorities described below.

We can’t do this in isolation. Key partners include (but aren’t limited to!) organisations in the health and social care economy, voluntary and community organisations, education providers, the local business community, Dorset’s Local Nature Partnership, digital infrastructure providers, the Jurassic Coast Trust, Dorset Wildlife Trust, the National Trust, Natural England, Homes England, Dorset Police, Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, Community Land Trusts, Public Health England, colleagues in the Integrated Care System, Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group (and subsequent bodies), Dorset Healthcare Trust, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, the Local Enterprise Partnership, the ambulance service, transport providers, the Armed Forces, probation services,.

# Our priorities – the climate and ecology

Dorset Council declared a climate and ecological emergency at its first Full Council meeting and in July 2021 adopted a strategy and action plan setting out how the council will respond. This commits us to taking direct action across our operations to become a carbon-neutral Council by 2040, and through our wide ranging services and partnerships, to facilitate the changes required for the whole of Dorset to become carbon-neutral by 2050, and to protect and enhance biodiversity across Dorset.

The strategy set the direction of travel over 9 topic areas , buildings & assets, waste, water, economy, transport, natural assets, food and drink and renewable energy.

## What will we do

- Decarbonise our estate by 2040
- Facilitate greater renewable energy supply in Dorset
- Achieve a zero carbon fleet by 2040
- Enable residents to travel more sustainably
- Work towards Become a low waste council and county
- Support transition to a low carbon Economy in Dorset
- Protect and enhance biodiversity across Dorset
- Encourage a low carbon food and drink sector
- Ensure Dorset is resilient to impacts for climate change

Dorset Council must work towards reducing its own carbon emissions output, food poverty and the level of waste produced, all while meeting the increasing demand for food.

## How will we do it

- Install energy & water efficiency and renewable energy technologies across our estate
- Support development Secure large scale renewable energy installation to provide our energy needs
- Switch to Electric Vehicles and ultra- low emission vehicles
- Reduce our waste and increase facilities to reduce, re-use and recycle
- Support businesses to be greener and encourage low carbon sector skills and jobs
- Improving EV infrastructure, bus services and facilities for walking and cycling.
- To protect and enhance natural assets and facilitate net gain in biodiversity
- Support local food produces, food waste reduction and healthy low carbon meals
- To facilitate the development Develop a climate resilience plan
- Securing external funding
- Work with partners, community organisations and other stakeholders
- Monitor and report progress

# Our priorities – economic growth

We will deliver sustainable economic growth, increasing productivity and the number of high-quality jobs in Dorset, creating great places to live, work and visit.

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on Dorset's economy, though precisely what those impacts are, and how long they will last, will take years to understand. The council has worked hard to ensure local businesses have received government grants, distributing over £250m in just 12 months.

More positively, the pandemic has provided an incredible insight into the potential for flexible and remote working, and this has enormous potential to support Dorset's low-carbon economy and promote digital skills. We need to work together to build on this opportunity, drive the roll out of full fibre technology and 5G to enable people to travel less, and access opportunities online so that Dorset's economy can emerge from the pandemic in a way which is stronger and more environmentally sustainable.

## What will we do?

- Recover from the pandemic and become more resilient to future economic shocks
- Support Dorset's high streets to change and develop
- Support Dorset's residents to access retraining opportunities
- Promote apprenticeships across all sectors and set an example by creating as many opportunities within the council as possible
- Promote Dorset as a place to do business and attract inward investment
- Implement the Economic Growth Strategy adopted in 2020, and adopt a new Local Plan by 2024
- Support the growth of new and existing businesses, and in turn support job creation
- Improve the provision and use of sustainable transport and digital connectivity
- Enhance people's aspirations and skills to improve social mobility
- Support growth in Dorset's low carbon economy and skills

## How will we do it?

- Continue to efficiently deliver any government support grants for local businesses to support them through the pandemic and the recovery
- Advertise the government's fully funded retraining courses as part of its Lifetime Skills Guarantee.
- Establish an Education and Skills Leadership Board
- Drive the roll out of full fibre technology and 5G in Dorset to enable people to work from home effectively, travel less and access opportunities online
- Improve rail services, public transport and reliability of journey times by working with providers, lobbying Government and focussing on schemes to ease congestion
- Enable growth of good quality jobs at Dorset Innovation Park, our designated Enterprise Zone
- Support growth in key sectors, including advanced engineering/manufacturing, agritech, maritime commercial opportunities, aquaculture, tourism and the care sector
- Work with schools, colleges, universities and businesses to raise career aspirations and improve skills
- Stimulate local business opportunities, innovation and skills development through council procurement of goods and services

# Our priorities – unique environment

We will improve access to and use of Dorset's environment, in a sustainable way which protects it for future generations.

The pandemic has highlighted just how important access to green space is, particularly for children, young people and vulnerable adults. We are blessed with a stunning natural environment and recognise a new significance to it in mitigating the impacts of COVID-19-19 and possible future pandemics. It is more important than ever that we protect and enhance this natural asset for future generations.

Dorset has also seen an increase in visitors from elsewhere in the UK, which has brought both benefits and challenges. While visitors play an important role in supporting the local economy, higher volumes of traffic on the roads have put pressure on local infrastructure, and greater social mixing has created concern about how quickly the virus might spread. The council has within restrictions enabled and supported continued use of its country parks, green spaces, rights of way and harbours working closely with partners to reinforce key messages of 'hands, face, space' and reiterated the need for socially responsible tourism.

## What will we do?

- Work with partners to support safe visitor levels and improve access to safe outdoor spaces, including footpaths and bridleways, for everyone
- Monitor and respond to any additional wear and tear on the environment as a result of greater visitor numbers
- Deliver services in ways that protect our natural, historic and cultural environments
- Promote behavioural change to reduce waste and increase reuse and recycling
- Lead and support communities to respond to climate and ecological change
- Capitalise on Dorset's unique environmental assets to support our priorities
- Provide an environment that attracts business investment, tourism and a skilled workforce
- Protect Dorset's natural biodiversity
- Build and celebrate community pride in our environment to help keep it clean and safe
- Support the development of appropriately located renewable energy

## How will we do it?

- Implement our climate and ecological emergency strategy and action plan, working with our partners, particularly town and parish councils and government
- Promote Visit Dorset, the Dorset tourism information site [www.visit-dorset.com](http://www.visit-dorset.com)
- Actively respond to proposals that impact on the environment
- Deliver a highways verge management and street cleansing strategy
- Deliver our pollinators action plan
- Responsibly manage the spaces, buildings and land we own
- Support local farmers, woodland owners, foresters and land managers to make environmental improvements through agri-environment schemes
- Support the Environment Agency on flood protection projects
- Protect our environment from harm by monitoring and improving air, land and water quality
- Support and promote campaigns such as Litter Free Dorset and Love Your Dorset

# Our priorities – suitable housing

We will work with registered housing providers, community land trusts and local housing partners to deliver affordable, suitable and decent housing.

COVID-19 has put enormous pressure on housing services. The pre-existing shortage of suitable land for housing development, combined with the legal requirement to house everyone who was homeless during the pandemic, and problems with the supply chain in the construction industry, have added considerably to a service that was already under enormous pressure. It seems likely that pressure will increase as the effects on the economy contribute to housing insecurity and an expected increase in evictions. We must also monitor whether changing work practices is putting additional pressure on market housing – purchase and rents – from people moving into Dorset. Working with partners and private owners will be critical in coming months and years to prevent homelessness and reduce reliance on short term or poor quality temporary accommodation.

New strategies will be implemented around homelessness, rough sleeping and housing which will draw on the lessons from the pandemic.

## What will we do?

- Work with partners to continue to support people who were housed during the pandemic, once that requirement comes to an end
- Maximise the use of council assets, and opportunities offered through our partnerships, to develop affordable and sustainable housing, including the creation of more social rented housing
- Bring long-term empty properties back into use
- Support people to access the right accommodation suitable for their needs and affordable to them
- Raise standards of privately rented homes, focussing attention on those which do not meet good and decent standards
- Promote energy efficiency and green initiatives within the housing sector to meet our climate change objectives and tackle fuel poverty
- Implement new housing allocations policy and approach to prioritising housing
- Adopt a new Dorset Council Local Plan by 2024

## How will we do it?

- Develop a mixed programme of new homes, including supported accommodation and affordable housing including the Building Better Lives programme that will provide quality housing and care for local people ([www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/building-better-lives](http://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/building-better-lives))
- Provide homes by 2024 in line with land supply target and the Local Plan
- Develop a comprehensive and ambitious housing strategy for Dorset
- Provide a balance of new high quality, affordable housing in a range of tenures and prices to meet needs and aspirations
- Prevent homelessness and reduce reliance on short term or poor quality temporary accommodation by direct action through the provision of short term accommodation by adopting an Invest to Save policy
- Maximise the amount of affordable housing on new developments in line with the Local Plan policies to promote affordability as a proportion of new developments
- Support and enable access to energy efficiency initiatives and grants

# Our priorities – strong healthy communities

We will work with residents and partners to build and maintain strong communities where people get the best start and lead fulfilling lives.

This principle is focussed on community activity, and the power of our collective effort in recovering from the pandemic. One of the most positive things to have emerged from the pandemic has surely been the speed and determination of communities, voluntary and community groups, town and parish councils, local shops and other organisations to support those who need it. It has been a truly astonishing response and a testament to the power of our collective resource and compassion.

Local council budgets have reduced year on year for over a decade now and the reality is that we cannot continue to provide everything residents, businesses and visitors all want and need. Responding to the pandemic has put enormous strain on budgets that were already insufficient, so it is more important than ever that we find the best way of working together to help communities to help themselves.

We know that COVID-19 has had a particularly damaging impact on children, young people and vulnerable adults. We are anticipating a significant increase in people reporting mental health problems, and we must work together at a community level to respond to that. We also need to recognise that the impact of COVID-19 will last for several years, particularly amongst children, vulnerable adults, service providers and business and this cannot be underestimated. Many will continue to struggle with significant workforce issues which are exacerbated by our rural landscape and geographically dispersed population.

Whether by volunteering for a local group, standing for your local town or parish council, making a donation to a local food bank, offering your time and expertise to a local initiative or simply learning more about your local community, everyone can do something. The council will continue to support new community groups and initiatives to help make this happen.

## What will we do?

- Keep residents and visitors informed about health and wellbeing, including COVID-19
- Work with and support the Strategic Alliance Board (a group of partners who have come together to support children and young people)
- Maintain and strengthen the voluntary and community sector, including facilitating / helping residents and communities to support each other
- Work to improve the social and cultural wellbeing of the area
- Enable people to feel a sense of belonging and to participate actively in their community
- Aim to increase people's healthy life expectancy and reduce differences between areas
- Provide additional support to communities with the greatest challenges, including the Stronger Neighbourhoods project in Weymouth and Portland
- Improve outcomes for children, and focus on narrowing the gap for the most vulnerable
- Work to find creative and innovative ways to deliver support and care to vulnerable adults to support their independence and to try and reduce the call on statutory services
- Ensure where statutory services are needed that they are available at the right time, right place and supports where possible people reaching crisis point
- Focus on keeping the voice of residents central to all we do and regularly ensure we are doing what matters most to people

## How will we do it?

- Enable and support appropriate level of Page-23 testing

- Encourage take up of COVID-19 vaccinations
- Support communities to be connected, inclusive, safe and active
- Support the development of the Dorset Integrated Care System (ICS) with a particular focus on the health and care partnership forum, place-based partnerships and strategic commissioning workstreams
- Refresh the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Dorset, working through the Health and Wellbeing Board, to inform the ICS priorities
- Support the development of a health and care strategy for Dorset that promotes integration, early intervention and prevention, and tackles the most pressing health problems
- Work with the ICS and its statutory body to ensure resources to support the strategy
- Ensure a place-based approach to improving health and wellbeing identifies and tackles the key inequalities in health outcomes in Dorset
- Implement the Cultural Strategy
- Work collaboratively with town and parish councils and communities to identify and deliver what they think is important
- Provide an inclusive and accessible directory of community activities to connect people and tackle social isolation
- Recognise when the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector is better placed to provide a service and support them in their work
- Encourage volunteering to help build communities, reduce loneliness and enable people to learn new skills
- Help people to claim and receive the benefits they are entitled to
- Improve mental health support for children, young people and adults
- Help ensure food available to buy and eat is safe
- Increase the number of people supported by LiveWell Dorset to be more active, maintain healthy weight, quit smoking and reduce their alcohol intake ([www.livewelldorset.co.uk](http://www.livewelldorset.co.uk))
- Protect people from harm from fraud, rogue traders and scammers
- Provide safe and useable cycle ways and footpaths, integrated bus services and community transport schemes
- Provide and maintain access to rights of way, country parks and countryside
- Communicate quickly and accurately with residents using a range of channels
- Work with voluntary and community sector to identify innovative ways to help adults with care and support needs
- Review our day opportunities service and develop and implement a more flexible offer
- Work with residents to develop our preventative offer to support people at the earliest opportunity
- Deliver A Better Life Programme and the Greater Partnerships project
- Support informal carers and ensure we have the support in the right place
- Promote working in adult care as a career of choice and enhance training and development offer working with community ,voluntary organisation, businesses and education partners



# Our priorities – staying safe and well

We will work with all our residents to have a good quality of life.

This priority is focussed on individuals, and the council's duty to protect the most vulnerable. With some packages of support running to several thousand pounds per week, this is the area where the council spends most of its money, and experiences the greatest degree of pressure.

Although COVID-19 appears to pose a lower risk of infection and serious illness to children and young people, its social toll could be devastating. The pandemic has intensified the challenges many children and young people face, and there are widespread concerns about the impact on babies and the very youngest from lost learning, families facing job losses and diminished income, and the impact of social distancing and lockdowns on mental health and wellbeing. Children must now be a priority in recovery planning, both nationally and locally.

## What will we do?

- Improve outcomes for children and support children disadvantaged by missing education through the pandemic
- Support people to build on their strengths
- Make Dorset the best place to be a child; where communities thrive, and families are supported to be the best they can be
- Ensure our children achieve the best educational results they're capable of
- Work with families and children with special educational needs and disabilities to shape better services
- Support vulnerable children with food and activities during school holidays
- Support people to live independently in their own homes and, when this isn't possible, to provide high quality care,
- Work to protect children and vulnerable adults and prevent them from being exploited
- Ensure good quality service provision is available when needed by those most in need
- Learn from living with COVID-19 and develop support based on good information and data
- Review how we use resources to ensure they are shared in the most effective and efficient way to meet people's needs
- Review mental health services with partners to ensure services are accessible to those who need them

## How will we do it?

- Deliver our Children, Young People and Families' plan 2020-2023
- Provide good quality social care services
- Provide more specialist education within Dorset for children with complex communication and learning needs including creating a new centre of excellence at St Mary's, Shaftesbury
- Recruit more Dorset Council foster carers, shared lives carers and develop more children's home provision in Dorset
- Increase the types of care placements available for children and young people
- Develop youth support services
- Provide information, advice and support at the earliest opportunity
- Use technology – and help others to use it - to explore innovative ways to improve quality of life and independence

- Improve the way we work to deliver better outcomes for children and young people through our place-based locality teams and Dorset Children Thrive model
- Improve the way we work to deliver better outcomes for adults
- Work with and support providers to ensure they offer good quality care and support
- Implement the government's Breathing Space policy for people struggling with debt
- Ensure there is sufficient choice and availability of care for vulnerable adults
- Work jointly with health services to support people who are leaving hospital
- Develop a carers strategy
- Work closely with health to ensure we have the right services available to meet the health and care needs of children and adults
- Signpost those affected by the pandemic to services that support people with bereavement and grief

# Dorset Council's values, behaviours and principles

As we have come together to create a new organisation, we have defined our principles and values for our journey ahead. This is the focus of our transformation plan which will support us to achieve the council's priorities by 2024

## Our values

- We are an advocate for Dorset on a local, national and global stage
- We work together with our communities and our partners to make things happen
- We put people first and design services around their needs now and in future
- We are open, accessible and accountable
- We use time and money wisely
- We value people and build on their strengths

## Our principles

- Employer of choice
- Customer focused
- Sustainable organisation
- Effective and modern

## Our behaviours

- Responsibility
- Respect
- Recognition
- Collaboration

## Our equality objectives

- Fostering good relations with and within the community
- Developing and supporting a diverse workforce
- Developing, commissioning and delivering inclusive and responsive services

# Dorset Council's transformation programme

Dorset Council has an ambition to be a modern 21st century organisation, re-thinking how we deliver services. Following learning from the COVID-19-19-19 pandemic, we have developed a transformation programme made up of 38 projects that will deliver savings of around £18 million over the life of this plan and sustain and were possible improve service delivery.

Dorset Council will transform to:

- Be a key player in place shaping, optimising community capacity and assets.
- Be an early intervention, inclusion county.
- Be smart in its use of assets, estate and capital.
- Be a commercially minded council that demonstrates value for money services.
- Be a great organisation to work in and with - an employer of choice.

This will be achieved by:

- transforming our services with our customers, communities and partners
- operating at a lower cost with a reduced carbon footprint
- planning for the long term by investing in services and activities that set a strategic path to managing demand
- using evidence and business intelligence to direct our decisions to deliver improved impact and good value
- tackling digital exclusion so that no-one in Dorset is disadvantaged digitally
- building ambitious and sustainable capabilities that prepare the council for the future

**Which council strategies help deliver the council plan?**

Strategies that support all 5 themes	Economic growth	Unique environment	Suitable housing	Strong and healthy communities	Staying safe and well
<p>COVID-19 Recovery Strategy and Workplans (Local Resilience Forum)</p> <p>Health and Wellbeing Strategy</p> <p>Customer Transformation Strategy</p> <p>Diversity and inclusion strategy 2021 to 2024</p> <p>Library Strategy</p> <p>People strategy 2019 to 2024</p> <p>Budget strategy 2021 to 2022</p> <p>Procurement strategy 2020 to 2022</p> <p>Asset management strategy 2020 to 2023</p> <p>Digital strategy</p> <p>External communications strategy</p> <p>Dorset Council climate and ecological &amp; emergency strategy</p> <p>Dorset Council transformation plan 2020 to 2024+</p> <p>Dorset Council Local plan (in development)</p>	<p>Economic growth strategy 2020 to 2024</p> <p>Dorset passenger transport strategy 2015 to 2026</p> <p>Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset local transport plan 2011 to 2026</p>	<p>Dorset Harbours strategy (in development)</p> <p>Dorset coast strategy 2011 to 2021 *</p> <p>Jurassic coast partnership plan 2020 to 2025</p> <p>Dorset coastal community team connective economic plan 2018*</p> <p>Dorset area of outstanding natural beauty management plan 2019 to 2024</p> <p>Cranborne Chase area of outstanding natural beauty management plan 2019 to 2024</p> <p>Dorset rights of way improvement plan*2011 to 2021</p> <p>Dorset's Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2008-2033</p> <p>Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan to 2033</p>	<p>Homelessness and rough sleeper strategy</p> <p>Housing strategy (in development)</p> <p>Housing allocations policy</p> <p>Building Better Lives+</p>	<p>A Better Life+</p> <p>Community safety plan 2020 to 2023</p> <p>Dorset Council communities strategy (in development)</p> <p>Youth Justice strategy 2021 to 2022</p> <p>Placement Sufficiency Strategy+ 2020 to 2023</p> <p>Corporate Parenting strategy 2020 to 2023</p> <p>Cultural strategy 2021 to 2026</p> <p>Children, Young People and Families' Plan 2020-23</p>	<p>Community safety plan 2020 to 2023</p> <p>Dorset SEND strategy 2018 to 2021*</p> <p>Pan Dorset reducing reoffending strategy 2018 to 2021*</p> <p>Children, Young People and Families' Plan 2020-23</p> <p>Pan-Dorset Child exploitation strategy 2020 to 2022</p> <p>Youth Justice strategy 2021 to 2022</p> <p>Corporate Parenting strategy 2020 to 2023</p> <p>Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2020 to 2023</p> <p>Building better lives+</p> <p>Health and wellbeing strategy</p>

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# Dorset Council's Plan

2020 - 2024



## Welcome

This is the Dorset Council Plan, which sets out our ambitions for the next four years. It incorporates the political vision of your new councillors, and has been developed following a conversation with residents, town and parish councils, businesses and representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Our ambition is to put Dorset Council at the heart of the community. The reorganisation of local government in 2019 simplified administrative structures, and was a big step forward, but we continue to face some very significant challenges, locally, nationally and globally.



**Cllr Spencer Flower,**  
Leader of Dorset Council

It is clear that the climate and ecological emergency must inform the council's decisions and actions for the foreseeable future. A climate and ecological change strategy and action plan is currently being developed. It will make a significant change in our approach and will require a shared commitment and ongoing dialogue with you, our residents and partners.

We must all challenge ourselves to do more and this will involve some difficult conversations about the nature of our economic growth and the infrastructure – particularly the transport infrastructure – that underpins it. We will drive the roll out of full fibre technology and 5G in Dorset to enable people to travel less and access opportunities online. We need to maximise technology so that 'jobs move to people, rather than people moving to jobs'.

We must work closely with Dorset's children and young people, not only to safeguard their future environment, but also to improve their aspirations, education, health and wellbeing. Levels of obesity continue to rise, and educational outcomes remain low, particularly in more deprived areas of the county. If we want our young people to stay in Dorset, we must give them something to stay for, so we will also focus our energies on developing suitable housing, the skills agenda and sustainable economic growth.

**Financial constraints remain, and demand continues to grow for services which:**

- support children with special educational needs and disabilities;
- keep children safe from risk of harm; and
- support vulnerable older people and people with disabilities.

In response, the council has developed a four year medium-term financial plan which sets out our budget demands, pressures and risks. We will champion the interests of Dorset, advocate nationally the need for better funding, and work with our partners for the benefit of our county.

This is a high-level plan – delivery will be detailed in directorate and service plans as they develop. We will need to work together with residents, partners and communities to deliver our shared ambitions and to monitor how we're doing.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, comments or concerns, please make contact with your local Dorset Council ward councillor – they are there to represent your area and respond to your queries and concerns. Please keep them informed about the issues that affect you and your communities, so we can continue to make Dorset a great place to live, work and visit.



# Understanding Dorset

## Population

Dorset (Council area) has a population of 375,000 residents, 28% of whom are aged 65 and older (compared to 18% in England and Wales).

Dorset is an attractive place for people to settle in their retirement – it has a large population of older people, and relatively low birth rates. Currently there are over 7,000 people in Dorset living with dementia, and the number is increasing. Younger people often move away from the area. The population continues to grow slowly, driven by people moving into the county and longer life expectancy. The greatest part of population growth is among over 65s. Dorset's working age population is expected to see a marginal decline over the next 25 years.

The Dorset rural idyll can conceal hidden deprivation: there are pockets of deprivation, mostly in urban areas (mainly Weymouth and Portland). But there is also some rural deprivation due to isolation and difficulty accessing housing, transport and essential services. Crime is generally low in Dorset.

The population is predominantly white British, with 4.4% of our residents black and minority ethnic.

## Natural, geological and historic environment

Dorset's natural environment is a great asset.

95 miles of coast in Dorset and Devon are classified as a UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site – the only one in England. Over half of Dorset is covered by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designation; 7% of Dorset is protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest; and Dorset has one of the largest areas of protected lowland heath in Europe.

These designations together mark Dorset as a special place but also present challenges in terms of available land for delivering housing and employment development.

Dorset also has a rich historic environment, with one in twenty of all the protected ancient monuments in England, a well preserved pre-historic landscape and around 10,000 listed buildings.

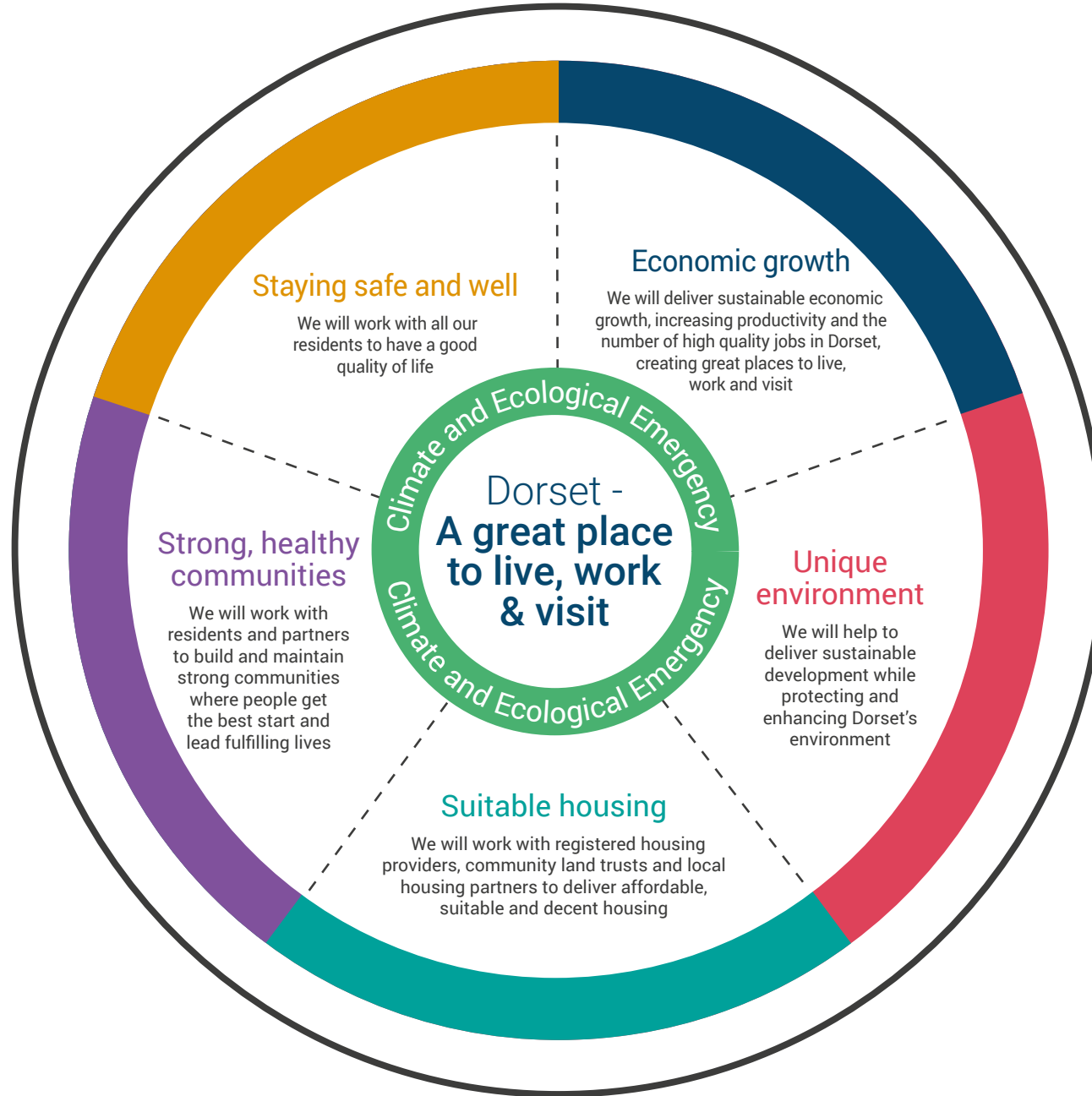
## Economy and infrastructure

Employment in Dorset is high but, like the UK, our economy has a productivity gap. Manufacturing, health, retail, education and hospitality are all big employers in Dorset. 20,000 businesses are based in Dorset: 86% are micro firms and fewer than 1% are large firms. Dorset's economy is worth around £7.1 billion and provides 143,000 jobs. Dorset has an above average number of advanced engineering and manufacturing businesses. But there is also a continuing seasonal, low skill, low wage economy with tourism and agriculture significant industries. The area is rich in valuable minerals, including stone, sand/gravel and oil.

Earnings are below average and house prices are high with affordability issues for many young people and keyworkers. In 2017, lower end house prices were more than ten times higher than lower end earnings in Dorset.

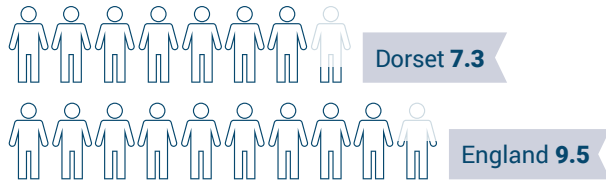
Dorset has no motorway but over 2,500 miles of roads. 95.1% of premises in the Dorset Council area have access to superfast broadband. 3.1% of premises in the Dorset Council area have access to full-fibre broadband.

# Our priorities

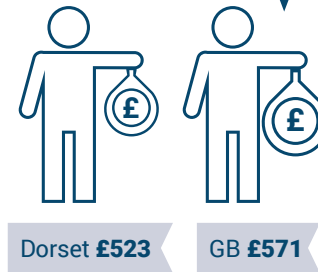


# Economic growth – the current picture

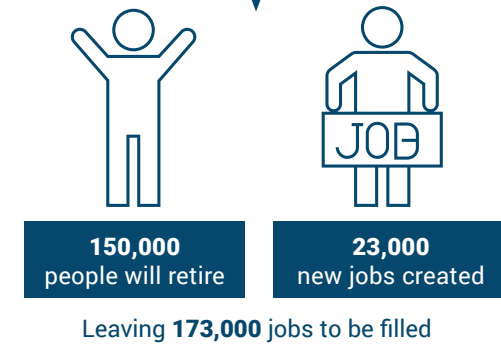
## Number of employees per business



## Average weekly earnings



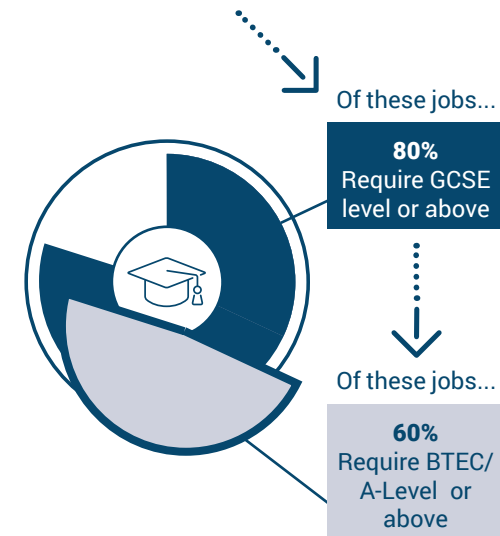
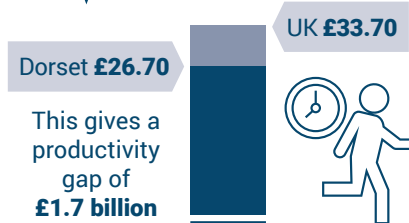
## \*By 2029...



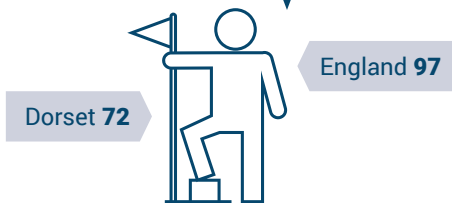
## Workforce aged 50+



## Value produced for every hour worked



## New businesses



(per 10,000 working age people)

## Superfast broadband coverage



The rate of creation of new businesses is below the national average and has changed little in the last four years

# Our priorities

## Economic growth

We will deliver sustainable economic growth, increasing productivity and the number of high quality jobs in Dorset, creating great places to live, work and visit.

### What will we do?

- Promote Dorset as a place to do business and attract inward investment
- Support the growth of new and existing businesses, and in turn support job creation
- Improve the provision and use of sustainable transport and digital connectivity
- Enhance people's aspirations and skills to improve social mobility
- Support growth in Dorset's low carbon economy and skills

### How will we do it?

- Adopt a Local Industrial Strategy and Economic Growth Strategy in 2020, and a new Local Plan by 2024
- Drive the roll out of full fibre technology and 5G in Dorset to enable people to travel less and access opportunities online
- Improve rail services, public transport and reliability of journey times by working with providers, lobbying Government and focussing on schemes to ease congestion
- Enable growth of good quality jobs at Dorset Innovation Park, our designated Enterprise Zone
- Support growth in key sectors, including advanced engineering/manufacturing, agritech, maritime commercial opportunities, aquaculture, tourism and the care sector
- Work with schools, colleges, universities and businesses to raise career aspirations and improve skills

- Stimulate local business opportunities, innovation and skills development through council procurement of goods and services
- Promote apprenticeships to develop the council's own workforce, and work with partners to improve the creation and take-up of apprenticeships across Dorset
- Support businesses and other organisations to reduce their carbon footprint

### Who will we work with?

- Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership
- Dorset Local Nature Partnership
- Schools, colleges, and universities
- Local business community
- Government departments
- Investors and developers
- Business support networks, including Chambers of Commerce
- Town and parish councils
- Digital infrastructure providers



# Unique environment – the current picture

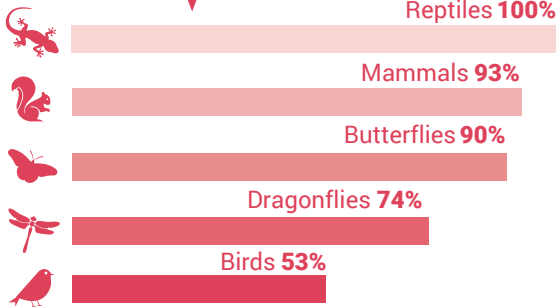
## Dorset environmental economy

(natural assets, agriculture, forestry, fishing, energy, tourism)



...is valued at up to **15%** of the local economy and supports up to **61,000** jobs

## Native species living in Dorset



## Natural status



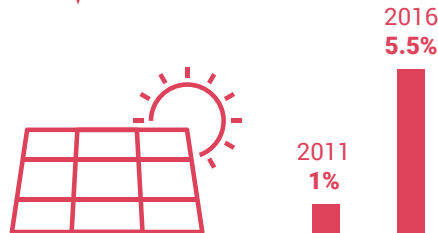
Dorset has England's only natural **World Heritage Site** and two **Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)** covering **54%** of the Dorset Council area

## \*\*Living in Dorset

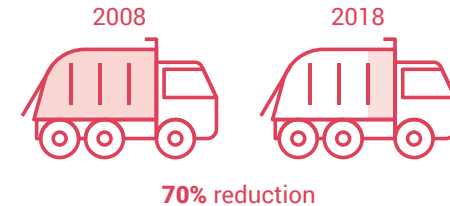


**Nine out of ten** Dorset residents said the environment was an important factor in their decision to live in Dorset

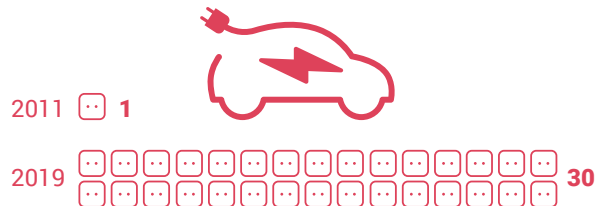
## \*Renewable energy production in Dorset



## \*\*Amount of waste sent to landfill



## Publicly available charging points in Dorset

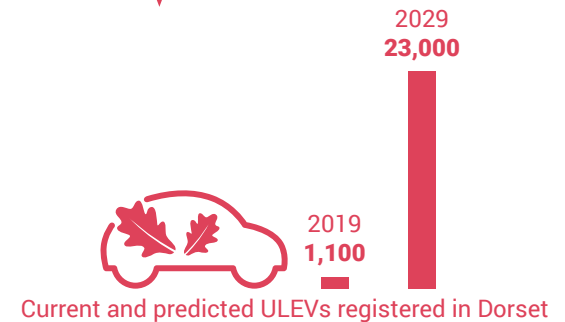


## Car and van emissions



**Government targets:**  
All new cars and vans should be "effectively zero emission" by **2040**

## Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs)



# Our priorities

## Unique environment

We will help to deliver sustainable development while protecting and enhancing Dorset's environment.

### What will we do?

- Improve access to our coast, countryside and greenspaces
- Deliver services in ways that protect our natural, historic and cultural environments
- Promote behavioural change to reduce waste and increase reuse and recycling
- Lead and support communities to respond to climate and ecological change
- Capitalise on Dorset's unique environmental assets to support our priorities
- Provide an environment that attracts business investment, tourism and a skilled workforce
- Protect Dorset's natural biodiversity
- Build and celebrate community pride in our environment to help keep it clean and safe
- Support the development of appropriately located renewable energy

### How will we do it?

- Develop a climate and ecological emergency strategy working with our partners, particularly town and parish councils and Government
- Actively respond to proposals that impact on the environment
- Deliver a highways verge management and street cleansing strategy
- Deliver our pollinators action plan
- Responsibly manage the spaces, buildings and land we own
- Support local farmers, woodland owners, foresters and land managers to make environmental improvements through agri-environment schemes
- Support the Environment Agency on flood protection projects
- Protect our environment from harm by monitoring and improving air, land and water quality

### Who will we work with?

- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty partnerships
- Dorset Local Nature Partnership
- Jurassic Coast Trust
- Dorset Wildlife Trust
- National Trust
- Natural England
- Marine Management Organisation
- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Highways England
- Government departments
- Dorset Police
- Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Town and parish councils
- Voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations
- Significant landowners

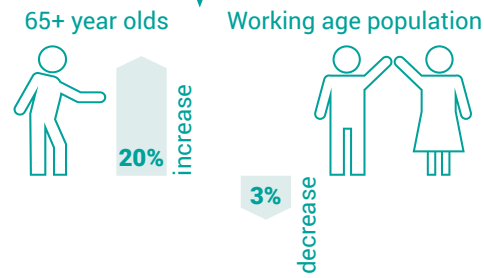
# Suitable housing – the current picture

## Properties in Dorset



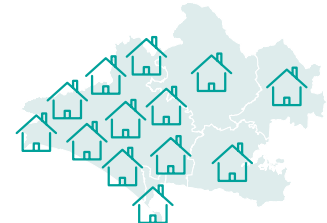
We will see an increase of around **7,000** properties over the next 6 years

## Population change 2019 - 2029



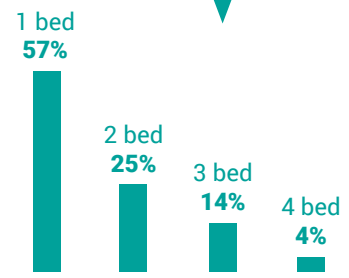
Housing supply needs to reflect this

## Area demand



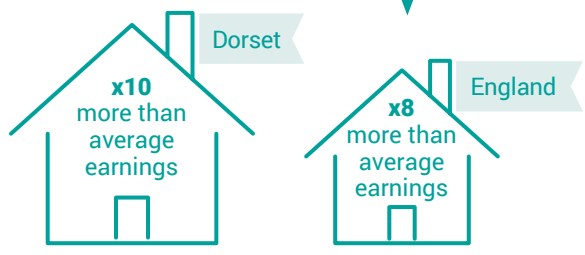
Greatest demand for social rented housing is in **West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland**

## Bedroom demand



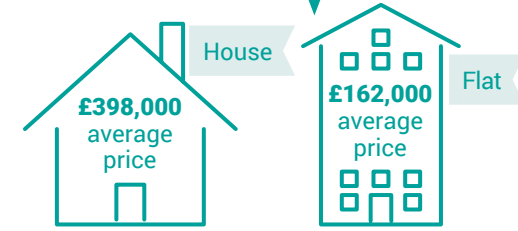
**More than half** of the demand for social rented housing is for **one-bedroom homes**

## Average property prices are...



This makes it **very hard for first time buyers** to join the property market

## Property types



**Detached houses** are the most common type of property in Dorset

## Rough sleepers

Between 2010 - 2017



Dorset had approximately 35-40 rough sleepers in November 2018, a decrease on the previous year

## Homeless households



There are **265** homeless households in Dorset

Data underlying the infographics is provided by the Research Team. For more information contact [research@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:research@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk). Dorset refers to the new Dorset Council area that came into effect 1 April 2019, unless otherwise indicated.

# Our priorities

## Suitable housing

We will work with registered housing providers, community land trusts and local housing partners to deliver affordable, suitable and decent housing.

### What will we do?

- Maximise the use of council assets to develop affordable and sustainable housing, including the creation of more social rented housing
- Bring long-term empty properties back into use
- Support people to access the right accommodation
- Raise standards of privately rented homes, using appropriate legislation
- Promote energy efficiency and green initiatives within the housing sector
- Implement a new single Dorset Council housing register
- Adopt a new Dorset Council Local Plan by 2024

### How will we do it?

- Deliver the Building Better Lives programme that will provide quality housing and care for local people ([www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/building-better-lives](http://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/building-better-lives))
- Provide homes by 2024 in line with land supply target
- Develop a business plan for our emerging housing company Homes Dorset
- Increase the number of new homes of all tenures e.g. shared ownership, starter homes, key worker housing, social rented housing
- Reduce homelessness
- Maximise the amount of affordable housing on new developments in line with the Local Plan
- Increase the number of households receiving assistance with energy efficiency from Healthy Homes Dorset ([www.healthyhomesdorset.org.uk](http://www.healthyhomesdorset.org.uk))

### Who will we work with?

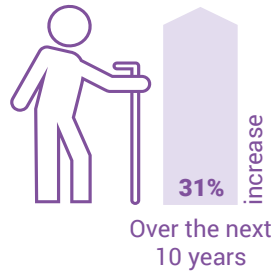
- Registered housing providers
- Town and parish councils
- Voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations
- Private landlords
- House builders
- NHS partners
- Homes England
- Dorset Police
- Armed Forces
- Community Land Trusts





# Strong, healthy communities – the current picture

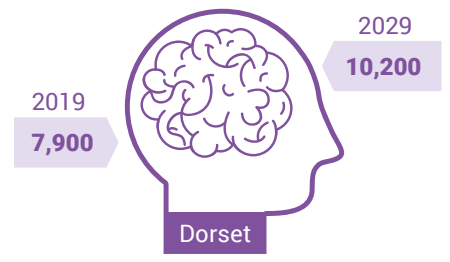
## 85+ year olds in Dorset



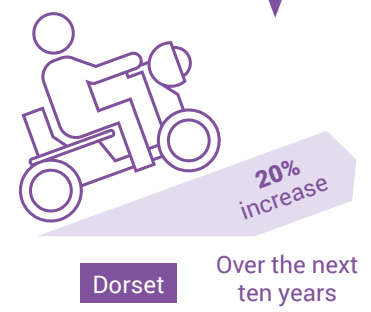
## Life expectancy



## 65+ year olds with dementia

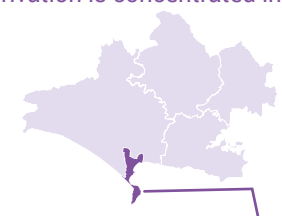


## 65+ year olds with long-term health conditions and disabilities



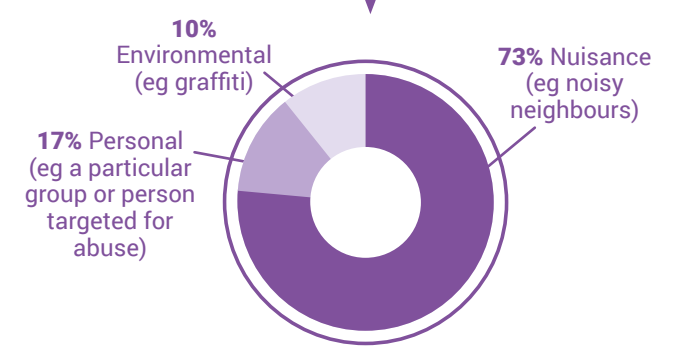
## Deprived areas

Dorset has few deprived areas in national terms, but...deprivation is concentrated in certain areas

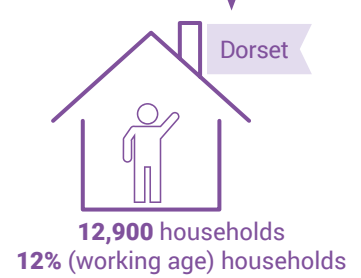


**10 out of 11** deprived areas are in **Weymouth & Portland**

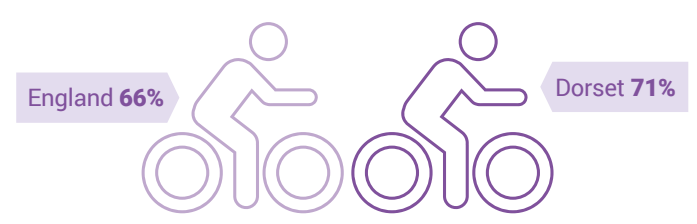
## Anti-social behaviour in Dorset



## Workless households



## Regular physical activity (adults)



Data underlying the infographics is provided by the Research Team. For more information contact [research@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:research@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk). Dorset refers to the new Dorset Council area that came into effect 1 April 2019, unless otherwise indicated.

# Our priorities

## Strong, healthy communities

We will work with residents and partners to build and maintain strong communities where people get the best start and lead fulfilling lives.

### What will we do?

- Work to improve the economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing of the area
- Support communities to be connected, inclusive, safe and active
- Enable people to feel a sense of belonging and to participate actively in their community
- Aim to increase people's healthy life expectancy and reduce differences between areas
- Provide additional support to communities with the greatest challenges
- Improve outcomes for children, and focus on narrowing the gap for the most vulnerable
- Keep Dorset connected, with better transport and digital links between communities

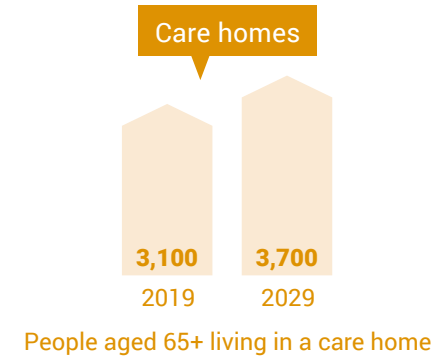
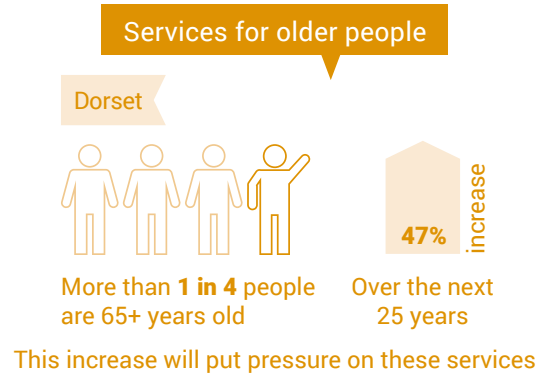
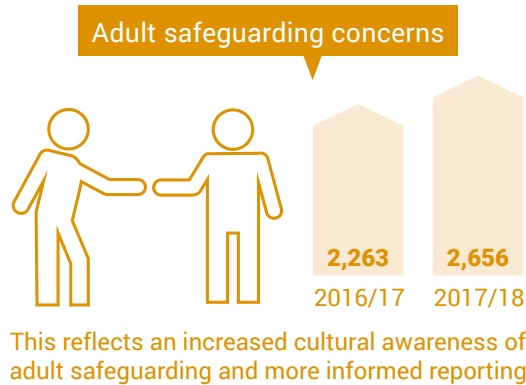
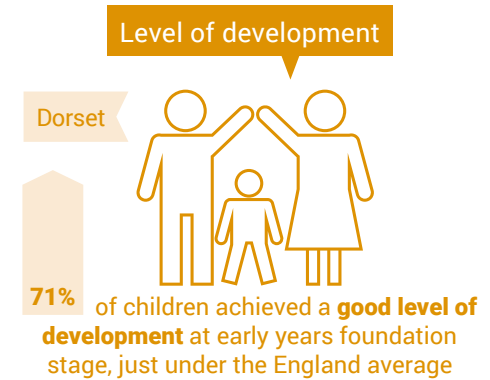
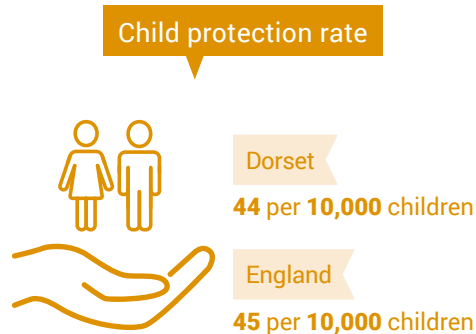
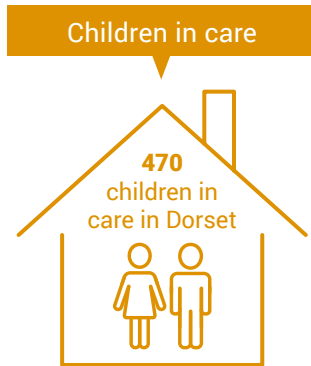
### How will we do it?

- Work collaboratively with town and parish councils and communities to identify and deliver what they think is important
- Provide an inclusive and accessible directory of community activities to connect people and tackle social isolation
- Help people to claim and receive benefits they are entitled to
- Improve mental health support for children, young people and adults
- Help ensure food available to buy and eat is safe
- Increase the number of people supported by LiveWell Dorset to be more active, maintain healthy weight, quit smoking and reduce their alcohol intake ([www.livewelldorset.co.uk](http://www.livewelldorset.co.uk))
- Protect people from harm from rogue traders and scammers
- Provide safe and useable cycle ways and footpaths, integrated bus services and community transport schemes
- Provide and maintain access to rights of way, country parks and countryside
- Recognise when the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector is better placed to provide a service and support them in their work
- Encourage volunteering to help build communities, reduce loneliness and enable people to learn new skills

### Who will we work with?

- Schools, colleges, universities and other training providers
- Residents
- Cultural and sporting partners
- Dorset Police
- Town and parish councils
- NHS partners
- Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Bus companies and other transport providers
- Other councils including Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
- Sport England
- Active Dorset

# Staying safe and well – the current picture



Data underlying the infographics is provided by the Research Team. For more information contact [research@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:research@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk). \*Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership Area (DLEP). Dorset refers to the new Dorset Council area that came into effect 1 April 2019, unless otherwise indicated.

# Our priorities

## Staying safe and well

### What will we do?

- Make Dorset the best place to be a child; where communities thrive, and families are supported to be the best they can be
- Ensure our children achieve the best educational results they're capable of
- Support older people and disabled people to live independently in their own homes and, when this isn't possible, provide high quality care
- Focus on getting it right first time, proactively providing early help as needs arise
- Build and support capacity in voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations
- Work to protect children and vulnerable adults and prevent them from being exploited

### How will we do it?

- Provide good quality social care services
- Provide more specialist education within Dorset for children with complex communication and learning needs
- Increase the types of care placements available for children and young people
- Develop youth support services
- Provide information, advice and support at the earliest opportunity
- Use technology – and help others to use it - to explore innovative ways to improve quality of life and independence
- Improve the way we work to deliver better outcomes for children and young people
- Design services with people, not for them

We will work with all our residents to have a good quality of life.

- Raise public awareness of exploitation of children and vulnerable adults
- Target our resources in the areas of greatest need and deliver services at a local level
- Improve how social care, education and health services work together through the 'Our Dorset' partnership ([ourdorset.nhs.uk](http://ourdorset.nhs.uk))

### Who will we work with?

- NHS partners
- Schools, colleges and universities
- Police, probation and youth offending
- Voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations
- Residents and communities
- Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Regulators
- Housing associations
- Service providers
- Prisons
- Local Enterprise Partnership
- Town and parish councils
- Dorset Police



# Dorset Council's values, behaviours and principles

As we have come together to create a new organisation, we have defined our principles and values for our journey ahead. This is the focus of our transformation plan which will support us to achieve the council's priorities by 2024.

## Our values

- We are an advocate for Dorset on a local, national and global stage
- We work together with our communities and our partners to make things happen
- We put people first and design services around their needs now and in future
- We are open, accessible and accountable
- We use time and money wisely
- We value people and build on their strengths



## Our behaviours

Responsibility • Respect • Recognition • Collaboration

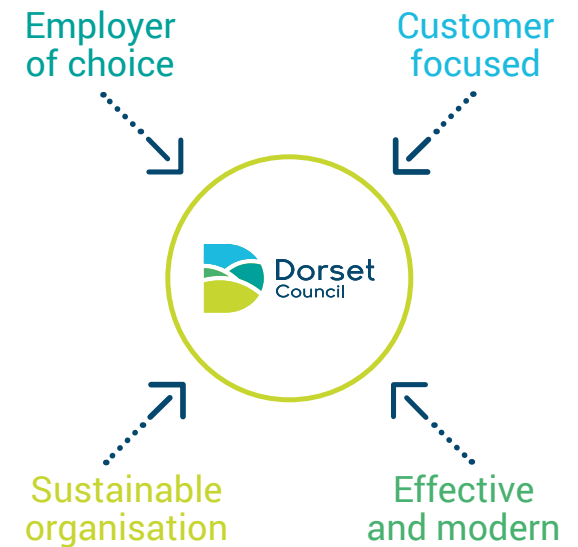
## Our equality objectives

- Fostering good relations with and within the community
- Developing and supporting a diverse workforce
- Developing, commissioning and delivering inclusive and responsive services

### Dorset Council is committed to:

A skilled and confident workforce which will be well trained, supported and enabled to take decisions and operate efficiently within a clear accountability structure. The behaviours, attitudes and approaches we take are key to our success.

## Our principles





**Dorset**  
Council



[dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](http://dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)



[@dorsetcounciluk](https://twitter.com/dorsetcounciluk)



[dorsetcounciluk](https://www.facebook.com/dorsetcounciluk)



[@dorsetcounciluk](https://www.instagram.com/dorsetcounciluk)

## **Appendix 3**

### **People and Health Overview Committee**

#### **Extract of minutes of meeting held on Thursday 2 September 2021**

##### **62. Updated Dorset Council Plan**

The Committee considered a report which included the updated Council plan which reflected on the learning and changes as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic prior to it being presented to Cabinet on 5 October 2021.

Officers advised that there had been an informal meeting held at the end of July in order for members to look at priorities and for an opportunity to contribute to the Plan.

##### **Areas of discussion/questions**

An important part will be the synopsis of the Plan which is quite lengthy. Needs to be something easy for members of the public to read. A key point document would be prepared.

While some of the issues that the Council faced were included it was felt it did not address all the points. The Plan included comments and input from all directorates but officers were happy to look at any activity that was not currently reflected

Biggest issues facing Dorset Council was demographics.

Revisit wording in respect of ASB and crime

Skills to wage ratios highlighted

Prevention of scale not adequately reflected

Highlighted the need to keep our youth in the county to help support our older people.

#### **Extract of draft notes of informal meeting of the Place and Resources Overview Committee – 17 September 2021**

##### **Updated Dorset Council Plan**

The committee considered a report which set out proposed changes to the Dorset Council Plan to reflect learning and changes as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic. An informal session of members of the council's two overview committees had been held and a draft updated plan produced following the discussions held.

The Place and Resources Overview Committee was invited to review the updated document and provide any further comments or suggestions before consideration at Cabinet on 5 October 2021.

Councillors considered the draft updated document and comments were made in the following areas:

- The importance of and links to the council's climate strategy and action plan had been recognised in the draft plan

- The name of the draft plan – the committee’s suggestion to Cabinet was that the plan should either remain as the Dorset Council Plan or change to the Dorset Council Corporate Plan
- There should be recognition of the status of the council in terms of area covered and population size
- How the plan would be reviewed in future and that it should be seen as a working document
- A suggestion was made that wording around the impact of retirement issues should be re-examined
- It was confirmed that infographics would be updated with latest data where available
- A suggestion was made that wording around high quality housing including affordable housing should be re-examined
- It was recognised that some additional detail requested would be available elsewhere and could be cross referenced to in the plan where appropriate
- How outcomes from the plan would be measured and links to the council’s performance management framework
- It was agreed to remove the names of particular areas of deprivation from the plan and instead provide a link to where the information was available.

The Chairman noted that the comments made at the meeting had been captured by officers to feed into the discussion to be held at Cabinet.

The Executive Director of Corporate Development confirmed that the points raised would be taken forward to Cabinet.



## **Full Council 14 October 2021 Return to 'In Person' Full Council meetings**

### **For Decision**

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr S Flower, Leader of the Council

**Local Councillor(s):** All

**Executive Director:** J Mair, Corporate Director, Legal & Democratic

Report Author: Jacqui Andrews

Title: Service Manager, Democratic & Electoral Services

Tel: 01258 484325

Email: jacqui.andrews@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

**Report Status:** Public

### **Recommendation:**

To decide whether to return to 'in person' Full Council meetings from December 2021, or from when the availability of the appropriate webcasting equipment having been installed and tested, or to continue with informal virtual Full Council meetings until a later date to be agreed by members.

### **Reason for Recommendation:**

To enable members to consider how best to ensure that democratic decision making is able to continue effectively and safely.

#### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 Since May 2020, Dorset Council has been operating virtual meetings. Initially these were held under The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020. The flexibility regulations came in to force on 4 April 2020 and were effective until 7 May 2021.
- 1.2 On 28 April 2021 the High Court dismissed a claim for a declaration that the law already permitted virtual meetings without the need for special

regulations. The High Court decision meant that formal decision making meetings of local authorities could not continue as remote meetings beyond 7 May 2021. Virtual meetings could only therefore take place on an informal basis at which members would not make binding decisions.

- 1.3 Following a decision of Full Council on 4 May 2021 meetings of Dorset Council and its committees that are not executive in nature continued to be held virtually, on an informal basis. In these informal virtual meetings an officer with delegated powers has made any decision, after consulting members about the decision that members would have been minded to make had they been in a formal meeting. The Cabinet met in a similar matter but with the relevant portfolio holder as the decision maker.
- 1.4 The decision taken by members on 4 May 2021 was time limited until the Government's social distancing requirements were lifted on 19 July 2021. However, at that time in view of:
- the increasing number of Covid cases in Dorset and
  - the duty of care owed to members, staff and members of the public wishing to engage with meetings

the Chief Executive took a decision, in consultation with Group Leaders, to continue with virtual meetings throughout August and September, subject to review in September.

- 1.5 At the request of Group Leaders all members were surveyed for their views about a return to in person meetings. Having taken into account the views expressed by members in response to the survey Group Leaders concluded that subject to the:
- availability of a dispensation (included as a separate item on the agenda for this meeting) for those members who for health reasons felt unable yet to return to in person meetings
  - installation of equipment to enable meetings to be webcast and
  - facility for members to be able to be able to join meetings remotely (*note; joining a meeting remotely would not count towards the quorum and such a member would not be able to vote*)

the Council should return to in person committee meetings as soon as the necessary equipment had been installed and tested.

- 1.6 Group Leaders and the Chairman also concluded that the meeting of Full Council on 14 October should be held virtually so that all members could debate the timing of a return to in person Full Council meetings.

## **2. Financial Implications**

- 2.1 The cost of webcasting equipment and other works to the Council Chamber are being met from existing budgets. Virtual meetings have avoided travel costs. A return to in person meetings would carry the usual budgeted costs associated with in person meetings including members' mileage costs.

## **3. Well-being and Health Implications**

- 3.1 It is recognised that there are a range of potential well-being and health impacts associated with virtual and in person meetings. These will vary depending upon personal circumstances. For some members a return to in person meetings will bring about important social contact. For others, attendance at in person meetings might be a cause for anxiety because of underlying ill health or the ill health of others for whom a member has caring responsibilities.

## **4. Climate implications**

- 4.1 Meeting virtually has enabled the Council to contribute to a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions as members, officers and members of the public have not been driving to attend committee meetings in person. A return to in person Full Council meetings will increase the emissions as a result of additional travel by members, officers and the public.

## **5. Other Implications**

- 5.1 None.

## **6. Risk Assessment**

- 6.1 Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:  
Current Risk: Medium  
Residual Risk: Medium

## **7. Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed in May 2020 in respect of holding virtual meetings. A copy of this is attached at Appendix A.

## **8. Appendices**

Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment  
Appendix B – Survey of Dorset Council members

## **9. Background Papers**

- 9.1 There are no background papers associated with this report.

## **10. Democratic Decision making**

- 10.1 Group Leaders met on 23 September 2021 to discuss the return to in person meetings. Following a recent survey of all members on this subject, Group Leaders considered carefully all the responses received and recognise both the views of those wishing to return to in person meetings and the concerns of those who are keen to retain virtual meetings.
- 10.2 Group Leaders have agreed that all committee meetings will be held as in person meetings from late October, as soon as the equipment enabling hybrid attendance of officers and members of the public has been installed and tested, enabling maximum engagement with Council meetings. This equipment will also enable members of committees to attend remotely and contribute to the debate, although the requirements of legislation will prevent their attendance counting towards a quorum and they will not be able to cast a vote if they are not physically present at the meeting.
- 10.3 With the agreement of the Chairman, the Full Council on the 14 October 2021 will be held as a virtual meeting. At the Full Council meeting on 14 October 2021, all members will have the opportunity to consider whether or not they wish to hold the December Full Council meeting as an in person meeting; this will give all members the opportunity to have their say on this important issue.
- 10.4 The Council respects the concerns expressed by some members who would not wish to attend an in person meeting for health or other reasons. Members will therefore be asked to support a further dispensation for all councillors to ensure that members who cannot attend a meeting in person over the coming months do not lose their seat on Dorset Council. This matter is dealt with by a separate report to Full Council.

## **11. Future of democratic decision making**

- 11.1 Members may recall that in June 2021, the Council responded to Government's "Call for Evidence" seeking local authorities' views on the possibility of future flexibility to hold meetings virtually where this is considered appropriate. Such flexibility would enable local authorities to make their own decisions on when this would be the right way to meet. Members' responses provided as part of a survey formed the basis of Dorset Council's response.

11.2 We are awaiting a response from Government following this “Call for Evidence” and will, of course, report back to members as soon as this is received.

**Footnote:**

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

## Appendix A



### Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Before completing this EqIA please ensure you have read the guidance on the intranet.

#### Initial Information

Name:	Jacqui Andrews
Job Title:	Service Manager, Democratic and Electoral Services
Email address:	<a href="mailto:jacqui.andrews@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk">jacqui.andrews@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</a>
Members of the assessment team:	Susan Dallison, Hayley Caves, Susan Ward-Rice
Date assessment started:	4 May 2020
Date of completion:	22 June 2020
Version Number:	3

#### Part 1: Background Information

Is this (please tick or expand the box to explain)

Existing	
Changing, updating or revision	
New or proposed	X
Other	

Is this (please tick or expand the box to explain)

Internal (employees only)	
External (residents, communities, partners)	X

Both of the above	
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What is the name of your policy, strategy, project or service being assessed?

“Virtual/Remote” Full Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings.

What is the policy, strategy, project or service designed to do? (include the aims, purpose and intended outcomes of the policy)

To ensure that all formal Full Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings held remotely are transparent and accessible to residents, organisations/stakeholders, and town and parish councils.

What is the background or context to the proposal?

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the council has had to put in place measures to enable the council’s decision making processes to continue whilst keeping safe members of the public, councillors and council employees in accordance with the Government and Public Health England’s guidance on social distancing and in accordance with new regulations for holding committee meetings from remote locations. Prior to the coronavirus pandemic lock the council did not live stream its committee meetings, other than Full Council, and Democratic Services had been investigating the options for webcasting. The live streaming of meetings was therefore a new service in response to the lockdown rules and the publication of new regulations to enable the holding of virtual committee meetings.

**Part 2: Gathering information**

What sources of data, information, evidence and research was used to inform you about the people your proposal will have an impact on?

The need to enable remote decision-making has come about due to the current Covid-19 pandemic to ensure that the council complies with the Government and Public Health England guidance on social distancing ensuring the safety, health and welfare of members of the public, elected members and officers wishing to take part in or observe the democratic decision making process. However, due to the pace at which this change to our decision-making processes has been required, it has not been possible to carry out a comprehensive consultation exercise. The current regulations enabling “remote” meetings are only in force until 7 May 2021. Should legislation be made enabling remote meetings beyond this date, and there is an option to return to meetings in person, consultation will be undertaken on this way of working.

The council has always ensured that its meetings are accessible to anyone wishing to take part, observe and, in some case, review meetings after the event with live-streaming, with accessible locations and any reasonable adjustments that we are able to make to enable people to attend, listen and/or take part in the democratic decision making of the council. It is important to bear in mind that Full Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings are “meetings in public” and not “public meetings”.

Unfortunately the Covid-19 pandemic has required the council to work quickly to restart its democratic decision making processes, using available technology to ensure that the council complies with Government and Public Health England advice on social distancing, preventing any physical attendance by members, employees and the public. In ensuring that the council meets these all-important social distancing requirements, it's clear that some of our residents/communities may not be able to “access” the meeting as it is taking place. However, all meetings will be live-streamed and recorded, enabling people with internet access to view proceedings either live or after the event. It is also acknowledged that prior to the lockdown some residents would have attended the committee meetings in person at County Hall or South Walks House and those members of the public may not have the technology at home or the ability to access the recorded meetings whilst the public libraries are closed.

The council has information about councillors provided in surveys that they have completed with regard to age and, more recently, members have been asked to identify if they consider themselves to be in a particular “at risk” category that may preclude them from physically attending a meeting if social distancing measures remain in place, albeit at a more relaxed level (as of May 2020, there are 27 councillors out of 82 classed as clinically vulnerable). The council is researching whether it would be possible to hold “hybrid” meetings with some people in physical attendance and some in remote attendance.

To ensure that public participation is maintained, the council has enabled members and residents to ask questions of the council by submitting their questions in writing in advance of the meeting. Whilst not ideal, this enables the council to be held accountable for its decisions/actions. Where there is a statutory requirement for someone to be able to ask questions in person, or answer questions posed by members, i.e. at Licensing Sub-Committees and School Admission and Transport appeals, the council is using a piece of software that will enable a member of the public to participate using software or calling in from a mobile or landline telephone.



What did this data, information, evidence and research tell you?

Current data on councillors who are clinically vulnerable has indicated that a large proportion of the councillors need to be shielded and longer term proposals for virtual meetings may need to be considered into the summer months and beyond.

Is further information needed to help inform this proposal?

No.

### **Part 3: Engagement and Consultation**

What engagement or consultation has taken place as part of this proposal?

The need to introduce remote meetings at pace has meant that it hasn't been possible to undertake a consultation exercise with members of the public, although the council has engaged with members and officers who will be required to participate remotely to ensure that they have the necessary software and skills and knowledge to work in this way.

Democratic Services Officers investigated how other councils were holding virtual meetings and advice was also available from several organisations including the Local Government Association.

Webinars held by Cornerstone Barristers on remote meetings have also been viewed (<https://cornerstonebarristers.com/news/remote-meetings-faqs/>).

The council has considered all software available and has currently opted for MS Teams and MS Teams Live Events as these form part of our current software licensing arrangements and offer the best security to the council to prevent breaches of our information governance rules.

Whilst it is appreciated that this technological solution does not enable anyone without a computer/smart phone to watch the meetings, minutes summarising the debate and setting out any decisions will be drafted after the meeting and can be provided, upon request, to anyone without a facility to watch the live broadcast or view the minutes on the Dorset Council website.

How will the outcome of consultation be fed back to those who you consulted with?

N/A

**Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment Guidance before completing this section.**

Not every proposal will require an EqIA. If you decide that your proposal does **not** require an EqIA, it is important to show that you have given this adequate consideration. The data and research that you have used to inform you about the people who will be affected by the policy should enable you to make this decision and whether you need to continue with the EqIA.

**Please tick the appropriate option:**

An EqIA is required  (please continue to Part 4 of this document)	<b>Yes</b>
An EqIA is <b>not</b> required  (please complete the box below)	

Name: Jacqui Andrews

Job Title: Service Manager, Democratic and Electoral Services

Date: 20 May 2020

**Part 4: Analysing the impact**

Who does the service, strategy, policy, project or change impact?

- If your strategy, policy, project or service contains options you may wish to consider providing an assessment for each option. Please cut and paste the template accordingly.

For each protected characteristic please choose from the following options:

- Please note in some cases more than one impact may apply – in this case please state all relevant options and explain in the ‘Please provide details’ box.

Positive Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the proposal eliminates discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and/or fosters good relations with protected groups.</li> </ul>
Negative Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protected characteristic group(s) could be disadvantaged or discriminated against</li> </ul>
Neutral Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No change/ no assessed significant impact of protected characteristic groups</li> </ul>

Unclear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not enough data/evidence has been collected to make an informed decision.</li> </ul>
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Age:	<p><i>Positive for working age people</i></p> <p><i>Unclear for older people</i></p>
What age bracket does this affect?	Possibly younger people or working age people
Please provide details:	<p>There may be some positive impact for younger people or working age people who generally do not attend committee meetings during the day due to work or caring commitments but they will be able to observe the meetings live or via recordings.</p> <p>The impact for older people is unclear as they may not have access to the internet at home or have poor wifi connectivity.</p> <p>Positive for all age groups who would have previously had to travel to Dorchester in order to attend meetings particularly if they did not drive, have access to a car or had to rely on public transport.</p>

Disability: (including physical, mental, sensory and progressive conditions)	<i>Unclear</i>
Does this affect a specific disability group?	Yes
Please provide details:	<p>For some people with a disability, virtual meetings will have a positive impact as there will be no need to travel and they will be able to observe meetings easily from their home.</p> <p>Current legislation suggests that we only have to provide audio for the meeting to be legally constituted. However,</p>

	<p>we are using technology which also allows visual elements too such as PowerPoint presentations and video of the speaker. Each speaker identifies themselves before speaking or presenting, which is helpful for people with visual impairments.</p> <p>The live meetings will have captions appear on the screen which will be of benefit for those that have hearing difficulties which are not available for meetings in person.</p> <p>The recordings of meetings are being added to the committee webpage and include automatic subtitles via the YouTube service which will be of benefit for those that have hearing difficulties.</p> <p>However, the Council is using the Microsoft Teams platform for its virtual meetings and the accessibility of this platform is unclear, for example there may be people with specific disabilities such as epilepsy who could find accessing Teams challenging.</p>
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Gender Reassignment & Gender Identity:	<i>Neutral</i>
Please provide details:	There is no assessed significant impact on this protected characteristic group.

Pregnancy and maternity:	<i>Positive</i>
Please provide details:	Someone who is pregnant or on maternity leave can chose to watch the recording of the remote meeting at a time to suit them. Virtual meetings will have a positive impact as there will be no need to travel and they will be able to observe meetings easily from their home, whether this be live or the recording of the meeting.

Race and Ethnicity:	<i>Unclear</i>
Please provide details:	This will be in English language and we don't currently have a facility to translate. Prior to the Coronavirus pandemic there were no facilities to provide translations for committee meetings.

Religion or belief:	<i>Neutral</i>
Please provide details:	There is no assessed significant impact on this protected characteristic group.  One potentially positive impact is that anyone with a fixed prayer time could watch the recording of a meeting rather than the live stream.

Sexual orientation:	<i>Neutral</i>
Please provide details:	There is no assessed significant impact on this protected characteristic group.

Sex (consider both men and women):	<i>Neutral</i>
Please provide details:	There is no assessed significant impact on this protected characteristic group.

Marriage or civil partnership:	<i>Neutral</i>
Please provide details:	There is no assessed significant impact on this protected characteristic group.

Carers:	<i>Positive</i>
Please provide details:	Someone who has caring responsibilities can chose to watch the recording of the remote meeting at a time to suit them. Virtual meetings will have a positive impact as there will be no need to travel and they will be able to

	observe meetings easily from their home, whether this be live or the recording of the meeting.
--	--

Rural isolation:	Unclear
Please provide details:	The move to virtual meetings may help people who live in the rural parts of the county as they will not have to travel to attend meetings and will be able to participate and observe from home. However, the new format of meetings is dependent on good Wi-Fi connection which can be an issue for some people in rural settings.

Single parent families:	<i>Positive</i>
Please provide details:	Someone who has parental responsibilities can chose to watch the recording of the remote meeting at a time to suit them. Virtual meetings will have a positive impact as there will be no need to travel and they will be able to observe meetings easily from their home, whether this be live or the recording of the meeting.

Social & economic deprivation:	<i>Negative</i>
Please provide details:	Those who are in economic deprivation may not be able to afford technology or devices to participate in committee meetings and other organisations that would normally assist and provide computer access such as libraries are closed. As the libraries begin to open as the lockdown restrictions ease people will be able to access the internet.

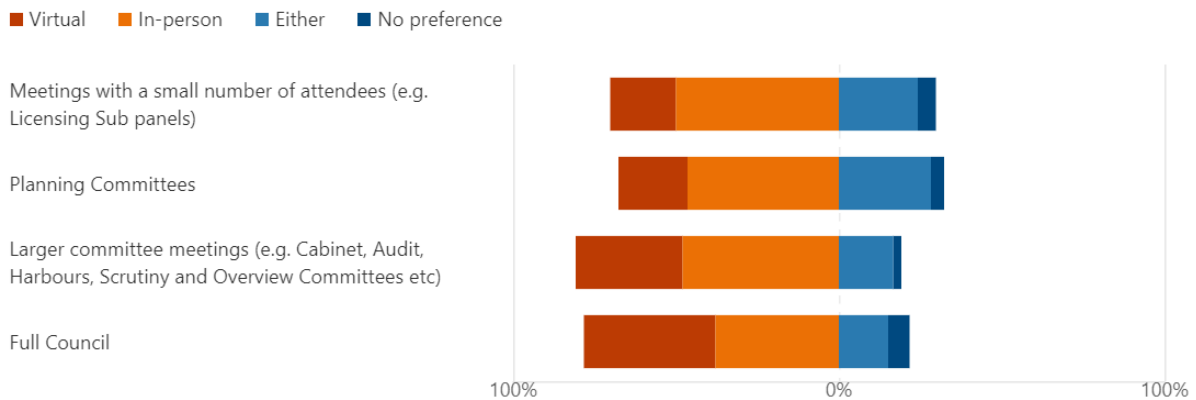
Armed Forces communities	<i>Positive</i>
Please provide details:	If a member of the armed forces has been deployed overseas or elsewhere in the country they will be able to watch committee meetings via the internet.

# Survey results - Returning to face to face committee meetings September 2021

## Introduction:

The week commencing 6<sup>th</sup> September, councillors were asked to complete a survey about the possibility of returning to in-person committee meetings. 75 responses were received from 82 councillors. The results from the survey were as follows.

## Question 1 - Would you like the following meetings to be virtual or in-person?



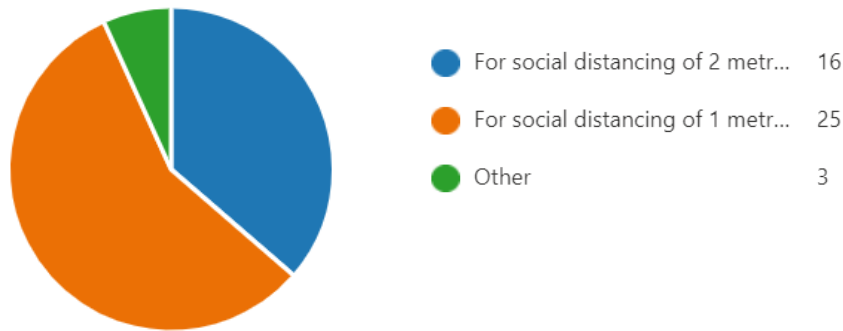
Results from above displayed as percentages:

	Virtual	In-person	Either	No Preference
<b>Small meetings</b>	20.3%	50%	24.3%	5.4%
<b>Planning committees</b>	21.1%	46.5%	28.2%	4.2%
<b>Larger meetings</b>	32.9%	47.9%	16.4%	2.7%
<b>Full Council</b>	40.5%	37.8%	14.9%	6.8%

## Question 2 - If face to face meetings were restarted would you wish to see a limit placed on the number of people able to be accommodated in the chosen venue?



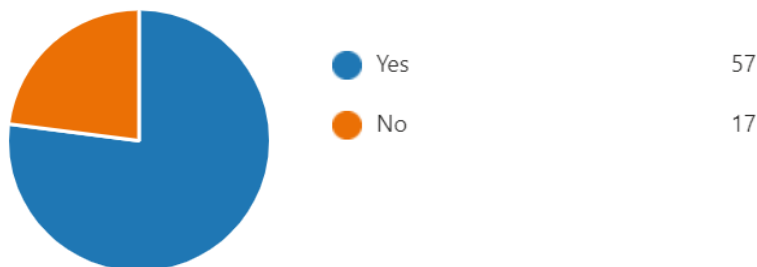
**Question 3** If councillors answered yes, to Question 2 they were asked this question: What limits would you like to see on numbers of attendees?



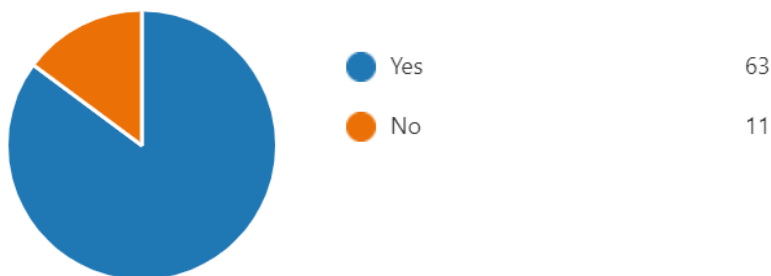
3 councillors answered with 'other' and stated the following:

- No public in the same room
- I would like all those attending meetings to have taken a lateral flow test prior to the meeting and have had 2 vaccinations.
- Proof of having had two Covid 19 jabs.

**Question 4** - Subject to the safe capacity of a room, members of the public are entitled to attend council meetings. If meetings are webcast would you support a strict limit on the number of members of the public who can attend a meeting in person?



**Question 5** - For virtual meetings questions from members of the public have been read out by officers. If hybrid meeting technology permits this, should members of the public be able to join in-person meetings remotely to ask their questions?





## Question 6 - Are there any other comments you would like to make?

- Hybrid is the way to go so everyone can do either whichever that suits them
- Hygiene measures at each venue. Ventilation where possible. Facemasks to be worn but removed when speaking possible
- No Questions on Face Coverings! If limited numbers should meet inside I believe Face Coverings should be worn. Also believe we should continue virtually as long as C19 cases remain high.
- For Full Council to return we need to be spaced apart and the chamber needs to be ventilated. As from the past it can be stuffy in the chamber and I feel we should continue to wear facemasks for the time being as well as in any face to face meetings.
- This should be discussed fully in an official meeting not a survey
- Whilst I am sympathetic to those who are anxious about Covid we need to learn to live with it. Those testing positive are reducing, there is evidence that those hospitalised are mainly the unvaccinated, and the death rates are those who die within 28 days of testing positive, which includes the already terminally ill. Most Town and Parish Councils have reopened offices with sensible precautions, and commercial businesses have done the same. As a councillor I miss the mentoring aspect of council work and having a face to face chat with more experienced members would be very valuable to me. Teams and WhatsApp have been useful but we need to get back to as near normal as we can.
- While I am for going back to normal for most meetings it should only be for the committee members and relevant officers to be in the room. Everyone else including some contributing officers should be virtual. Full council is still just too large. Those asking questions either the public or councillors not on the committee should do that virtually.
- I have a concern about the time management implications of this stage of re-opening. Working in Dorchester was fine when it was possible to schedule lots of meetings. The overhead to get changed, drive, park, meet, drive home, change again, for just one short meeting. You could end up with a 30 minute meeting costing two or three hours. The cost will not be offset by the opportunity to make other meetings because the people you would want to meet will not be there. I feel really strongly that we shouldn't dribble back but should return substantively on a fixed day. And I don't think we are at that point yet.
- In the same committee meeting does technology allow for some members to attend in person and other member to attend remotely
- Children are going back to school to resume their education and start a near as normal life. We should also lead by example and return to face to face meetings, where possible the public can attend so that we can be an open and transparent council once again
- I think the quality of our interactions is gradually being de-graded by virtual meetings. I've really noticed the difference at the face to face Licensing sub-committees I've been to, hence my enthusiasm for getting back to nearly normal. But I'd like to keep public virtual participation, one silver lining has been the increased public interest.
- I would suggest asking attendees to show proof of negative lateral flow test before entering a meeting
- I think banning some of the public is undemocratic and how would you choose. Also see many issues around this around discrimination. I would like to know about ventilation for the rooms and I would like to know will we use Lateral flow testing results prior to meetings for councillors and staff and other attendees? Many people do not have the apps on phone, how will we keep a record of attendees and how to contact them if an attendee becomes ill? I would love to attend face to face meetings but then do not want to transfer virus elsewhere if people are not testing.

- Planning meetings with comments read out are slow and give no feel of public opinion in general but preference the first and most articulate to speak out.
- Well ventilated rooms are paramount!
- We need to consider climate implications of large numbers of councillors driving many miles to in many cases sit in a room and say nothing, or not make a meaningful contribution. Also cost. Hopefully government will soon enable these virtual meetings to have same status as face to face
- Ventilation is an important safety measure and if smaller meetings are permitted face to face, I believe that windows should be open.
- Although I have some natural reservations about meeting face to face, this is overridden by a strong belief that democracy and accountability and indeed good decision making is much better achieved face to face,
- At council meetings there has pre Covid been a limit on the number of members of the public in the public gallery of the council chamber. There is no credibility in having virtual meetings when other politicians are having face to face meetings in Parliament. The sooner we return to normality the better
- I believe as a council we should be leading by example moving out of covid restrictions. The majority of towns and parishes are doing face to face meeting, as is Parliament. Schools have returned with no restrictions and many other large events are taking place. We need to learn to live with covid and move along rather than shutting ourselves away.
- Can briefings go back to in person as well. Personally, I have found them completely useless since they have been online. Online is a one-way communication, we are being talk at not with. Also, when they are online, they are less accessible for working people as they all seem to be in the middle of the day rather than late afternoon/evening. By having in-person meetings it gives councillors an opportunity to pop up stairs and chat to officers about outstanding issues. Since 'working from home' the response rate to emails is very poor.
- Having said the above, I think that there would be a good case for non-decision-making meetings (EAPs/working groups) to meet virtually.
- Some smaller meetings or those with a 'short' agenda would be more time productive if still held virtually.
- We need to return to normal ASAP
- Despite the official government line this pandemic is far from over. We cannot return to normal yet.
- If meetings are to return to face to face, are we able to have adequate ventilation?
- Virtual meetings definitely contribute to our environmental challenges, but as a responsible Authority, we need to be accessible in person to those who don't find it easy to carry out virtual meetings. Also, I am not sure about delegating decision making to officers.
- I'd be happy to take a lateral flow test before any meetings I may be attending if required by the council
- Please take into account current Government advice. This is that those in close contact with a person who is clinically vulnerable to Covid should avoid unnecessary social interaction. Members who are in this situation may choose not to attend face-to-face meetings at the present time.
- The statistics of covid are now closer to those of flu. We need to be careful but not panicky.
- Remote meetings have worked perfectly well and have actually enabled me to attend more meetings that I would have been able to do in person.
- For any face to face meetings I would want adequate ventilation and carbon dioxide monitors to assess this. I would also like the facility to change back to all virtual should the science dictate it. Could lateral flow testing be considered for all attendees?

- I'm still not double jabbed and have concerns entering a packed meeting room as don't want to contract the virus and then have time away from work resulting in a loss of income, also need to consider safety of our staff and don't want them to contract the virus and have time away of work as they are already stretched
- All people attending would be required to show a lateral test taken that day to be negative.
- Meetings are - or should be - about communication. Successful communication amounts to more than disembodied voices. So 'virtual' meetings are not adequate or satisfactory substitutes for in-person gatherings.
- Whether virtual or in person depends very much on the type of meeting. If public are involved, then they should be allowed to attend in person. However, I believe hybrid meetings are the way forward to allow everyone access to meetings and save on officer time if they can attend virtually in some cases.
- It is time we restarted Face to face meetings with caution i.e. face masks, cleaner and social distancing.
- Covid infection rates and new variants will dictate the safe approach taken along with government guidance. However, face to face meetings need to start; provided the necessary safety measures are in place to mitigate against infection as best as possible.
- My answers could change over time, especially if the pandemic gets worse
- Retaining the use of technology to allow the public to follow meetings and participate is important.
- I have been chairing face to face meetings of the appeals committee for four months now and see no reason why others cannot be held in person. Covid is here and we must learn to live with it. Having a survey on how we conduct meetings is largely irrelevant as the powers that be will dictate their own preference upon the rest of us, as at the moment.
- Any decision should be ratified by a full council vote
- Virtual meetings have worked really well and it keeps the attendance rate of members high, it doesn't matter how you are feeling as you can still attend without turning out.
- I think we need to be as flexible as we can and be able to react quickly if necessary. Wherever it is possible to meet face to face with safety we should strive to do so but we should respect the feelings of those who still feel it is unsafe to do so. That applies to both staff, members and public.
- Keep all non-public meetings virtual
- Holding large meetings virtually is far from ideal. Perhaps that's why virtual meetings of the full council have become so fractious. You shouldn't underestimate the frustration of being an onlooker with a microphone and video feed switched off and just half a dozen postage stamp sized talking heads on the laptop with the rest of the screen taken up by a page from the agenda. Such events are not real democratic participation and not what we got elected for.
- Although many people have had their vaccinations, I believe a Winter wave puts people at risk. It's too risky for large face to face meetings
- Protection of members from the upstairs gallery will be essential in the chamber, better still segregate the public if they wish to attend. Public must apply to attend rather than just turn up
- I will say that I have a hearing impairment which makes virtual meetings very difficult. They cannot come to an end quickly enough.

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## **Full Council 14 October 2021 Dispensation for non-attendance at committee meetings**

### **For Decision**

<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr S Flower, Leader of the Council
<b>Local Councillor(s):</b>	All
<b>Executive Director:</b>	Jonathan Mair, Corporate Director Legal & Democratic

Report Author: Susan Dallison  
Title: Democratic Services Team Leader  
Tel: 01305 252216  
Email: susan.dallison@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

**Report Status:** Public

### **Recommendation:**

That all members of council receive a dispensation in relation to Section 85 of the Local Government Act for the period up to and including 14 April 2022 for the reason that not all members may be able to attend an in person committee, Cabinet or Full Council meeting due to Coronavirus.

### **Reason for Recommendation:**

To prevent members from being disqualified as a councillor whose health or personal circumstances may prevent them from attending in person committee meetings due to the health risks associated with Coronavirus.

### **1. Executive Summary**

At the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2021, Full Council resolved to continue to hold virtual committee meetings, (except for some smaller committee meetings) from 7 May 2021 until such time as social distancing requirements

were removed. The majority of the council's meetings have therefore been held on an informal basis since this date with 'minded to' decisions from councillors and officers taking decisions under temporary extended delegated powers. Full Council also agreed at this time to give all members a dispensation under section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, until such time as social distancing requirements were removed. In the case of decisions that would have been taken at Cabinet meetings the Leader used his delegated powers for decisions to be taken by individual Portfolio Holders, provided that the other members of Cabinet had given a 'minded to decision' in support of the recommendations in the report or as amended at the meeting.

On 19 July 2021 the Government lifted all social distancing requirements in England, however due to the increasing number of Covid-19 cases in Dorset at that time, a decision was taken by the Chief Executive, after consulting all Political Group Leaders, to continue with on-line committee meetings to reduce the health risks associated with meeting in person.

**2. Financial Implications**

N/a

**3. Climate implications**

N/a

**4. Other Implications**

N/a

**5. Risk Assessment**

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Medium

Residual Risk: Medium

**7. Equalities Impact Assessment**

An EqIA has not been undertaken in respect of this decision however an impact assessment had been undertaken in respect of holding virtual committee meetings.

**8. Appendices**

None

## **9. Background Papers**

Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1975

Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 No. 392

## **10. Dispensation for non-attendance at committee meetings**

- 10.1 Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that councillors who have not attended a meeting in any 6-month period since their last committee attendance will automatically cease to be a member of the Council. This section applies automatically unless the reason for not attending is approved by Full Council in advance.
- 10.2 Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic councillors have continued to work to support their communities and at the same time have carried out council business online. Attendance by a councillor at a virtual meeting does not though meet the requirements of Section 85 of the Local Government Act and so councillors are at risk of losing office because for technical reasons the work they have carried out does not count as attendance.
- 10.3 As the majority of committee meetings have been held as virtual informal meetings since 7 May 2021 many councillors will not have had the opportunity to attend a committee or Full Council meeting in person since that date. Failure to attend a meeting in person by 7 November 2021 would result in automatic disqualification as a Dorset Councillor and would create a casual vacancy, triggering the need for a by-election. It is therefore proposed to extend the dispensation for all councillors.
- 10.4 In addition, when the council does return to face to face meetings, bearing in mind the on-going number of Covid-19 cases in Dorset, the greater transmissibility of new variants and moving into the winter months, a number of councillors may feel that on health grounds (either their own or in a caring capacity) they are not able to attend an in person committee meeting.
- 10.5 It is therefore considered appropriate that, in view of the on-going pandemic, an automatic dispensation is given to all councillors in respect of the 6-month non-attendance rule, up to and including 14 April 2022.

**Footnote:**

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.



## **Full Council 14 October 2021 Appointment of Temporary Members to Parish Councils**

### **For Decision**

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr S Flower, Leader of the Council

**Local Councillor(s):** All councillors

**Executive Director:** J Mair, Corporate Director, Legal & Democratic

Report Author: Jonathan Mair  
Title: Corporate Director, Legal & Democratic Services  
Tel: 01305 224181  
Email: jonathan.mair@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

**Report Status:** Public

### **Recommendation:**

That delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive, after consultation with Group Leaders and the local member, to enable the appointment of temporary parish councillors where a parish council would otherwise be inquorate.

### **Reason for Recommendation:**

To avoid a situation where a parish council that has become inquorate is unable to function and can carry out necessary business.

#### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 Within the Dorset Council area there are 153 parish and town councils. Parish and town councils range in size from 5 to 29 members, with a usual quorum of three.
- 1.2 Where casual vacancies arise before the next ordinary date of elections notice of the vacancy is published and this provides an opportunity for electors to require an election to be held to fill the vacancy. Where local

electors do not come forward to require an election to be held the vacancy can instead be filled by co-option onto the parish or town council.

However, if the number of vacancies that arise means that a council is no longer quorate and if insufficient electors wish an election to be held then the council cannot itself co-opt additional members.

- 1.3 To overcome this situation Section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that where there are so many vacancies that a parish council is unable to act then the district council may by order appoint persons to fill all or any of the vacancies until other councillors are able to take up office.
- 1.4 Recently due to three resignations Winterborne Whitechurch has become inquorate. Notices of election have been published but at this stage we do not know if sufficient electors will come forward and require an election to be held. Nor do we know that candidates would then prove willing to stand for election. As a precaution and to avoid a lengthy period when the parish council might be inquorate it is proposed that the Chief Executive should be given delegated authority to appoint additional temporary members to the parish council.
- 1.5 Over the next two and half years before the next ordinary date of elections there is the potential for other councils to become inquorate and for Dorset Council to need to appoint additional members. Rather than a delegation only to address the current situation with Winterborne Whitechurch Parish Council it is proposed that the Chief Executive should be given delegated authority to appoint in any situation where a parish or town council would otherwise be left inquorate.

## **2. Financial Implications**

- 2.1 There would be minimal financial implications, arising from the cost of any additional members attending meetings of parish or town councils.

## **3. Well-being and Health Implications**

None.

## **4. Climate implications**

None.

## **5. Other Implications**

None.

## **6. Risk Assessment**

6.1 Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

## **7. Equalities Impact Assessment**

None.

## **8. Appendices**

None.

## **9. Background Papers**

Section 91 of the [Local Government Act 1972](#)

### **Footnote:**

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

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