



# Place and Resources Overview Committee

**Date:** Thursday, 9 February 2023  
**Time:** 10.00 am  
**Venue:** Council Chamber, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

## **Members (Quorum 3)**

Carole Jones (Chairman), Les Fry (Vice-Chairman), Tony Alford, Toni Coombs, Ryan Hope, Sherry Jespersen, Val Potheary, Maria Roe, Andrew Starr and Roland Tarr

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

For more information about this agenda please contact Democratic Services Meeting Contact 01305 252209 / [lindsey.watson@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:lindsey.watson@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting, apart from any items listed in the exempt part of this agenda.

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## **Agenda**

<b>Item</b>		<b>Pages</b>
<b>1. APOLOGIES</b>		
	To receive any apologies for absence.	
<b>2. MINUTES</b>		5 - 8
	To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2022.	
<b>3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>		
	To disclose any pecuniary, other registrable or non-registrable interests as set out in the adopted Code of Conduct. In making their disclosure councillors are asked to state the agenda item, the nature of the interest and any action they propose to take as part of their declaration.	

If required, further advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

#### **4. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE**

To receive any updates from the Chairman of the Place and Resources Overview Committee.

#### **5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Representatives of town or parish councils and members of the public who live, work or represent an organisation within the Dorset Council area are welcome to submit up to two questions or two statements for each meeting. Alternatively, you could submit one question and one statement for each meeting.

All submissions must be emailed in full to [lindsey.watson@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:lindsey.watson@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk) by 8.30am on 6 February 2023.

When submitting your question(s) and/or statement(s) please note that:

- no more than three minutes will be allowed for any one question or statement to be asked/read
- a question may include a short pre-amble to set the context and this will be included within the three minute period
- please note that sub divided questions count towards your total of two
- when submitting a question please indicate who the question is for (e.g. the name of the committee or Portfolio Holder)
- Include your name, address and contact details. Only your name will be published but we may need your other details to contact you about your question or statement in advance of the meeting.
- questions and statements received in line with the council's rules for public participation will be published as a supplement to the agenda
- all questions, statements and responses will be published in full within the minutes of the meeting.

[Dorset Council Constitution](#) Procedure Rule 9

#### **6. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

To receive questions submitted by councillors.

Councillors can submit up to two valid questions at each meeting and sub divided questions count towards this total. Questions and statements received will be published as a supplement to the agenda and all questions, statements and responses will be published in full within the minutes of the meeting.

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[lindsey.watson@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:lindsey.watson@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk) by 8.30am on 6 February 2023.

[Dorset Council Constitution](#) – Procedure Rule 13

7. **COUNCIL TAX PREMIUMS ON SECOND HOMES AND EMPTY PROPERTIES** 9 - 14
- To consider a report of the Corporate Director – Climate and Ecological Sustainability and the Head of Revenues and Benefits.
8. **CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY AND PROTOCOL** 15 - 60
- To consider a report of the Business Partner – Communities and Partnerships.
9. **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND ECOLOGY STRATEGY, 2023 - 25 REFRESH** 61 - 88
- To consider a report of the Climate & Ecology Policy Officer and the Sustainability Team Manager (Climate and Ecological Sustainability).
10. **PLANNING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE: INTERIM GUIDANCE AND POSITION STATEMENT, SUSTAINABILITY CHECKLIST AND LISTED BUILDINGS GUIDANCE** 89 - 156
- To consider a report of the Senior Planning Officer.
11. **PLACE AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN** 157 - 172
- To review the Place and Resources Overview Committee Forward Plan.
- To review the Cabinet Forward Plan.
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.**





## PLACE AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

### MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2022

**Present:** Cllrs Carole Jones (Chairman), Tony Alford, Toni Coombs, Sherry Jespersen, Val Potheary, Maria Roe, Andrew Starr and Roland Tarr

**Apologies:** Cllrs Les Fry

**Also present:** Cllr Cherry Brooks and Cllr Andrew Parry

**Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):**

Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151), Dawn Adams (Service Manager for Commercial and Procurement) and Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

**32. Minutes**

A question was raised with regard to the inclusion of information in the minutes relating to the discussion of an exempt item. Clarification would be sought and provided to all councillors.

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**33. Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**34. Chairman's Update**

There were no updates from the Chairman for the meeting.

**35. Public Participation**

There were no questions or statements from members of the public or local organisations.

**36. Questions from Members**

There were no questions from councillors.

**37. Fees and Charges Policy**

The committee received and considered a report and presentation of the Service Manager Commercial and Procurement with regard to the development of a new Fees and Charges Policy to provide a consistent

approach in setting, monitoring, and reviewing fees and charges, and applied to fees and charges for discretionary services and trading activities across the Council.

Councillors considered the issues arising from the report and during discussion, the following points were raised:

- The requirement to undertake regular price reviews was noted and the assumption that fees and charges would be increased each year based on a reasonable level of inflation. Members considered the definition of 'reasonable' and it was suggested that the wording should be amended to state that increases to fees and charges were made following reasoned and careful consideration
- There was discretion to increase charges above inflation in some service areas and to undercharge in others and this was clearly set out in the policy
- The role for portfolio holders should be clearly stated throughout the policy
- The policy to include reference to fees and charges reflecting officer skills and the provision of high value services
- The issue of fees and charges being used to subsidise other areas and groups of people was considered
- In respect of fees and charges for discretionary services, there needed to be awareness of the range of items that the council charged for in different ways. This should be reflected in the wording of the policy
- Issues around the Equality Impact Assessment were considered
- The schedule of rates allowed for comparison with other councils
- Opportunities for the council to be more competitive in some areas were considered and it was noted that the policy provided the platform to further consider these issues
- Thoughtful communication with town and parish councils around the policy was required
- Each price area was considered on a case-by-case basis and took into account local circumstances
- Support was expressed for a review of the policy by the Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee, after one year of operation, to include a review of the application of subsidies.

### **Recommendation**

That the proposed Fees and Charges Policy be considered and approved by Cabinet (date 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023), with the comments of the Place and Resources Overview Committee, as set out above.

### **38. Place and Resources Overview Committee Forward Plan**

Councillors noted the committee's forward plan and items scheduled for the next meeting. In addition, councillors noted the Cabinet Forward Plan.

Items for potential review by the committee, were raised as follows:

- New Strategic Asset Management Plan
- Dorset Council Plan Priorities update: Housing for Local People – a report was to be considered by Cabinet on 25 April 2023 and a question raised as to whether there was a role for the committee in respect of this
- Dorset Council Plan Priorities: One Customer Account and Digital Innovation – a report was to be considered by Cabinet on 28 February 2023 and a question raised as to whether there was a role for the committee in respect of this
- Clarification would be sort in respect of the timing and reporting route for the ‘New Household Recycling Centre for the Eastern Area of Dorset’ item. It was noted that a local councillor briefing was to be held.

**39. Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

**40. Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

**Duration of meeting:** 10.00 - 11.08 am

**Chairman**

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## Place and Resources Overview Committee

9 February 2023

## Council tax premiums on second homes and empty properties

### For Recommendation to Cabinet

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Peter Wharf, Deputy Leader

**Local Councillor(s):** All

**Executive Director:** A Dunn, Executive Director, Corporate Development

Report Author: Steven Ford/Katie Hale

Title: Corporate Director – Climate and Ecological Sustainability/Head of Revenue and Benefits

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**Report Status:** Public

#### Brief Summary:

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill has an avowed aim to reverse geographical disparities between different parts of the UK. The Bill is wide-ranging, including provisions for more widespread devolution across England, changes to local planning and enhancing the ability of local authorities to take forward regeneration schemes. Additionally, the Bill will create a legal duty upon which the government must report on a number of missions for levelling up the country<sup>1</sup>.

This report sets out the implications for a key element of the Bill; the proposed changes to allow councils to place a council tax premium on second homes and permit a 100% premium on empty properties at an earlier one-year commencement point as opposed to the current two-year commencement point, with a number of recommendations on next steps. The aim of this draft legislation is primarily aimed to allow councils to raise additional revenue and to acknowledge

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<sup>1</sup> [Levelling Up and Regeneration: further information - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

the impact that second (referenced as ‘dwellings occupied periodically’ in the Bill) and empty homes can have on some communities. If the Bill receives royal assent, these options will become available to billing authorities with effect from 1 April 2024 at the earliest.

Through the Bill it is the government’s intention to:

- reduce the minimum period for the implementation of a council tax premium for empty premises from two years to one year; and
- allow councils to introduce a council tax premium of up to 100% in respect of dwellings occupied periodically.

As a billing authority, Dorset Council must adopt policies for the application of discretionary council tax premiums across the whole of the council area. There are a number of premiums already in place, having been approved by the council in previous years.

At a meeting on 20th February 2019 the shadow Dorset Council agreed that for second homes no discretionary council tax discount be awarded and that in the case of dwellings which have been unoccupied and unfurnished for at least two years, a premium of 100% (meaning the council tax is doubled). Current premiums charged for properties that remain unoccupied and empty (substantially unfurnished for over 2 years) are:

*From 1 April 2019, Dorset Council charge a 100% premium (meaning the Council Tax is doubled) on properties that have remained unoccupied and unfurnished for more than 2 years.*

*From 1 April 2020, a premium of 200% may apply to a property that has been unoccupied and unfurnished for a period between 5 and 10 years.*

*From 1 April 2021, a premium of 300% may apply to a property that has been unoccupied and unfurnished for a period over 10 years.*

The government has confirmed that billing authorities that wish to adopt any council tax flexibilities arising from the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill are required to make a council resolution confirming their requirements at least 12 months prior to the financial year in which the changes will come into effect. For Dorset Council to be able to utilise (from the year commencing 1 April 2024) the council tax flexibilities set out in the Bill two things must happen:

- (i) the Bill will need to be enacted before the end of March 2023 and

- (ii) the Full Council will need to meet after the Bill has been acted and before 1 April 2023.

There is a risk that the Bill might not be enacted before the end of March but early recommendations will allow the Full Council to make timely decisions if and when Royal Assent is attained.

**Recommendation:**

The Place and Resources Overview Committee is asked to consider the contents of this report and to recommend to Cabinet (date 28 February 2023) that the Full Council should be asked to approve the following additional council tax premiums be applied from 1 April 2024, or as soon as possible thereafter, subject to the required legislation being in place. That approval is given to:

1. 100% premium for dwellings occupied periodically;
2. 100% premium for properties which have been empty and unfurnished for a period of between 1 (previously 2) and 5 years

**Reason for Recommendation:**

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill has an avowed aim to reverse geographical disparities between different parts of the UK. The Bill is wide-ranging, including provisions for more widespread devolution across England, changes to local planning and enhancing the ability of local authorities to take forward regeneration schemes. Additionally, the Bill will create a legal duty upon which the government must report on a number of missions for levelling up the country<sup>2</sup>.

The Bill is currently at the report stage of parliament. The government has confirmed that billing authorities wishing to adopt any changes arising from the Bill are required to make a council resolution confirming their requirements at least 12 months prior to the financial year in which the changes will come into effect; meaning that the Bill will need to obtain royal assent before the end of March 2023 in order to adopt the changes for the year commencing 1 April 2024.

The proposed changes to legislation to allow councils to apply a council tax premium on second and empty homes is primarily aimed at allowing councils to raise additional revenue and to acknowledge the impact that second and empty homes can have on some communities, with a view that especially in the case of empty properties this would incentivise property owners to bring those properties back into use at the earliest opportunity.

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<sup>2</sup> [Levelling Up and Regeneration: further information - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

There is no official planning definition of a second home, but the government's English Housing Survey<sup>3</sup> does provide a logical definition, which is that: '*a second home is defined as a privately-owned habitable accommodation that is not occupied by anyone as their main residence. It may be occupied occasionally, for example as a holiday home or when working away from the household's main home.*' As aforementioned, the terminology that is used in the Bill refers to 'dwellings occupied periodically'.

From a Dorset perspective, this Bill once it has secured royal assent could have significant positive financial implications. Based on the latest figures (November 2022), Dorset has 5,722 second homes. If this was extrapolated into a revenue uplift, it would equate to around £10m, but from a fiscal budgeting perspective, the advice would be to expect a downward shift, based on owners changing use, selling or other changes to circumstances. As such, our prudent planning assumption is in the range between £8m and £9.5m for potential additional revenue. However, this will be updated once the legislation is passed.

It will be for the council at the time to establish the best use of this additional taxation income when setting future revenue budgets.

A growing number of local authorities across England are now making decisions in support of adopting the council tax premiums on second homes and empty properties, including a number in the Southwest. Within this context, it is important to recognise that the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill contains enabling elements to go beyond the council tax premiums on second homes and empty properties. How councils embrace additional freedoms and flexibilities that come through legislation, especially when pertaining to more financial discretionary powers, could influence future discussions on substantive issues such as devolution.

## **1. Financial Implications**

1.1. Initial high-level analysis suggests that the application of a 100% premium on second homes could generate around £10m in additional council tax revenue. However, as highlighted in the report, it would be prudent to assume a lower figure in a range between £8-9.5m given a range of factors that may impact on collection rates. However, this assessment will be updated once the legislation is passed.

1.2. Initial high-level analysis suggests that the potential adoption to commence a 100% premium on empty homes from the early one-year duration rather

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6719/2075342.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6719/2075342.pdf)

than the existing two-year point could generate around £1.1m in additional council tax revenue. However, there is considerable increased scope for reasonable challenge which we estimate could see a reduction to this revenue yield factored in with normal collection rate expectations meaning that an actual increased revenue of between £500,000 to £600,00 is more reflective.

- 1.3. It is important to note that, given the uncertainty around the timings for royal assent of the Bill into law, that no provision has been made to factor the potential revenue into the medium-term financial planning assumptions.

## 2. **Environmental Implications**

The environmental implications of this recommendation have been considered, and there are no implications of the proposed course of action that would act against the strategic ambitions of the Climate and Ecological strategy and action plan.

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

- 3.1. There is a potential positive impact on resident's wellbeing if under-utilised or empty properties are made available for occupation.

## 4. **Other Implications**

- 4.1. The recommendations set out within the report are subject to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill receiving royal assent.

## 5. **Risk Assessment**

- 5.1. Having considered the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Medium

Residual Risk: Low

- 5.2. There is a risk that the implementation of a second homes premium may encourage council tax "avoidance" through people seeking to transfer their properties to business rates as holiday lets. This risk should be reduced with the government also bringing in a requirement for people to evidence to the Valuation Office Agency that alongside having their property available for let for at least 20 weeks in a year, it must also have been actually let for at least 70 days. It is the Valuation Office that make the decision if a property (hereditament) is entered and remains on the Council Tax list or the Business Rates list.

- 5.3. There is a risk that the legislation may be delayed, making it more challenging to build in future financial assumptions within the context of the medium-term financial plan.

6. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

There are no specific equalities issues that have emerged from the potential implementation of this policy, although subject to adoption there will be additional revenue for Dorset Council to invest into services for the residents of Dorset.

7. **Appendices**

N/A

8. **Background Papers**

N/A

## Place and Resources Overview Committee 9 February 2023 Consultation and Engagement Policy and Protocol

### For Recommendation to Cabinet

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr J Haynes, Corporate Development and Transformation

**Executive Director:** A Dunn, Executive Director, Corporate Development

Report Author: Laura Cornette

Title: Business Partner – Communities and Partnerships

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**Report Status:** Public

#### **Brief Summary:**

Dorset Council consults and engages on a wide range of topics and issues relating to the services it provides for its residents. Throughout 2022 we conducted a wide-ranging review of how the council consults and engages, seeking to re-design the approach to make it more effective and efficient. Above all, we want residents' voices to be heard and listened to across the organisation; their insight and feedback used to help shape services and policies.

One of the key actions from this review was to develop a new Consultation and Engagement Policy and Protocol for Dorset Council, to outline and embed consistent standards across the organisation.

#### **Recommendation:**

Members of the Place and Resources Overview Committee consider the proposed Consultation and Engagement Policy recommend it go forward to cabinet. Also recommend whether they consider the Protocol for decision on whether Dorset Council will adopt it as a baseline standard for all Consultations and Engagement activity delivered to Dorset Council residents with any minor adjustments to be authorised by the Portfolio Holder.

## **Reason for Recommendation:**

Prior to Dorset Council there was an adopted Consultation and Engagement Policy from a sovereign council. As part of the harmonisation work, a transformation programme of the Consultation and Engagement function is being conducted, of which the policy and internal protocol are key elements to underpin the standards. It is deemed imperative there is a minimum set of standards and defined consistent process for how Dorset Council conducts consultations and engagement with our residents.

### **1. Background**

1.1 Dorset Council consults and engages on a wide range of topics and issues relating to the services it provides for its residents. We are committed to listening to residents and communities when developing and shaping our services, we conduct formal and informal activities and have direct and indirect conversations on a regular basis. This process also facilitates building a level of consistency and trust between the council and our residents.

1.2 In mid-2021, the communication and engagement service identified a challenge to: **'Improve engagement with our external communities and demonstrate that their voice is being heard within the council, in ways which are consistent, efficient, and appropriate, defining the role of the central team and responsibilities of other teams.'**

1.3 This programme is being delivered as a council transformation project, and Agile methodology has been used throughout the process. The discovery period of work ran from autumn 2021 to spring 2022, and actively involved colleagues from all services across the council who deliver engagement, consultation and co-production activity.

1.4 The discovery phase included analysis of all recent engagement and consultation activity conducted by the council, a mix of surveys, interviews and discussion groups with colleagues, councillors and with residents, exploration of best practice by other councils, and advice from The Consultation Institute.

1.5 Key findings from discovery phase can be found in **Appendix 1**

1.5 One of the recommendations from the discovery stage was: Repositioned role of the central consultation & engagement team (two officers) to provide advice, guidance and maintain central systems in order to support all other colleagues; Facilitate colleagues across the council to be able to conduct high quality consultation and engagement activity themselves. This will include the development of a new policy, a new protocol and training materials for colleagues.



1.6 This paper is concerned with the Policy and Protocol development section of the overall transformation programme only.

1.7 The benefits to having an agreed policy and protocol for Dorset Council are:

- Improved customer experience – much clearer journey for residents to have their say, ongoing relationship and engagement with Dorset Council.
- Better use of data and insight to inform design and delivery of council services – all residents’ voices being heard more loudly and acted upon.
- Improved trust in and satisfaction with Dorset Council among residents.
- Reduced risk of reputational damage, judicial review, etc. as a result of poorly conducted consultations.

## **2. Consultation and Engagement Policy**

2.1 The scope of the policy is for all external consultation by Dorset Council, excluding consultation on Planning applications, the Local Plan and Traffic Regulation Orders. It will also exclude internal consultation within the organisation for example; in relation to employee pay and conditions is a separate process and led by Human Resources.

2.2 The proposed policy sets out a fundamental level of principles that consultation and engagement taking place throughout Dorset Council will adopt.

2.3 Guidance for staff on consultation policy, standards and activity is given in the Dorset Council Consultation Protocol document (3).

2.5 The draft Consultation and Engagement Policy is included in **Appendix 2**

2.6 Both the Policy and Protocol have been developed with advice from and using the latest guidance from The Consultation Institute (TCI) to meet the objectives of the transformation review.

## **3. Consultation and Engagement Protocol**

3.1 The protocol has been developed to ensure consistent planning and implementation of consultation activity across all parts of Dorset Council. It sets out how Dorset Council will deliver consultation so that it is not only legally compliant, but of benefit to all involved in the process.

3.2 The draft Consultation and Engagement Protocol is included in **Appendix 3**

3.3 As part of the wider Consultation and Engagement transformation programme the protocol is also supported by a toolkit which provides practical

advice, templates and useful information for officers carrying out consultation and engagement activity. Online learning modules are being developed by the consultation and engagement team to train and support staff to be able plan and develop their own consultation and engagement activities.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

There is no financial implication for the policy and protocol.

#### **Environmental Implications**

A more efficient and effective council-wide approach to consultation and engagement will reduce unnecessary activity and wastage which would have a small impact on reducing the council's carbon emissions.

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

More consistently delivered consultation and engagement with residents may contribute to improved well-being and health

#### **6. Other Implications**

None

#### **7. Risk Assessment**

a. **HAVING CONSIDERED:** the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

#### **8. Equalities Impact Assessment**

An EqIA for the Consultation and Engagement Transformation Programme has been completed.

The aim of the transformation is that improved consultation and engagement approach across Dorset Council will provide benefits for people with protected characteristics, ensuring that their voice is better heard and used to inform service design and delivery. Currently people with most protected characteristics are under-represented as respondents to council consultation and engagement. We also know that residents living in south Dorset from lower income backgrounds have lower levels of trust in and satisfaction with Dorset Council.

**9. Appendices**

**Appendix 1** – Key findings from the Discovery phase of the review.

**Appendix 2** - Draft Consultation and Engagement Policy

**Appendix 3** - Draft Consultation and Engagement Protocol

**10. Background Papers**

None

## Appendix 1

Key findings from discovery phase of the Consultation and Engagement Review:

- Most formal statutory consultations are conducted in line with legislation, including the Gunning Principles, and receive relatively high numbers of responses. However, certain groups in the population are over-represented among respondents (mainly well-educated, middle-income, white, older people) and others are under-represented. This means that results received are not always representative of the population and we are not reaching all groups in a way they would like to engage.
- Most consultation and engagement activity conducted by Dorset Council tends to use a traditional survey methodology, and there is a lack of more creative methods (and the tools and training to deliver this) which would better reach and engage certain audiences.
- There is some good work on service design, user testing and co-production taking place in certain pockets of the organisation – but it is not yet widespread.
- Too many surveys are conducted by Dorset Council, with services conducting their own activity in silos, not sharing results or learning from previous activity, and resulting in survey fatigue among residents.
- Different services procure and use different software for engagement, which can be confusing for residents and less cost effective. We need consistency in how we present our consultations and engagement: in the methods but also in branding, appearance, interfaces, etc., so people are familiar with it, how to access and use it.
- There is a lack of 'ongoing' ways for residents to engage with us – activity tends to be conducted as a one-off.
- Residents are sometimes engaged in a limited way that can mean they do not feel listened to and have poor understanding of council decision making. This negatively affects residents' trust in and satisfaction with the council. We need to do more to show what happens as a result of their feedback - 'you said, we did' - and we need to be clearer about what residents can and cannot influence through consultation and engagement.
- It can be confusing for residents to know how to engage with Dorset Council – there are lots of different surveys, but a lack of overall clarity about how or where to engage with the council. A single 'one stop shop' approach for consultation and engagement would be much clearer, simpler and more

accessible.

- Among some Dorset Council employees, there could be stronger understanding of consultation, engagement and co-production – terms are sometimes used interchangeably. We need to improve understanding of the processes, timescales, and the tools and support at colleagues' disposal.
- We need an improved comprehensive central record or library of all engagement and consultation activity across the council, and the findings from this activity.
- On occasion, there is insufficient time within projects to conduct consultation or engagement properly, end to end. This includes time to plan, develop stakeholder relationships, to take account of the findings, to embed EQIA (not just one point in process but throughout), and to feedback findings to respondents.
- There are opportunities with the new customer account and platform to use customer data to better target engagement activity at the right audiences.

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# Consultation and Engagement Policy

Version 1.0

Date: February 2023

Review: February 2024

# Consultation and Engagement Policy

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## 1. PURPOSE

Dorset Council consults and engages on a wide range of topics and issues relating to the services it provides for its residents. Committed to listening to residents and communities when developing and shaping our services, we conduct formal and informal activities and have direct and indirect conversations on a regular basis.

We want to ensure we formalise these activities, both statutory and non-statutory, be more consistent as a council in how we plan and approach our communities, and to ensure we are using accessible methods to allow them to engage with us in a way that best suits them. By doing so, we can develop a better understanding of the aspirations, needs and concerns of the residents of Dorset, and ensure we take these into account in our decision-making and service delivery. Building relationships and having ongoing dialogue leads to richer and more valuable understanding which can help better shape services based on what we have heard from our communities. This process also facilitates building a level of consistency and trust between the council and our residents.

This policy sets out a **basic level of principles that consultation and engagement taking place throughout Dorset Council will adopt**. Guidance for staff on consultation is given in the Dorset Council Consultation Protocol document. The protocol is also supported by a toolkit which contains practical advice, templates and useful information for officers carrying out consultation and engagement activity.

## 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all consultation and engagement work undertaken or commissioned by Dorset Council with councillors, customers, residents, businesses, visitors, and other external stakeholders, for example, other agencies and contractors. This may range from a statutory consultation to informal engagement work.

The policy is **applicable to external consultation** by Dorset Council but excludes internal consultation within the organisation itself. For example please note that consultation in relation to employee pay and conditions is a separate process and led by Human Resources

Consultation on planning applications, the Local Plan and Traffic Regulation Orders are also out of scope for this policy.

### 3. OUR VISION

Our vision as Dorset Council is:

- To involve local people in decisions and issues that affect them.
- A commitment to provide opportunities to listen to and incorporate the voices of all Dorset residents by engaging them in ways that suit them.
- To work in a way that builds trust and confidence in council processes and decision making.
- Where everyone feels heard and that their opinion matters.

### 4. WHAT IS CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT?

Consultation and engagement are the involvement and participation of people in decision-making. For Dorset Council, these activities help us to establish and to build more streamlined and effective services by having increased community involvement and a clearer voice in shaping local service provision.

**Consultation** is a formal process, and, in some cases, the council will have a statutory duty and be bound by legislation to consult before making changes to policy or service provision. Consultations have a clear remit and start and end points. However, consultation still forms a distinct part of an ongoing period of engagement and is part of a formal decision-making process. Failure to follow specific principles and conducting a consultation incorrectly may lead to judicial review.

#### Consultation is:

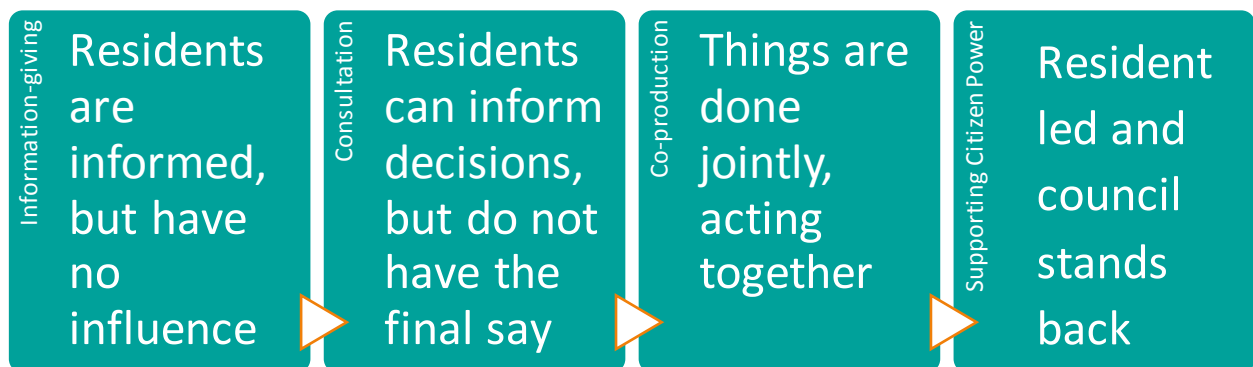
*“The dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based on a genuine exchange of views with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action”*

**Engagement is:**

*“Developing and sustaining a working relationship between one or more public body and one or more community group, to help them both to understand and act on the needs or issues that the community experiences.”*

**Engagement** is a broader, more exploratory process that can be used and embedded in many areas of council work. At the heart of engagement is developing relationships and building the opportunities for ongoing dialogue between public bodies and the community. It can involve a range of activities and different levels of public involvement. Ongoing engagement can support a greater level of understanding of more complex issues and the decision-making process. It should be a standard part of council practice to engage residents and service users to gather ideas, opinions, and feedback on how we work to enable us to be more responsive.

An activity is only a consultation if there is **scope for consultees to influence a decision**. Both consultation and engagement form part of a continuum on ‘ladder of participation’ (Arnstein, 1969) which the Consultation Institute has streamlined into four key parts: Information-giving, Consultation, Co-production and Supporting Citizen Power.



At Dorset Council we have **defined the wider range of activities as we work with our residents**. These are:

**Inform** - Sharing information about changes that could happen so people understand what they mean

**Consult** - Asking for people's opinions on ideas or options

**Engage** - Listening to people to understand issues and ideas for change

**Co-design** - Designing with people and bringing their ideas into the final approach

**Co-production** - People with lived or learnt experience work in partnership with us, from start to finish on a project.

Co-design and Co-production are important methods increasingly used throughout the council to ensure services are created to meet residents' needs.

## 5. WHY DOES DORSET COUNCIL UNDERTAKE CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY

Dorset Council first and foremost wants to understand the needs of residents and provide the best possible services.

Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 sets out a Duty to Consult representatives of a wide range of local persons. We must consult representatives of council taxpayers, those who use or are likely to use services provided by the authority, and those appearing to the authority to have an interest in any area within which the authority carries out functions. Authorities should include local voluntary and community organisations and local businesses in consultation.

As well as having a duty to consult, good consultation and engagement can have a number of benefits. As Dorset Council, we aim to:

- Work in a data and evidence-led way to build, shape and deliver more well-rounded and effective services
- Identify new or alternative ideas and to highlight impacts we may not have thought of, or to challenge any assumptions we have made.
- Build relationships and promote confidence and trust between the council and its residents and partners.
- Better understand the needs, priorities, and aspirations of our residents and to identify ways we can work together to meet them.
- Listen to our residents and to act on their concerns.
- Encourage wider participation from people and from groups we do not normally hear from.
- Use new and innovative ways to reach and engage people in ways that suit them.
- Widen opportunities for residents to gain understanding of council processes and decision making.
- Build understanding of local issues and priorities.
- Share learnings and insights within the organisation and to use them effectively across council services to improve delivery and provision.
- Establish where the council can provide better value for money.

Engagement activities should be embedded as part of an ongoing dialogue and engagement with our residents. Engaging well can increase levels of trust, perceptions of openness, encourage inclusive practices and can lead to collaboration. It can also mean difficult decisions are accepted more readily as people have been informed or involved throughout the process

As stated, consultation is a discrete activity that forms part of the process that is bound by specific legislation and principles. These are covered in the next section.

## Consultation principles and legislation

Consultations should be conducted where there is scope for residents to influence a decision. This may be a statutory duty (i.e., written in law) or where there is a legitimate expectation by consultees that they would expect to be consulted.

When we consult we follow a number of key principles. Any consultation is carried out in accordance with the Gunning principles; these are four fundamental principles for carrying out consultation, summarised below:

### Gunning Principles

1. Consultation must take place when the proposal is at a **formative stage**
2. **Sufficient reasons** must be put forward for the proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and response
3. **Adequate time** must be given for consideration and response
4. The product of consultation must be **conscientiously taken into account**.

The **Government** has also set out their own standards that should be adopted when engaging and consulting with stakeholders. You can find more detail on the Government principles [here](#). They are that consultations should:

- Be clear and concise
- Have a purpose
- Be informative
- Be only part of a process of engagement
- Last for a proportionate amount of time
- Be targeted – ensure the right people are consulted
- Take account of the groups being consulted
- Be agreed before publication
- Facilitate scrutiny

- Have the responses published in a timely fashion
- Not generally be launched during local or national election periods.

The **Consultation Institute** has developed its own Charter containing seven principles as shown in the image, and listed below.



### **Principle 1 The INTEGRITY of Consultation**

The process must have an honest intention. The Consultor must be willing to listen to the views advanced by consultees, and be prepared to be influenced when making subsequent decisions.

### **Principle 2 The VISIBILITY of Consultation**

All those who have a justifiable right to participate in a consultation should be made reasonably aware of the exercise

### **Principle 3 The ACCESSIBILITY of Consultation**

Consultees must be able to have reasonable access to the exercise. This means that the methods chosen must be appropriate for the intended audience and that effective means

are used to cater for the special needs of 'seldom heard' groups and others with special requirements.

#### **Principle 4 The TRANSPARENCY of Consultation**

Many Consultations are highly public, and rightly so. Consultation submissions will be published unless specific exemptions apply. Consultees rightly expect full transparency of the governance arrangements applicable to a consultation and the decision-making process which will follow.

#### **Principle 5 The DISCLOSURE obligations in Consultation**

For consultation to succeed, and to encourage a measure of trust between the parties, it is important to provide for reasonable disclosure of relevant information. Consultors are under a duty to disclose information which could materially influence the nature and extent of consultees' responses. But note that the Data Protection Act 1988 applies to information of a "personal nature"

#### **Principle 6 The FAIR INTERPRETATION of Consultation**

Information and viewpoints gathered through Consultation exercises have to be collated and assessed, and this task must be undertaken promptly and objectively

#### **Principle 7 The PUBLICATION of Consultation**

Participants in a consultation exercise have a proper expectation that they will see both the output and the outcome of the process. Except in certain Closed or Internal consultations, the assumption should be that publication in a form accessible to the consultee would follow within a reasonable time after the conclusion of the exercise

### **Other considerations**

**Public Sector Equality Duty** requires local authorities to have 'due regard' to the impact of changes on those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010; Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation. Consultations that are outside of statutory requirements should still be undertaken in accordance with this policy.

**Engagement activities** are less bound by law and statutes; however, the council will consider any relevant legislation in conducting these activities such as the Equality Act (2010) and the Data Protection Act (2018).

## 5. WHAT IS DORSET COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT?

At Dorset Council, when we engage with our residents and communities at any level, we aspire to work to the key principles and best practice, but also to our own standards. Our activities should be proportionate to the type and scale of the potential impact of the proposal and decision being taken. They may also depend on resourcing and the needs of the participants.

The activities we conduct will be informed by data and be evidence-led; we will also use best practice guidelines on how to effectively engage with different people and groups at various stages of the process. The Dorset Council central consultation team supports colleagues in undertaking Consultation and Engagement.

When conducting any type of consultation or engagement activity, Dorset Council **has its own standards** that we will adhere to.



These **bring together the key principles and best practice**, including the Gunning principles, Government principles, the Consultation Institute Charter and other requirements into a clear set of Dorset Council Principles

- **Legal Standards** – we will adhere to any legal guidance, principles, or processes when we consult, including only consulting if residents' involvement can influence the topic in question.

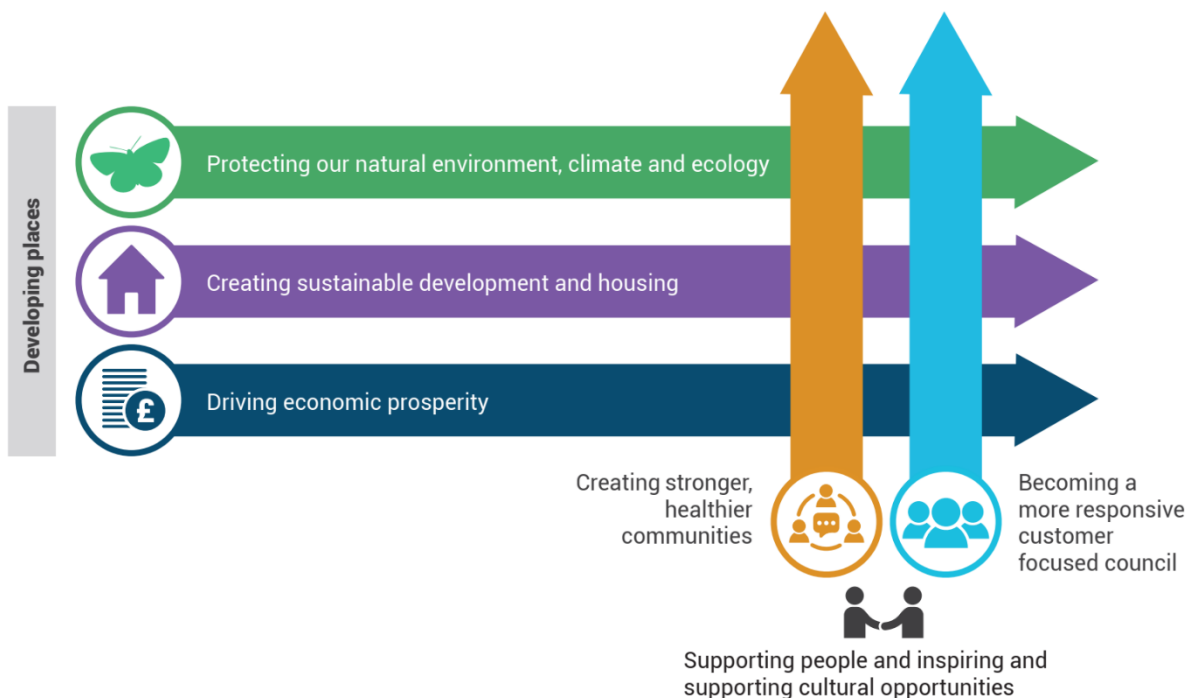


- **Participation** – we will actively encourage participation in our activities from all residents in the Dorset Council area, especially those who are seldom heard, giving opportunities for people to engage in ways that suit them using a variety of techniques.
- **Consistency** – we will consult and engage with stakeholders and the public in a more consistent way across council services.
- **Planning** – we will effectively plan our activities to ensure there is sufficient time to design, undertake and to feedback on them and for residents to be able to take part. We will also pool our resources where possible and join up our working to reduce the likelihood of consultation fatigue and duplication of effort.
- **Accessibility** – we will ensure that our activities are as accessible as possible to encourage participation from the widest range of residents. This includes factors such as language, format, location, and time.
- **Inclusion** – we will ensure that our activities are inclusive and that we understand our communities, their composition, needs and priorities and how we can mitigate any barriers to participation.
- **Capacity** – we will ensure that those responsible for facilitating consultation and engagement activity have the relevant knowledge, skills, and training to do the work.
- **Partnerships** – we will work together across our council service areas and with our external partner agencies and organisations.
- **Communication** – we will ensure that all appropriate channels of communication are used, whether to promote our activities, to reach out to seldom-heard groups or to feedback the outcomes of our work.
- **Transparency and accountability** – we will be clear about our reasons for consulting or engaging, our expectations of those who choose to take part, and be clear on the decision-making process and how the results will be used. We will take responsibility and be accountable for our processes and decision-making
- **Feedback** – we will ensure we communicate any outcomes or decisions made to stakeholders and all relevant parties, including the public, and how or where their input has been considered. This will be provided in a suitable format.
- **Evaluation** – we will review our activities and actively ask for feedback to be able to evaluate how successful they have been and to take any learning forward.

## LINKS TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES, PLANS AND OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

Within Dorset Council we have a shared responsibility to conduct effective consultation and engagement. Our activities should align closely with our priorities as Dorset Council and the [Council Plan \(2020 – 2024\)](#) which sets out our vision to make Dorset a great place to live, work and visit.

Our consultation and engagement activities help us work towards this vision by helping us to listen more effectively and giving us a better understanding of the needs of local people. Consultation and engagement helps us to respond by planning, testing, and delivering better services, and ensures that we are accountable and transparent in any decision-making we undertake. Our activities ensure that our residents and communities have an opportunity to engage with us in a way that suits them and where they feel listened to.



Dorset Council is also developing other community focused strategies which will closely inform how the council involves and engages with the community and places them at the heart of everything we do.



**EQIA:** When we conduct consultation and engagement activity, a thread of our work is assessing the impact that our proposals are likely to have on different groups or people in Dorset. An EQIA helps us to consider the actual or potential impact of our activities and decisions on people, particularly those with protected characteristics.

**Data Protection/Privacy Notice or Policy** During the course of any consultation or engagement activity we will comply with the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 when handling personal data. You can find more information on Dorset Council's information governance and data protection [here](#) .

### Useful organisations we work with

**The Consultation Institute:** The Institute promotes and supports best practice in public and stakeholder consultation in the public, private and voluntary sectors

**Local Government Association (LGA) New Conversations 2.0** The Local Government Association have produced a resource – New Conversations 2.0 – that can support the basic aspects of consultation and engagement.

### SUPPORT FOR CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY

While responsibility for consultation within Dorset Council is spread across the organisation, the activity is supported by Dorset Council's central Consultation and Engagement team. The team provide support and advice to the wider council. The team **will** be involved in any statutory consultation delivered by the council.

The central team have produced a Consultation Protocol which guides staff through the consultation and engagement process.

The team can be contacted: [consultation@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

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# Consultation Planning and Implementation -Guidance/Protocol-

Version 1.1

Date: February 2023

Review: February 2024

Communications and Engagement Team  
February 2023

## Introduction

This protocol document fits closely together with its partner document, the Dorset Council Consultation and Engagement Policy, adopted by the council. In the protocol we provide the “how to” part of delivering the policy. It has been designed by for use by any Dorset Council colleague who are delivering consultation and engagement activities.

Dorset Council consults and engages on a wide range of topics and issues relating to the services it provides for its residents. We are committed to listening to residents and communities when developing and shaping our services, and we conduct formal and informal activities and have conversations on a regular basis.

We want to ensure we standardise these activities, both statutory and non-statutory, be more consistent as a council in how we plan and approach our communities, and ensure we are using accessible methods to allow people to engage with us in a way that best suits them. By doing so, we can develop a better understanding of the aspirations, needs and concerns of the residents of Dorset, and ensure we take these into account in our decision-making and service delivery.

**Guidance is given in this document on how to plan and conduct a consultation.** The protocol is also supported by a toolkit which contains practical advice, templates and useful information for officers carrying out consultation and engagement activity. There are also modules on the Learning Hub on how to conduct less formal engagement activities and you can seek support or advice from the central team.

Consultation is a shared responsibility and is important because:

- We are an organisation led by the needs of our communities, to make informed choices about priorities and developing services.
- Sometimes consultation is required by legislation but at other times we consult to be confident we have met our duty of due regard.
- We also often consult with no prior requirements simply to better understand how our residents feel about issues so we can ensure the services we provide are the best they can be.
- Consulting with our residents creates greater transparency in decision-making and understanding of how the democratic process works.

As a council we need to carry out consultation at an early stage and to do it right – we need to plan in a formal way – and adhere to the Gunning principles. The Gunning principles are simple, sensible, and based on legal principles so are not an optional way of working - they are a necessity.

## Consultation or Engagement?

It is important to understand the difference between Consultation and Engagement.

**Consultation** is: “The dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based on a genuine exchange of views with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action”

**Engagement** is: “Developing and sustaining a working relationship between one or more public body and one or more community group, to help them both to understand and act on the needs or issues that the community experiences.”

## Dorset Council’s consultation principles

Our principles are based on three sources of consultation guidance:

### The Gunning Principles

1. Consultation must take place when the proposal is at a **formative stage**
2. **Sufficient reasons** must be put forward for the proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and response
3. **Adequate time** must be given for consideration and response
4. The product of consultation must be **conscientiously taken into account**.

The **Government has also set out their own standards** that should be adopted when engaging and consulting with stakeholders. They are that consultations should be:

- Be clear and concise
- Have a purpose
- Be informative
- Be only part of a process of engagement
- Last for a proportionate amount of time
- Be targeted – ensure the right people are consulted
- Take account of the groups being consulted
- Be agreed before publication
- Facilitate scrutiny
- Have the responses published in a timely fashion
- Not generally be launched during local or national election periods.

The **Consultation Institute** Charter also sets out their guide to best practice in their charter. The principles set out in the Consultation Charter are – integrity, visibility, accessibility, transparency, disclosure, fair interpretation, publication.

## Dorset Council Consultation Principles

As outlined in our Consultation and Engagement Policy our principles are:

- **Legal Standards** – we will adhere to any legal guidance, principles, or processes when we consult, including only consulting if residents' involvement can influence the topic in question.
- **Participation** – we will actively encourage participation in our activities from all residents in the Dorset Council area, especially those who are seldom heard, giving opportunities for people to engage in ways that suit them using a variety of techniques.
- **Consistency** – we will consult and engage with stakeholders and the public in a more consistent way across council services.
- **Planning** – we will effectively plan our activities to ensure there is sufficient time to design, undertake and to feedback on them and for residents to be able to take part. We will also pool our resources where possible and join up our working to reduce the likelihood of consultation fatigue and duplication of effort.
- **Accessibility** – we will ensure that our activities are as accessible as possible to encourage participation from the widest range of residents. This includes factors such as language, format, location, and time.
- **Inclusion** – we will ensure that our activities are inclusive and that we understand our communities, their composition, needs and priorities and how we can mitigate any barriers to participation.
- **Capacity** – we will ensure that those responsible for facilitating consultation and engagement activity have the relevant knowledge, skills, and training to do the work.
- **Partnerships** – we will continue to work together across our council service areas and with our external partner agencies and organisations.
- **Communication** – we will ensure that all appropriate channels of communication are used, whether to promote our activities, to reach out to seldom-heard groups or to feedback the outcomes of our work.
- **Transparency and accountability** – we will be clear about our reasons for consulting or engaging, our expectations of those who choose to take part, and be clear on the decision-making process and how the results will be used. We will take responsibility and be accountable for our processes and decision-making
- **Feedback** – we will ensure we communicate any outcomes or decisions made to stakeholders and all relevant parties, including the public, and how or where their input has been considered. This will be provided in a suitable format.



- **Evaluation** – we will review our activities and actively ask for feedback to be able to evaluate how successful they have been and to take any learning forward.

## Why do we need a protocol?

This document has been created **to support employees with a protocol/guidance** that will ensure consistent planning and implementation of consultation activity across all parts of Dorset Council. It sets out how Dorset Council will deliver consultation so that it is not only legally compliant, but of benefit to all involved in the process. The protocol will:

- Help us to ensure our consultations meet legal requirements, including the statutory legislation and our public sector equality duty (under Equality Act 2010) in planning, delivery, and decision-making.
- To identify high-risk, sensitive or challenging consultations early in the process so appropriate measures and support can be put in place.
- Support the effective planning of consultation to get the most out of the process in capturing the needs, views and thoughts of stakeholders and presenting them with viable options to give opinions on.
- To deliver an effective consultation where stakeholders have clarity in how the council have got to this stage, they understand their role in the process and where they can and cannot have influence.
- Support employees and services in understanding the processes involved in planning and delivering a consultation and to make them aware of the resource and time required.
- Help employees and services understand where and how they can access support in the consultation process.
- Lead to the outputs from consultations to be communicated and shared more effectively via a shared resource.
- Support a cycle of continuous engagement with residents of the Dorset Council area, helping them recognise that consultation is just one part of the decision-making process.

## The Consultation Process

Following the steps below will ensure that a consultation is planned and implemented effectively. Support from the central team is available throughout this process from start to end. In some cases, all 13 steps will not be required, but you will always need to consider each stage and decide if any action is necessary. The main steps are:



## STEP 1 PREPARING FOR CONSULTATION

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Conducting a consultation may be legally required or a decision will have been taken that it is beneficial to do so. In other cases, a decision to formally consult may be less clear. Before deciding to consult it is helpful to do some research and ask yourself the following questions:

- Is it a consultation or engagement you need to carry out? It is important to get the terminology correct as once it is decided it is a 'consultation,' the service is bound by the consultation principles by which the activities must be conducted and can be open to challenge via judicial review.
- Is the consultation required by law? (If so, you must consult)
- Is there a *legitimate expectation* that we would consult on this issue? (Have we promised we would consult, have we consulted on this issue before?)
- Have we consulted on identical or similar issues before?
- Is there existing evidence we have that would make a full consultation unnecessary?
- Is there a more appropriate and effective way to engage people to achieve our objectives? (e.g., ongoing engagement)
- Is there work ongoing that we need to be aware of or could join up with?
- What budget/resource do we have to conduct the consultation?

You can look up previous consultations that have been conducted [here](#).

It is important that you clearly identify the issues you want to consult on and what the scope of your consultation is. To kick the process off, you may start by asking yourself the following questions:

- What are the issues at hand?
- What does the evidence/data tell us? What do we already know?
- Who do we want to hear from? Whose views do we need to understand?
- What do we want to speak to them about?
- What do we want to find out?
- Why do we need to know?
- What do we hope to ultimately achieve? What are the outcomes for our residents, businesses, communities?
- How will we use the information and how will we report it back?

You will also need to consider whether a one-off consultation is appropriate or whether a programme of continuous engagement would better help you deliver your objectives. But you do need to bear in mind if a formal consultation is required in law, that will overrule.

At this stage, you will also already be thinking about your **Equality Impact Assessment** and the implications of the issues on various communities from the proposals under consideration. This is a key, evidence-driven document that will support understanding of the actual, or potential, impact of our proposed activities and decisions on people. This process ensures robustness in meeting our duties under S.149 of the Equality Act and reduces the risk of legal challenge by supporting decision makers in paying ‘due regard’ before any decision is made. You can find more information and guidance [here](#)

### **Do I need to consult?**

Given the challenges and costs involved of public consultation, knowing if you need to consult is an important issue. Pre-consultation work will help you determine this, but it may be that you are legally required to consult for one of two reasons: 1) Statutory legislation or 2) the doctrine of Legitimate Expectation.

An example of a statutory requirement to consult would be in a Public Space Protection Order. (PSPOs). Another example would be undertaking a Community Governance Review. Often the details of the consultation are specified as well e.g., the length of time you consult for.

There is a legal requirement to consult in several key areas, these include:

- Health (Health and Social Care Act 2012, S.142)
- Environment (Impact assessments)
- Equality (Equality Act 2010, S.149, Public Sector Equality Duty)
- Best Value Duty which states that authorities should work with voluntary and community groups when facing difficult funding decisions, to consider over value in reviewing service provision, and that they are under a duty to consult representatives of a wide range of local persons (Local Government Act 1999, Section 3(2)).

The doctrine of legitimate expectation is also known as ‘common law’, where the court recognises people’s rights to expect consultation:

- if there has been a promise to do so
- if official policy or guidance implies it
- where the authority has always consulted on that issue in the past
- if a benefit is being withdrawn and will have significant impact
- where the nature of the relationship would create unfairness if there were to be inadequate consultation.

An example of a legitimate expectation requirement to consult would be something like Weymouth Harbourside Consultation carried out in 2021. Here various works were proposed to enhance the harbourside and improve the pedestrian/cycling facilities. There was a statutory requirement to consult on the necessary traffic regulation order but not

necessarily for the other works. However, when the works were previously discussed in the public realm the portfolio holder promised residents Dorset Council would consult before going ahead. This promise meant the works created a “legitimate expectation” that the public would be consulted and then consultation had to be carried out, following the Gunning principles.

If you decide it would be beneficial to consult rather than needing to consult by law, you are still bound to conduct it properly and according to the law and key principles. You can find out more from the LGA here – [Do I need to consult?](#)

The central consultation team can support you in any decision-making, along with establishing any legal requirements. In certain situations, legal advice may need to be sought from Legal Services to ensure consultation is carried out when necessary. The agreement to proceed with a consultation may come from a committee or senior officers in agreement with portfolio holders.

If you go ahead with consultation, there are several key principles that must be taken into account. Any consultation must be carried out in accordance with the Gunning principles; these are four fundamental principles for carrying out consultation and engagement to ensure the council is not at risk of being taken to judicial review. These are summarised above and expanded on in the appendix:

## STEP 2 PRE-CONSULTATION/ENGAGEMENT

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The pre-consultation stage involves clarifying the issues at hand and to determine the scope of your consultation. At this stage, discussions and engagement activities should be held with key stakeholders; this is an opportunity to test any advice, guidance, evidence, or options you are considering.

A Stakeholder Mapping exercise will help you to identify who your key stakeholders are, how best to engage with them and how involved they should be. These may be made up of people such as service users, non-users, other customers, or other interested parties and organisations. Your analysis should also identify seldom-heard groups and barriers that may be preventing their accessing council consultation. In these cases, you may be able to link with existing groups and networks to engage with stakeholders and interested parties. You can find guidance for this exercise in the Consultation Toolkit.

As a rule, you should seek to gain a balanced perspective on the issue as this will help in determining the strength of feeling. You can also find out from opposers to your proposals what their fears are and gauge their understanding of what the council can and can't influence. You can then shape your consultation in a way to allay these fears and be clear in your material and introductory text what aspects of the options the council can influence and where the respondents can have a say. Consultation is not a referendum.

You should create a summary of your engagement exercises and reflect on what this means for your proposal and the options you wish to consult on.

The outcome of your engagement may be that a full consultation is NOT required; the central team can help you with this decision. If you do go on to consult, your consultation must comply with the Gunning Principles and consultation best practice, even if the consultation is not legally required.

In some situations, it will be possible/necessary to go straight into Step 3 and not carry out pre-consultation engagement. For example, this may be when prior work has already identified the issues or earlier survey work or data analysis means you can already formulate your proposals.

## STEP 3 CONSULTATION PLAN AND RISK ASSESSMENTS

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If a consultation is required, the next step is to consider the level of risk involved and the creation of a consultation plan. This will help determine the level of support and resource you require in planning and conducting your consultation.

### **Risk Assessment**

We have created categories within which consultations will fall to assess the level of risk; these categories are important as it has a bearing on key decisions and the involvement of personnel throughout the process.

**High Risk Consultations** – these are consultations that:

- Are about substantial and/or controversial issues
- May affect a high number of residents
- Have a strong possibility that it could be legally challenged

These consultations will be managed by the central team and plans would normally be shared with members of the Senior Leadership Team and Cabinet.

**Medium Risk Consultations** – these are consultations that:

- Potentially could be difficult due to number of people affected
- Could be difficult due to particular sensitivities involved

These consultations can be delivered by a lead within the service, but closely supported by the central team. Plans may be shared with members of the Senior Leadership Team and Cabinet.

**Low Risk Consultations** – these are consultations that:

- Are less controversial

- Small changes that will affect a limited number of people

These consultations will normally be delivered by a lead within the service with support available from the central team where required. Plans should be sent to the central team for information.

At this stage, you should also review your EQIA to consider any additional information or understanding gained during the pre-consultation phase. This document should evolve and be updated continually throughout the course of the consultation. You can seek support from our EDI Officer. Responsibility for creating and updating the EQIA would always sit with the service promoting the consultation.

The EQIA is normally on the proposals themselves and not the consultation process itself. It is possible to carry out an EQIA on the consultation process for highly controversial consultations.

### **Consultation Plan**

All consultations should have a consultation plan. A plan gives you the opportunity to think about the objectives of your consultation, who needs to be involved (your stakeholders and target audience), your methodology, available resources/budget, and your timeframes/key milestones.

At this stage you will also need to work with a Communications Officer to develop your communications plan which will outline how you will publicise your consultation. The communications plan and the consultation plan should dovetail together.

You should also start thinking about your evaluation at this stage. This will help you to know what data you need collect throughout the process.

Consultation Plans could be requested to be presented at a judicial review, so it is important to present the information clearly and then follow what you have written. It should, like the EQIA, be an evolving document building in and recording changes if necessary as you complete the process.

The Consultation Plan template and associated guidance to help you complete the document can be found in the toolkits. Further support in drafting the plans is available from the central team.

Deadlines for Committee reports and decisions will vary depending on the consultation type and where in the process the consultation falls, e.g., findings to be presented at the next Cabinet meeting. You will be asked for an indication of these timeframes when you contact the team about doing a consultation.

## STEP 4 CONSULTATION PLAN SIGN OFF

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Consultation plans should be reviewed by the Senior Consultation Officer and central team to ensure they are sufficiently robust and meet the Gunning Principles. The central team should receive copies of all consultation plans, prior to the consultation commencing.

High risk – will need more senior sign off.

## STEP 5 OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT

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The officers making the recommendation and /or the decision at the end of the consultation process should be part of this stage of the consultation preparation. This stage is vitally important in determining what options will be provided to consultees and what rationale will be shared to explain why these options have been decided on. You should draw on all the information gathered plus any pre-consultation engagement activity outcomes to formulate them.

This stage will also need to provide clarity on whether each option has flexibility i.e.: whether options can be changed in response to feedback or whether they are fixed. You should also demonstrate that each option has been costed and is therefore viable. This information should be made clear in the material prepared for the consultees, whether on the website or in the introduction to the consultation.

You should also consider whether key influencers and stakeholders need to be part of the options development stage.

It is quite acceptable to have a preferred option in a consultation. However, it is important that decision makers are prepared to be influenced by the consultation responses. The useful saying is “have an open mind, not an empty mind”.

By their very nature some consultations will have limited options. It is good practice to try to ensure there are options, but they must be viable options. In some cases, the options may just be that the change goes ahead or it doesn't. If there are limited options, it becomes more important to try and understand who is affected and how the effects of any proposed changes can be mitigated. Clear analysis of the impacts of the proposals should be provided, for the public to understand and help inform their response.

## STEP 6 AND 7 PREPARATION, APPROVAL, PRODUCTION AND DELIVERY OF CONSULTATION MATERIALS

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For high and medium risk consultations, the central team will support the development of surveys and materials, give advice on the development of questions and methods etc. Services can come to the team with suggestions/a plan and the team can help formulate the questions/approach.

Good survey design is fundamental to a successful consultation. Careful consideration should be given to the audience to ensure an appropriate length of survey together with efficient routing of respondents through the questions. The setting of appropriate questions is vital to ensure the information needed is gathered and the analysis of the responses is straightforward.

Always imagine you are answering the questionnaire yourself. Some question styles are useful to the service but not so easy to answer. For example, ranking three things is relatively easy but ranking 10 might not be. Always keep qualitative open text questions to a minimum as analysis is time-consuming.

Advice is available in the training modules and the central consultation team are available to give advice on question design.

The new engagement platform will be a shared resource for the whole council, with different levels of users, who will need to have training according to their needs. External training in use of the platform, if required will need to be paid for by the service.

Overall management of the platform will be held by the central consultation team. For all non-statutory consultations, service areas will be expected to add their own material to the platform and extract their own results, where appropriate.

Currently all consultations should be offered in alternative formats. The principal one of these will be a paper copy, and this is a requirement for all statutory consultations. The paper copy will be created by the person creating the survey on the platform (as this can be automated to a certain extent). The responsibility for printing and circulation of the paper forms rests with the service. Paper forms would normally be made available through the library service and services would need to liaise with the library service early in the process. Libraries would also need copies of supporting documentation. If people request alternative formats (e.g., Large Print, Easy read, Braille, other languages etc.) their request needs to be carefully considered and complied with if possible.

The toolkit and learning modules help with many of these aspects e.g., survey design, how to collect different types of information and different activities they might use in the consultation. Alternative methods of consultation include focus groups, surveys (telephone, paper, online), forums, workshops, etc.

**Data Protection/Privacy Notice or Policy** During the course of any consultation or engagement activity it is important to comply with the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 when handling personal data. You can find more information on Dorset Council's

information governance and data protection [here](#) . It is important that your participants are clear on how their data will be used, managed, and stored and therefore you may also want to have your own privacy policy or notice.

**Collecting Demographic Data** This is an important element of the consultation. Sometimes you need to collect this information to closely inform the consultation. An example of this would be collecting disability information when consulting on a proposed change to bus services. To understand how the changes affect different people can be fundamental. In other cases, you collect the information to ensure you get a response from right across the spectrum of the Dorset population, ensuring a response from underrepresented groups. It is important to take a balanced view in collecting personal information and not collect it for no good reason. It is vital always to allow people to opt out of providing this information with “prefer not to say” as an option. These questions are only asked of individuals and not organisations. The list we propose you use includes age, sex, disability, sexuality, religion, and ethnicity. We also have a standard way of asking these questions. This and further information are available in the toolkit.

**Next Steps:** It is important in the prelude to the consultation questions; you clearly explain how people’s responses are going to be used and what the next stages in the consultation process are. Try to include any detail you have available.

## STEP 8 LIVE CONSULTATION PERIOD

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There is no fixed timeframe for a consultation to be ‘live’, unless there is legislation relevant to the consultation that dictates it must run for a set period of time (e.g., 12 weeks).

However, consultees should be given adequate time to take part in the consultation. You may need to give consideration to public holidays, school terms or significant events that may affect engagement with the consultation. Generally, a minimum of 4-6 weeks should be set aside, however reasons for the timescales decided upon should be recorded in your consultation plan.

Sometimes shorter time periods can be effective in generating responses, but the pros and cons of different time periods need to be carefully considered. In certain cases, consultation periods can be extended before they finish. An example of this would be when a public lockdown, power outage, building closure restricts public access. This information needs to be added to the consultation plan if it happens. If you are unsure, please ask advice from the central team.

## STEP 9 MID-CONSULTATION REVIEW

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The consultation and your approach to it should be reviewed throughout the live period, with a date set about halfway through for a formal review. This should be done with the support of the central team, especially for high profile or complex consultations.

Under review should be the response rate, profile of respondents and any feedback on the consultation to date, so any changes or additional actions can be taken before the end of the consultation. You may decide to extend the consultation period. This process is key to ensure that people can engage effectively with it and have the opportunity to participate.

This review would normally involve consideration of the Comms plan and how to promote the consultation to get an appropriate response.

**Response numbers** - If it was a 'closed survey' where you select people at random to take part you can calculate a statistically valid survey size within confidence levels.

For example, if your population was 10,000 this means 370 or more responses are needed to have a confidence level of 95% that the real value of answers to the questions is within  $\pm 5\%$  of the measured/surveyed value. This can be calculated online. Virtually all Dorset Council surveys are 'open surveys' where anyone can take part so that method is not appropriate.

It is always good to set a response target to aim for based on your knowledge of the local area, how controversial the issue is, the engagement levels etc. You would pause during the consultation review to look at who is responding. However always prefer quality over quantity when it comes to responses. You need to ask, have you got enough responses from young people, visitors, businesses etc? If not, selective promotion can balance the numbers up. Also, always good to ensure you get reasonable numbers from harder to reach groups such as disabled people.

If you are not looking at subdividing the results into smaller groups (say a town or district area) you can manage with smaller response numbers. If you are subdividing, you will need a larger sample size to make valid conclusions. This may deem the results invalid.

When the consultation is live **it is important not to change any questions** unless a serious error is discovered. This may make the responses prior to the change incompatible to those made afterwards, hindering analysis of the data.

Responses would not normally be accepted after the closing date unless arrangement had been made to include them due to unavoidable circumstances, but acceptance is at your discretion.

## STEP 10 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

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High risk consultation response analysis would normally be conducted by the central team to allow for a level of independence. Low risk work can draw their results from the consultation platform and seek support from central team for interpretation where required.

The Business Intelligence team can help with the statistical analysis, especially for large consultations with high response rates, but this needs to be arranged in advance.

Coding and analysis of text comments is an important part of the overall analysis. Coding involves reading each comment and adding it to a category or categories. These can then be numerically summed to identify the main themes coming through. It is labour intensive and without significant shortcuts. All comments need to be read and coded. Further advice on coding is available in the toolkit.

It is important to publish high level findings and the number of responses somewhere to show transparency – you can also do this to have more time to fully analyse the results if you have had a large response. Publication of any results needs to be done in conjunction with the service originating the consultation

Full guidance is available in the toolkit on collating and analysing results and report writing.

## STEP 11 CONSULTATION REPORTS AND DECISION MAKING

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An output report should be completed for each consultation which is balanced, factual and provides all the material points raised by consultees. It should present what was said by respondents. It is not meant to list proposals but is there to support the decision-makers in their role in providing evidence. This shows that they have taken consultation responses into account. You should also explain how you have ensured the consultation was accessible.

Consultation reports should be structured in the following way:

- Executive Summary/Abstract

- Introduction and background to the consultation
- Preparatory work – pre-consultation/engagement phase/options appraisal
- Methodology – response channels, ensuring accessibility, methods used.
- Findings and discussion – can be by question or by theme.
- Conclusion with key findings/next steps
- Appendices (e.g., comments, survey form as a minimum)

High-risk consultations will be written up by the central team as this allows for a level of independence and reduces the risk of accusation of bias in how the results are interpreted. The team will aim to complete the analysis within two weeks of the consultation closing after the final paper copies being entered. For larger and more complex consultations this may take longer. Support in writing up other consultations can be discussed with the central team to ensure accuracy and quality assurance. In some cases, the team will provide the raw results and offer direction in report writing and presentation of findings where required.

The final report would normally be expected to include graphical representations of the data emphasizing important points. Text comments would be read and coded. The summary and full redacted comments should be provided, as should the consultation survey questions themselves in the appendix.

Deadlines for Committee reports and decisions will vary depending on the consultation type and where in the process the consultation falls, e.g., findings to be presented at the next Cabinet meeting. You will be asked for an indication of these timeframes when you contact the team about doing a consultation.

The consultation report is a public report (when agreed and released by the service). Individual and personal details should not be included unless individuals are in public office. Organizational responses should be considered in the public realm unless arrangements have been made to deal with them in an alternative way prior to the consultation closing.

Organisational responses should normally be given more weight in your report than responses from single individuals. If possible, quote from the responses, if appropriate, and blend them through the report

## STEP 12 EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK TO CONSULTEES

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Evaluation is important to highlight what strategies and approaches worked well and where there is room for improvement in how you conducted your consultation. Consultation can take up significant resources and therefore it is important to evaluate how well it went and to be able to demonstrate impact and value for money.

Demonstrating the value of good consultation can support a culture change in attitudes and approaches to this type of work.

You may look at the process, the impact and outcomes and the return on investment of consulting. Some elements you will not be able to measure straight away. You might think about:

- i) Whether the consultation followed due process and followed procedure correctly
- ii) Was the style and length of questions appropriate? Were the right questions asked?
- iii) The reach of the consultation and demographic of respondents (is it representative? Were any groups missed?)
- iv) How effective were the methods used to consult? How effective were the comms?
- v) Efficiency of the process e.g., how much was done in-house
- vi) The impact and outcomes – what difference was made due to consulting and how were the results used to inform changes?
- vii) Respondent satisfaction – did they feel informed, listened to?

You can find some tips in the toolkit on what questions you could ask and methods you can use to evaluate your consultation.

## Feedback

Timing is important in feeding back results. As part of your Communications Plan, you should have planned how you will feedback the findings to residents, to inform them what the response to consultation was and what impact their feedback has had on that outcome. We always need to be aware that the consultation is only part of the decision-making process. It is not a referendum. “You said we did” is not always appropriate. Think about what media might you use and your audience – where should the feedback be and in what form? Different audiences will have different needs and require different levels of detail so a mix of techniques would likely work best. Often there may be two separate parts to the feedback. Firstly, this is what you have told us in the consultation. This will be provided in full in the consultation report but will often be more accessible in summary form. e.g., an infographic. Then the service will build the evidence from the consultation into the proposals going forward, using all evidence available. At this point too it may be appropriate to feedback again. This will probably be put together in a committee report. In your communication plan, you will also need to consider how you will feedback to other stakeholders, including the portfolio holder, other council members, senior managers, other staff, other organisations, or users involved in the consultation or who may have an interest in the outcome. **Important to remember that elected members always need to see sight of consultation reports prior to them appearing in the press.**

This process is important to ensure that people continue to take part in our consultations in the future. It will also help influence general views or opinions of how good Dorset Council is at keeping local people informed.

## STEP 13 SHARING YOUR RESULTS WITHIN THE COUNCIL

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It is important we share results across the council. This could be through the development of a consultation library or via the engagement platform. It may be an abstract summary of findings or the detailed report. Data could be made available with the support of BI, but you would need to consider GDPR requirements.

Why we share findings:

- We share findings to raise awareness across the organisation (e.g., via a summary or blog)
- Sharing findings is an open and transparent way of working
- To prevent duplication of effort – not approaching the same people with the same questions – what have we already done?
- To inform future work – what do we already know and where are the gaps?

The council has set up a consultation library at XXXX. This is a searchable library of consultations and surveys conducted by services. Some provide an abstract summary of key findings; others offer data in more depth that you can refer to. You may want to use this data as a starting point for your own work, or just check whether work has been done with a particular population or topic before.

NOTE: consultees will need to be made aware of how their data is being used/stored, whether it will be anonymised etc.

## SUPPORT AND FURTHER INFORMATION

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Dorset Council has a central Consultation and Engagement team. Their primary role is to provide advice and support to officers and Members who are planning and implementing consultations, and to also offer challenge to thinking and planning to ensure robustness. The team will be more heavily involved in the planning and delivery of statutory and high-risk consultations.

Issues with consultations tend to arise due to lack of thorough planning or time given to ensure a robust process. The team is here to support both planning and implementation



to ensure the council and residents get the maximum possible benefit from the consultation process. Therefore, we ask that the team is given as much notice as possible of upcoming consultations.

### Consultation and Engagement Webpage

If you are considering undertaking consultation work and would like to discuss your requirements or get any advice please get in touch via our brief [Consultation Web Form](#)

[Consultation Policy](#) (link)

[Consultation Toolkits and Plan with guidance](#) (LINK)

Consultation contact e-mail address: [consultation@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

There will also be key modules on the Learning Hub.

## WHO WE ARE

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*You may also seek support from:*

**Communications Team** [Comms@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:Comms@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

**Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Officer** - James Palfreman-Kay

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## APPENDIX

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### **Appendix A: The Gunning Principles**

#### **Proposal at a formative stage**



A decision should not be pre-determined before consultation is undertaken. The decision maker cannot consult on a decision that it has already made. It would be unfair to do so but also pointless. This does not mean that the decision-maker must consult on all possible options of achieving a particular objective. A decision-maker can consult on a 'preferred option' so long as it is prepared to change course if persuaded to do so subject to the outcome of consultations. Participants must be able to give their feedback and offer up other suggestions.

### **Sufficient reasons to allow for intelligent consideration and response**

Consultees must be given sufficient information to enable them to understand the proposal and respond to it with their feedback. Proposals must be clear and not misleading. Consultees should be made aware how a proposal for consultation has already been considered, including any options that have been discounted and the reasons for this. Consultees should also be aware of how proposals will be considered, and decisions made after the consultation process. This includes any other evidence or work that will be considered as part of the decision-making process.

If information provided to consultees is incorrect or misleading or does not give the true reasons for putting forward the relevant proposals, then this may constitute a sufficient flaw in the consultation process to lead to a quashing of the subsequent decision. Although there is no general obligation to disclose unpublished internal advice or representations from other consultees, that remains subject to the overarching requirement to give sufficient reasons for consultees to be able to respond intelligently. If a proposal has been informed by private representations, those representations should be made available to consultees.

Note that if a consultation is taken to Judicial Review, the powers allow for all paperwork, emails, and notes around a decision to be submitted.

### **Adequate time for consideration and response**

Unless statutory time requirements are prescribed, there is no specified time frame within which the consultation must take place. Decision-makers will have to form a judgement as to what period of time is appropriate for the consultation exercise in issue. Where there has been prior discussion about the issue then it may reasonably decide to limit the time for formal consultation. However, where the information to be disclosed is complex, or not well known to those consulted upon, it may consider that a greater period of consultation is called for to allow for participants to be given sufficient time to have their say. Also, consideration should be given if a consultation is going to be run over a school holiday period. Depending on the subject of the consultation it is often necessary to extend the consultation period.

### **The product of consultation must be conscientiously considered**

The decision-maker must give genuine and conscientious consideration to the representations received. The product of the consultation exercise must be considered in finalising any proposals. The decision-maker must embark on the consultation process prepared to change course if persuaded by that consultation process to do so. The decision-maker does not have to read personally every response provided in the consultation process. However, where a summary is provided, this will need to be comprehensive and accurate. It is always sensible to make available to the decision-maker all the representations, so that they can access them if they wish.

## **Appendix B: The Consultation Charter**

### **Principle 1 The INTEGRITY of Consultation**

The process must have an honest intention. The Consultor must be willing to listen to the views advanced by consultees and be prepared to be influenced when making subsequent decisions. If the decisions subject to consultation have already been taken, it is a waste of consultees' time and a fraud upon all participants to undertake a purposeless exercise and breaches the principle of Consultation Integrity.

### **Principle 2 The VISIBILITY of Consultation**

All those who have a justifiable right to participate in a consultation should be made reasonably aware of the exercise. For Closed Consultations<sup>1</sup>, this will be less demanding than for Open Consultations. Visibility is also important for decision-makers who should have full awareness of any consultation exercise, which is relevant to decisions they are about to take.

### **Principle 3 The ACCESSIBILITY of Consultation**

Consultees must be able to have reasonable access to the exercise. This means that the methods chosen must be appropriate for the intended audience and that effective means are used to cater for the special needs of 'seldom heard' groups and others with special requirements. New technology and social media offer an ever-wider choice of consultation mechanism, but consultors must always ensure that the 'Digital Divide' does not disenfranchise citizens or stakeholders. <sup>1</sup> Where the audience only consists of fully identified stakeholders

### **Principle 4 The TRANSPARENCY of Consultation**

Many Consultations are highly public, and rightly so. Indeed, the principle of Transparency and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires that stakeholder invitation lists, consultee responses and consultation results be published. But this should only occur with the express or implied consent of participants. Consultors who intend to publish details of respondents and their responses have a duty to ensure that this is understood by all

participants. Consultation submissions will be published unless specific exemptions apply. Freedom of Information Act requests can be used to seek access to data previously kept hidden. 2. Consultees rightly expect full transparency of the governance arrangements applicable to a consultation and the decision-making process which will follow. They will also expect explanations for decisions taken following a consultation.

### **Principle 5 The DISCLOSURE obligations in Consultation**

For consultation to succeed, and to encourage a measure of trust between the parties, it is important to provide for reasonable disclosure of relevant information. Consultors are under a duty to disclose information which could materially influence the nature and extent of consultees' responses. Areas where decisions have effectively been taken already, and where consultee views cannot influence the situation, should be disclosed. Consultees are also under a duty to disclose certain information. If a representative body expresses a view on behalf of its members, it should inform the consultor of the presence of any significant minority opinion within its membership and be prepared to estimate the extent to which it is held. 2 But note that the Data Protection Act 1988 applies to information of a "personal nature"

### **Principle 6 The FAIR INTERPRETATION of Consultation**

Information and viewpoints gathered through Consultation exercises must be collated and assessed, and this task must be undertaken promptly and objectively. In general, decision-makers should not normally be personally involved with primary analysis and interpretation of consultation data, and the use of external data analysts has many advantages. Where consultors use weighting methods to assist in the assessment process, this must be disclosed to participants and to decision-makers relying on the consultation output.

### **Principle 7 The PUBLICATION of Consultation**

Participants in a consultation exercise have a proper expectation that they will see both the output and the outcome of the process. Except in certain Closed or Internal consultations, the assumption should be that publication in a form accessible to the consultee would follow within a reasonable time after the conclusion of the exercise. It is the responsibility of a consultor to publish an adequate feedback document, consisting of consultation output, preferably in advance of decisions being taken. Where no publication is intended, it is the duty of the consultor to disclose this when initially inviting stakeholders or the public to participate

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## Place & Resources Overview Committee

9 February 2023

## Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy, 2023-25 Refresh

### For Recommendation to Cabinet

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr R Bryan, Highways, Travel and Environment

**Local Councillor(s):** N/A

**Executive Director:** J Sellgren, Executive Director of Place

Report Author: Carl Warom/Antony Littlechild

Title: Climate & Ecology Policy Officer/Sustainability Team Manager (Climate and Ecological Sustainability)

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**Report Status:** Public

**Brief Summary:** The Council has identified the challenges of climate and ecology amongst its key priorities within the corporate plan; and adopted a climate and ecology strategy in July 2021. The strategy was noted as a living document that would evolve as action, technology, and policy progresses. Following its adoption there has been significant progress in delivery, science and policy, so we committed to a refresh of the strategy in order to ensure that it remained fit for purpose. Owing to the continuing relevance and suitability of much of the content of the 2021 strategy, the refresh aims to be a light touch rather than a rewrite from scratch by repurposing, reframing and tightening its existing content. Its broad aims are threefold:

- a) To give a clearer strategic articulation of the 'three pillars' of the climate, ecological and resilience challenges and workstreams, in order to emphasise the importance and interdependencies of nature recovery and climate adaptation work alongside our efforts on decarbonisation.
- b) To provide an updated narrative on the updates to national policy, in which to situate our activity.
- c) To provide a shorter articulation of our approach through a more concise set of 'missions' that more clearly articulates our direction and

identifies a clear subset of short-term priorities for the next couple of years in particular.

The appended draft represents a first early draft prior to planned engagement and further analysis.

**Recommendation:** To review progress made in refreshing the Dorset Council Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy and recommend its final approval to Cabinet.

**Reason for Recommendation:** To ensure that the strategy remains fit for purpose by being responsive to latest policy and progress, and concisely communicates our direction and ambition.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The Council has identified the challenges of climate and ecology amongst its key priorities within the corporate plan. The challenges remain vast, and the evidence on the case for action have only strengthened over the last couple of years – with 2022 witnessing the highest global emissions on record and the UK’s hottest year on record. Yet they also present unprecedented opportunities to make our food and energy systems more secure, our homes and transport healthier and cheaper to run, and a means to create new skilled jobs and industries. Cleaner, greener systems for how we power, heat, feed and transport ourselves will enable us to nurture prosperous, stronger, healthier communities.
- 1.2 Achieving this requires complex systems changes and action at scale, with a role for all stakeholders. The Council is setting an example through its efforts to tackle its own organisational impacts, but also will continue to play a critical systems leadership role through our spheres of influence.
- 1.3 Dorset Council adopted a climate and ecology strategy in July 2021 in response to its 2019 climate & ecological emergency declaration. The strategy was developed using the guidance of an Executive Advisory Panel and shaped by the input of a public consultation exercise (which indicated a very high level of positive net agreement with most elements of the strategy).
- 1.4 The strategy set a clear direction and ambition for the local area; and committed to (a) become a carbon neutral council by 2040 through an operational programme to cut emissions we directly control; and (b) help Dorset become carbon neutral by 2050, through a facilitation programme

using our influence through policy, services and partners. These were accompanied by interim targets which frontloaded these reductions.

- 1.5 The strategy was noted as a living document that would evolve as action, technology and policy progresses. Following its adoption there has been significant progress in our delivery of the strategy through an extensive programme of work. This has been reported to Council in regular progress reporting, most recently in [Autumn 2022](#) and [Spring 2022](#). The Council's emissions have declined by over a quarter since 2019, meaning we are well on track for a Carbon Neutral Council by 2040. Dorset's have declined by just under a fifth since 2018, but the inclusion of newly available data for waste and agriculture for the latter means emissions need cutting faster to reach net zero by 2050.
- 1.6 Following adoption there has also been major progress in the science and policy context, including:
- The [IPCC's 2021/22 Sixth Assessment Report](#), a large-scale synthesis by leading volunteer scientists on behalf of governments. It goes well beyond 2014's assessment, confirming as fact that humans are responsible for warming since 1850, that we will exceed 1.5C in 20 years on current trends, that it is causing a major increase in extreme weather, and that it will significantly threaten human health in coming decades.
  - [Government's 2021 Net Zero Strategy](#) now sets a clear pathway for the UK to meet the next three national carbon budgets to 2037 (for a 78% cut), towards reaching net zero by 2050. It gives clarity on their ambition for all sectors, with commitments including scaling up heat pumps and ending the sale of gas boilers, fully decarbonising energy by 2035, and ending the sale of new fossil-fuelled cars and vans by 2030.
  - [Multiple other detailed Government strategies](#), policy and legislation have also been released on transport, energy, hydrogen, food and industry – providing greater clarity on the national framework for decarbonisation.
  - [The Environment Act](#) become law in November 2021. It sets a new national environmental framework for environmental protection, including biodiversity, water quality, clean air and waste. There has also been significant progress towards implementation of linked emerging policy, such as Biodiversity Net Gain, Local Nature Recovery Strategies, and the new agri-environment regime for funding farming (the Environmental Land Management Scheme) – most of which will take significant steps forward in 2023. Government has also finalised its long-term environmental targets

(subject to Parliamentary approval), and outlined its intentions for regulatory, designation and public body reform.

- Government's latest 5-yearly climate risk assessment was published in 2022. It identifies 61 risks, including 8 urgent ones: natural habitats, soil health, natural carbon stores, agriculture, supply chains, the power system, heat impacts on health & productivity, and overseas impacts. Government recognises that adaptation so far hasn't been sufficient and commits to boost it in the third National Adaptation Programme due in 2023.

- 1.7 In view of the significant progress in our action and on the scientific and national policy context, we committed to a refresh of the strategy in order to ensure that it remained fit for purpose. Owing to the continuing relevance and suitability of much of the content of the 2021 strategy, the refresh aims to be a light touch that builds upon the existing strategy, rather than rewriting it from scratch. Its broad aims are threefold:
- a) To give a clearer strategic articulation of the 'three pillars' of the climate, ecological and resilience challenges and workstreams, in order to emphasise the importance and interdependencies of nature recovery and climate adaptation work alongside our efforts on decarbonisation.
  - b) To provide an updated narrative on the updates to national policy, in which to situate our activity.
  - c) To provide a shorter articulation of our approach through a more concise set of 'missions' that more clearly articulates our direction and identifies a clear subset of short-term priorities for the next couple of years in particular.
- 1.8 The appended draft represents a first early draft that aims to provide a basis towards reaching these aims, updating the narrative and retaining much of the ambition of the 2021 strategy whilst making it more concise. The strategy has also been retitled to the 'Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy' to ensure its clearer alignment to the associated priority within the Council's Corporate Plan.
- 1.9 Over late January and February engagement will be undertaken with internal and external stakeholders to test and refine the draft, and further analysis will be undertaken of our original consultation input to ensure the



fidelity of the refresh to stakeholders' requests. Further work will also be undertaken to finalise the design and visual aspects of the strategy.

## **2. Financial Implications**

2.1 A costed action plan presented to cabinet on 6 October 2020, highlighted that significant additional revenue and capital would be required to deliver the council's ambitions and strategy over its lifetime to ensure action continues with urgency and at the scale required. Dorset Council allocated £10 million capital over 5 years in the 2022/23 Dorset Council budget. This additional funding will help to strengthen work already underway to reduce our operation carbon footprint in some key areas to include building retrofit, electrification of the fleet, and electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Potentially enabling a further 5-6% reduction in emissions over the next 5 years.

2.2 There will undoubtedly be a requirement to re-align existing operations and resources to accelerate the actions required to deliver against the ambitions of the strategy and action plan. The scale of change required is significant, and to ensure that the ambitions contained within the strategy and action plan are fulfilled, a programme of this scale will need to access additional resources from a variety of sources. Maximising opportunities for external funding and partnership working are key and over the past year Dorset Council has been extremely successful at drawing in external funding streams contributing to reducing carbon emissions. Dorset Council will need to ensure it is 'opportunity ready', All of this work will require the right evidence and resources to draw in funds for both the operational and county-wide areas of focus, all of which will be through competitive processes. Additionally, there will be a requirement to re-align existing operations and resources to accelerate the actions required to deliver against the ambitions of the strategy.

## **3. Environmental Implications**

3.1 Ensuring that our Climate and Ecology Strategy remains fit for purpose is critical to ensuring our strategic direction and delivery to respond to successfully steer the Council and wider Dorset in decarbonisation, nature recovery and adaptation.

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

4.1 There are no specific health and wellbeing implications of this report. However, (a) the impact of climate change poses numerous health and

wellbeing risks to the residents of Dorset, and there will need to be significant consideration in how Dorset will start to manage the adaptation required to mitigate these impacts; (b) cleaner, greener systems will provide wider health and wellbeing co-benefits, such as improved air quality, healthy diets, improved access to high quality natural environment and active travel amongst others.

## 5. **Other Implications**

- 5.1 There are no other specific implications contained in this report. As previously noted, the strategy has wide ranging implications, opportunities, and co-benefits for the way the council delivers services and works with others across the county.

## 6. **Risk Assessment**

- 6.1 **HAVING CONSIDERED:** the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: High

Residual Risk: Medium

Failing to ensure a fit for purpose climate and ecology strategy entails (a) high risks associated with vulnerability to worsening climate impacts (including to Council services and budgets); (b) risks of missed opportunities in failing to seize the transition to cleaner, greener systems (including economic, health and wellbeing opportunities); and (c) reputational risks owing to known high level of public interest in the climate change agenda and the previous commitment.

## 7. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 An initial scoping exercise is currently being undertaken to highlight any specific impacts that need to be considered through the delivery of the strategy and action plan.

## 8. **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – CEE Strategy refresh Draft v1.0

## 9. **Background Papers**

- [Dorset Council Climate Emergency Strategy and action plans](#)
- [November 2022 Progress Report](#)
- [June 2022 Progress Report](#)

# Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy

2023-25 Refresh

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Climate Change | **Carbon Neutral Dorset**  
Biodiversity Loss | **Nature Positive Dorset**  
Adaptation | **Resilient Dorset**

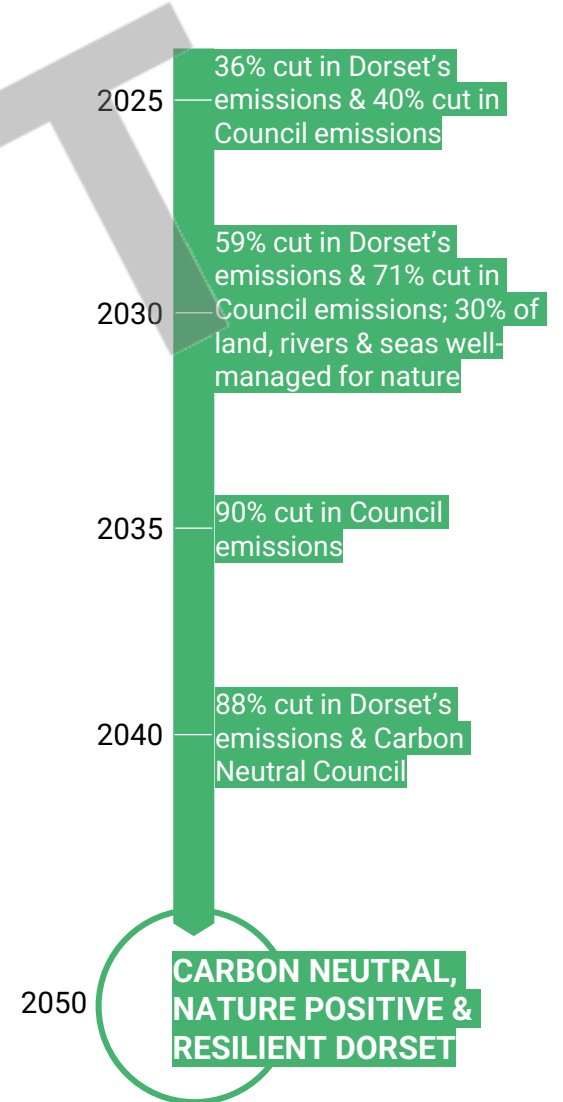


# Foreword

To be inserted

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DRAFT



# Introduction

**Acting to prevent environmental breakdown is an unprecedented opportunity. We can make our food and energy systems more secure, our homes and transport healthier and cheaper to run, and create new skilled jobs and industries. It is not a priority to weigh against our socio-economic ambitions, but a lever to achieve them. Cleaner, greener systems for how we power, heat, feed and transport ourselves will enable us to nurture prosperous, stronger, healthier communities. This refreshed strategy reiterates how.**

The need is clear: CO<sub>2</sub> is at its highest level in at least 2 million years, with emissions in 2022 the second highest on record. Temperatures rose quicker in the last few decades than in any such period in two millennia, with 2022 the UK's hottest year on record. This is causing a huge rise in the severity and likelihood of extreme weather, food insecurity, and growing risks of global cascading impacts. Even if we fail to stay under 1.5°C, as seems likely, every tenth of a degree beyond it really matters.

Unfortunately, climate change is just the tip of a rapidly melting iceberg. A great acceleration in the decline of many of earth's life support systems from around the 1950s means we've crossed 4 of 9 'planetary boundaries'. These boundaries marked the stable Holocene epoch in which civilisation developed.

In particular, biodiversity loss is now thousands of times the normal rate of extinction – with wildlife plummeting almost 70% in 50 years. A million species are now at threat. This doesn't just concern distant reefs and forests: the UK is one of the world's most nature-depleted countries. And this isn't just about cuddly animals – it risks the collapse of ecosystems that provide food, flood protection and store carbon. Species moving to adapt also threatens more pandemics.

Climate change and biodiversity loss are two sides of the same coin. Climate change is set to overtake land use change as the biggest cause of species loss. And the degradation of nature threatens to weaken its ability to remove carbon – turning it into an emitter. The solutions are therefore linked: many climate actions (like stopping deforestation or dietary change) can support biodiversity, and others (like monocultural woodland or bioenergy) threaten biodiversity if poorly done.

Whilst mitigation is a priority we must also be pragmatic: climate change is already happening and further warming is inevitable, so we must adapt. These three pillars – climate change, biodiversity loss, and adaptation – must all be considered in our operational programme as a Council and our facilitation programme for wider Dorset.

This can all seem overwhelming. It's hard to see the forest for the trees, especially when they're being felled or on fire. Yet it is not only solvable, but an unprecedented opportunity to make us healthier, wealthier, and more secure.

We aren't all equally responsible nor equally at risk, but we all have a role. Whilst COPs may fall short, that emphasises how important local action is. We will lead the way for Dorset to cut our emissions, restore nature, and make us more resilient. And we must do so fairly to ensure that everyone is protected and everyone benefits from green growth.

Global warming inevitably means more hot air, but we can be proud that we are not all talk. Since we declared an emergency in 2019 we've established it as a corporate priority, created a corporate director role, and secured £100m in grants and investment on top of our £10m programme to deliver major projects.

But to stay in budget we still need to cut Dorset's emissions by over half by 2030. We can't do that alone, but we have incredible strategic partners, businesses, community groups like DCAN, and residents to help us deliver. This refreshed strategy restates our path. We've kept the substance of our 2021 strategy but made it snappier, filled some gaps that have been highlighted to us, and reflected major new national policy advances.

# Our Strategy: Summary

Our vision is for a **carbon neutral, nature positive and resilient Dorset** achieved through a **clean, green and fair transition** and that generates prosperous, stronger and healthier communities.

## 3 Challenges, 9 Missions, 10 Levers...



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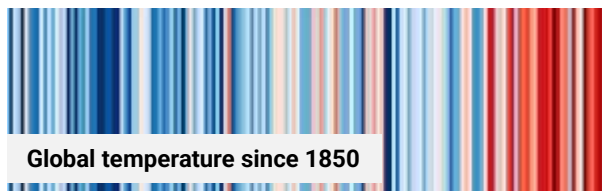
# The Global Challenge

## Climate Change

CO<sub>2</sub> is now at its highest level in at least 2 million years, with global emissions in 2022 the second highest on record. Global temperatures have risen 1.2°C on pre-industrial levels (2°C in Europe, 3°C in the Arctic) – rising faster in the last 50 years than in any such period in the last 2,000 years. The last decade was likely the hottest in 125,000 years. 2022 was the UK's hottest year on record.

This is causing a huge rise in the severity and likelihood of weather extremes like heatwaves, floods, and wildfires. Sea levels are rising at 3 times the rate of 1901-1971, and it's heating at a rate not seen for 11,000 years. The Arctic will likely be ice free in 2050.

Further warming is now unavoidable, but how much will depend on what we do now. Crossing 1.5°C will present severe risks, yet we are likely to do so in the early 2030s. Staying (or getting back) under it is possible, but it will require rapid and deep emissions cuts. Even if we fail, every tenth of a degree beyond 1.5°C still really matters.



## Biodiversity Loss

Biodiversity is rapidly declining, with over a million species at threat globally – ushering in earth's sixth mass extinction. The rate of extinction is now thousands of times the normal rate, with wildlife declining 70% in the last 50 years alone. Land-use change (primarily from food) is the biggest driver, but climate change is likely to be the biggest cause in the future.

The UK itself is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. With only around half its biodiversity left (compared to a global average of 75%), the UK is in the bottom 10% for biodiversity. 41% of UK species declined in abundance over the last 50 years alone and 15% are now threatened with extinction.

Biodiversity loss and climate change accelerate one another. Nature has absorbed over half our emissions since 1750, but its destruction and degradation is now limiting its ability to store and sequester carbon. Biodiversity and habitat loss also risks the collapse of ecosystems which provide our food and other key ecosystem services, whilst also threatening more pathogenic diseases.



## Threats to our resilience

Impacts are happening now and further warming is unavoidable. We must therefore ensure the resilience of people, prosperity and nature alongside cutting our emissions.

Globally, 15 times more people died from floods, drought and storms in vulnerable areas over the last decade, and we are already seeing mass tree loss from drought and wildfires. If we reach 1.7-1.8°C, half of humanity may be exposed to life-threatening heat and humidity. Unintended impacts of climate engineering present yet further risks.

The UK faces significant impacts even under optimistic scenarios, including a further 0.5°C rise to 2050 with warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers. This will see a rise in temperatures extremes, changes to rainfall patterns, and more flooding, erosion and wildfires. Heatwaves will occur every other year by 2050. Summer rainfall could drop by a quarter and winter rainfall may increase by 16%. UK sea levels have now risen 16cm, and will continue to rise for centuries.



# Dorset's Decarbonisation Trajectory

We must achieve a Carbon Neutral Dorset by 2050 and a Carbon Neutral Council by 2040. Our carbon budget requires that we only emit  $\leq 21\text{MtCO}_2\text{e}$  from 2017 on.

Our earlier reporting showed that Dorset's emissions reduced 18% (to  $1.4\text{MtCO}_2\text{e/yr}$ ) since 2017, which would have kept us on track. That included cuts in industrial (-30%), transport (-23%) and commercial (-23%) emissions; though it may in part reflect the impacts of the pandemic. However, that earlier reporting lacked data for agriculture and waste emissions.

Including agriculture and waste ( $900\text{ktCO}_2\text{e}$ , around 30% our total) shows that **our actual total emissions ( $2.27\text{MtCO}_2\text{e/yr}$ ) are off track, so our rate of reduction must be faster: we need to cut them by  $>50\%$  by 2030, from a higher level than previously calculated.** This factors in those emissions removed by nature ( $\sim 72\text{ktCO}_2\text{e}$ ).

Our largest sources are agriculture (33%), transport (27%) and domestic energy (24%). These are broadly in line with national proportions, except agriculture which is three times higher in rural Dorset (from sources like livestock, soils and machinery).

Making Dorset Council net zero by 2040 requires cutting our emissions from  $33,5\text{ktCO}_2\text{e}$  in 2019, with an interim target of 40% cuts by 2025. Our emissions are 1.5% of Dorset's carbon footprint.

**The Council's own emissions reduced 26% (to  $24,326\text{tCO}_2\text{e}$ ) since 2019, so we are well on track and well below target level for 2021 ( $27,807\text{tCO}_2\text{e}$ ).** This has been in large part due to the significant cut in business and commuting travel from remote working – through there was a slight uptick in travel last year. Our emissions are anticipated to continue to decline and we're in an excellent position to achieve our 2025 and 2040 targets if emission cuts and renewable generation for our own energy demand are achieved.

Diagram 1:  
Dorset County  
Emissions  
2018-2022

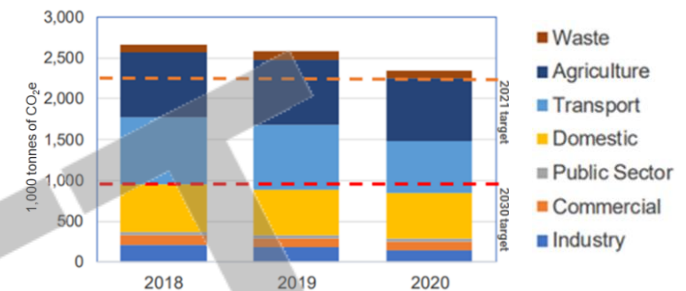


Diagram 2:  
Dorset County  
Emissions  
Trajectory



Diagram 3:  
Dorset Council  
Emissions  
2019-2022

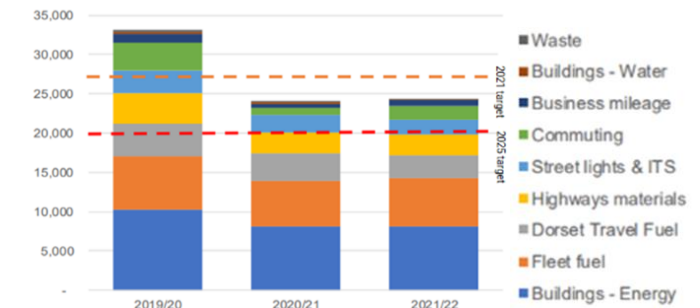
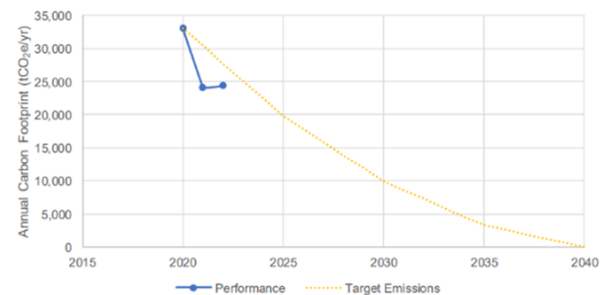


Diagram 4:  
Dorset Council  
Emissions  
Trajectory





# Dorset's Nature Recovery Trajectory

We want at least 30% of our land, rivers and seas to be well-managed for nature by 2030. Dorset is recognised for its rich biodiversity and natural beauty. From chalk grasslands, to ancient woodland, extensive heathland, and the coast and cliff habitats of our Jurassic Coast – our natural assets are protected by many designations and worth up to £2.5bn a year to our economy. But this doesn't mean it's in good condition. Protecting, restoring and enhancing it is vital for biodiversity, carbon, flood resilience, food, and more.

There was major loss and degradation of nature in Dorset over the last century. 2,930 terrestrial & freshwater species and 157 marine species are now of conservation concern locally. **Whilst a fifth of land in our Council area is in our ecological network, only a third of that is known to be in good condition. Only 12% of land is in a protected designation. It is also at risk of further loss, fragmentation and degradation from key pressures – including climate change.**

Our protected sites are slowly recovering in wider Dorset. 44% of SSSIs are favourable and 42% recovering. There was net growth of 109Ha in our SNCIs from 2005-2019; but, that includes 84Ha lost. 681Ha of green infrastructure was created or restored by 2021, though some is compensatory for losses. Major progress has been made on nutrient and heathland mitigation – including heathland restoration, rewilding, wetland creation, farmer-led approaches, and partnership projects. Progress is being made on light pollution, an objective of our streetlighting policy, with Dorset ranked the 13th darkest county and Cranborne Chase AONB made a Dark-Sky Reserve. At sea we welcomed a further 6 new designations in 2019, with 25% now in a Marine Conservation Zone and 31% of our inshore area protected from mobile fishing gear.

**But we need to up the pace in boosting nature's extent and condition to meet our 2030 goal. New nature recovery, biodiversity net gain and agri-environment policies present a strong opportunity to do so.**

Diagram 5:  
Land Cover  
Change  
1930-2015  
(Bournemouth  
University 2019)

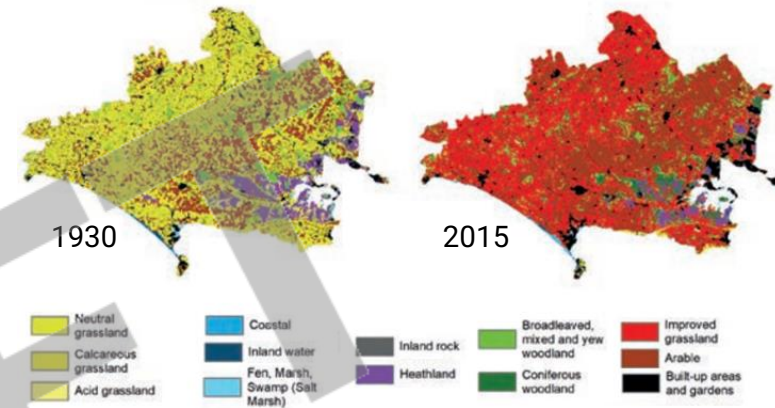
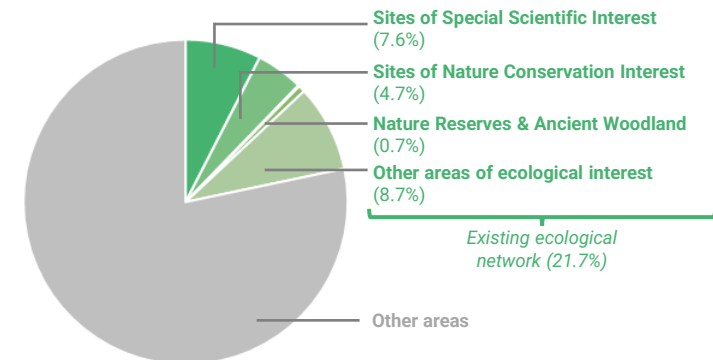


Diagram 6:  
Protected  
terrestrial site  
condition,  
wider Dorset  
2014-2020

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Sites of Special Scientific Interest</b>							
Favourable	39%	39%	39%	40%	40%	40%	44%
Unfavourable recovering	48%	49%	49%	48%	47%	47%	42%
Unfavourable no change or declining/destroyed	13%	12%	11%	12%	8%	13%	14%
<b>Sites of Nature Conservation Interest</b>							
Good maintained/improving	43%	41%	42%	41%	45%	45%	45%
Fair maintained/improving	14%	16%	19%	21%	32%	32%	32%
Poor or declining	15%	16%	16%	16%	2%	2%	2%
Unknown	28%	26%	23%	22%	21%	21%	21%

Diagram 7:  
Dorset Council  
land area  
profile



# Key Achievements in Dorset so far

## Energy, Heat, and Energy Efficiency

- Our **Low Carbon Dorset programme** has given free technical advice and £6.2m in grants for renewables, energy efficiency and innovation projects worth more than £17m
- Our £19m **Public Sector Decarbonisation Programme** has retrofitted public buildings and schools at 200 sites with measures like heating controls, lighting upgrades, solar & heat pumps.
- Each of these also trailblazed **conservation-sensitive deployment** at key heritage sites like Dorchester Castle and Sherborne Abbey.
- **Dorset Community Energy** has pioneered community-led models locally, raising community investment & commencing local energy trading.
- Our **Healthy Homes Dorset Programme** is facilitating insulation installation for local homes – as well as making referrals for boiler upgrades, LEDs, radiator reflectors, and draught-proofing. We're also using grant funding to improve our least insulated rentals.
- We've improved the **streetlight efficiency**; over a third are now LED, and with other measures this has helped to halve its energy consumption since 2008
- Three further **solar farms** were given approval in 2022, and Alaska Wind Farm LLP have acquired refurbished **wind turbines** for installation near Wareham. Canford Renewable Energy's **Green Hydrogen** project is also now underway.
- A decarbonisation strategy for our pension fund was established, with fossil fuel investment already cut by 70% to 1.2% of total assets.

## Transport

- Phase 1 of our **public EV charger rollout** is complete, with Phase 2 underway. On completion we'll have over 80 chargers.
- We're a **Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure pilot**, securing £2.7m for rural chargers.
- Our **Fleet Replacement Programme** has begun (following trials and a review with the Energy Saving Trust) and started providing employee incentives.
- We won £80m with BCP Council to create a **Sustainable Transport Network** in wider Dorset, including active travel infrastructure – like the project underway in Ferndown.
- We commissioned a Beryl **bikeshare scheme** for Southeast Dorset and maintained **training programmes** through Bikeability.
- An **Enhanced Partnership with bus operators** was established to boost public transport, and assessed the feasibility of two **Park & Ride Hubs**.
- **Gigabyte coverage** has expanded by a fifth, and we are promoting digital alternatives to cut travel with Dorset Business Travel Network and Digital Dorset.
- Strategic progress by our Sub-national Transport Body, including developing the **SW Rural Mobility Strategy** and the **South West Freight Strategy**.

## Waste & Materials

- We've achieved a **60% recycling rate**, making us the 8th best performing Council and 3rd best unitary.
- We've **cut waste sent to landfill** by 70% over the decade and are now treating all household **food waste** in-County using anaerobic digestion.
- We've introduced a **washable nappies** starter pack and **home compost bin subsidy**.
- Half of asphalt we use has been shifted to **Low Energy Asphalt**, and we've expanded materials recovery for surfacing and cut primary materials by a third.
- We've launched **behaviour change campaigns** such as Litter Free Dorset campaigns, 'Right Stuff Right Bin', 'Love Food Hate Waste', 'Slim Your Bin', recycling hangers, food waste stickering, Litter Free Coast & Sea and more.

# Key Achievements in Dorset so far

## Food

- Dorset AONB is delivering a £1.3m **Farming in Protected Landscapes' programme**, enabling 40 projects to implement sustainable measures like such as woodland creation, regenerative farming, soil health and flood mitigation measures.
- Multiple local initiatives continue to support Dorset **buy local and cut food miles**, such as Dorset Farmers Market, Dorset Food & Drink and Local Food Links Ltd.
- We've commenced **surveying on our County Farms** to identify opportunities for nature and climate, and have already seen positive outcomes from existing work like owl box installation.
- Major action on enabling **farmer-led approaches for nutrient mitigation** are established, such as the Poole Harbour Catchment Initiative and Nutrient Management Scheme, and the establishment of Wessex Water's **Trade scheme** (piloted in Poole Harbour) which enables auction-based financing of farmer-delivered water quality interventions.

## Resilience

- Over 40 **natural flood management** structures have been installed
- **Major flood alleviation measures** have been implemented, including a £750k scheme installing resilience measures for 94 homes.
- **Portesham Flood Alleviation Scheme** has been completed, with over 40 natural flood management measures installed in two catchments.
- Our **Building Resilience in Communities project** is underway in Weymouth, to engage communities in flood risk management and boost resilience.
- £2.5m funding has been secured to stabilise, protect & repair **Lyme Regis Cobb** from coastal erosion and flooding.

## Natural Assets

- Our **Biodiversity Appraisal Protocol** means that we protect nature where there is planned development.
- **Verge & amenity space management** improvements are being delivered through cut & collect, improving an additional 350,000m<sup>2</sup> for biodiversity.
- The UK's first 'super' National **Nature Reserve** was created at Purbeck Heath in 2020, and a 13 acre site has been acquired near Blandford for a new reserve.
- Dorset's **Ecological Network Maps** have been updated, showing opportunities to link and increase biodiversity.
- **Major nature recovery projects** have been delivered in projects like The Dorset Wild Rivers project, Purbeck Heaths Wilder Grazing Unit, River Asker project, and beavers have been introduced – enabling river, woodland, heathland, wetland and climate adaptation works.
- A marine project to protect the **seagrass beds** at Studland by installing **eco-moorings** is underway.
- **Nature-based activities for health and wellbeing**, including the Great Health Living Landscape and the Stepping into Nature projects, whilst the Healthy Places Programme and Dorset Local Access Forum have invested in improving access to greenspace in recognition of the value of the environment as a determinant of health.
- Developer contributions have been used to sustain **quality greenspace** in places like Wimborne, Ferndown, Verwood, Stoborough.
- Successful **behaviour campaigns** were launched on things like BBQ wildfire risks and #Loveyourverge.

# Latest National Policy

**The Climate Change Act commits to Net Zero territorial emissions by 2050, and requires policies to meet interim 5-year carbon budgets. Since our 2021 strategy was adopted, national Government has developed the national policy framework considerably.**

The most recent budget of June 2021 set a further statutory target for cutting emissions by 78% by 2035. **Government's new Net Zero Strategy sets out a pathway for the next three budgets to 2037 (for a 78% cut)**, delivered without global carbon offsets. It sits alongside strategies on transport, energy, hydrogen, food and industrial decarbonisation (Appendix 1), key points of which are highlighted in sections below.

**It gives clarity on what needs delivering this decade** via sector-specific measures and cross-cutting policies (like innovation, jobs & skills, public employment), whilst identifying alternative scenarios beyond 2037 depending on how options develop. All sectors contribute, with known tech and solutions prioritised, electrification key (with hydrogen supplementary where it is more difficult), and transformation of land through tree planting and peatland restoration. Key commitments for this decade include scaling up heat pumps, fully decarbonising electricity by 2035, ending the sale of new fossil-fuelled cars and vans by 2030.

**The strategy states that this is achievable, affordable, and essential for long-term prosperity** – anticipating annual investment of £50-60bn by 2030. The Treasury's review of it notes that climate mitigation is essential to prosperity and can boost the economy, with inaction far more costly.

**The strategy's targets are consistent with the demands of the Paris Agreement, and the pathways broadly align to those of the independent Climate Change Committee (CCC).** They described the strategy as a 'credible package' – but they also noted the urgent need for an agriculture and land decarbonisation strategy, and highlight the lack of emphasis on consumer behaviour change (such as on diets and transport choices).

**Subsequent policies and legislation have realised further progress.**

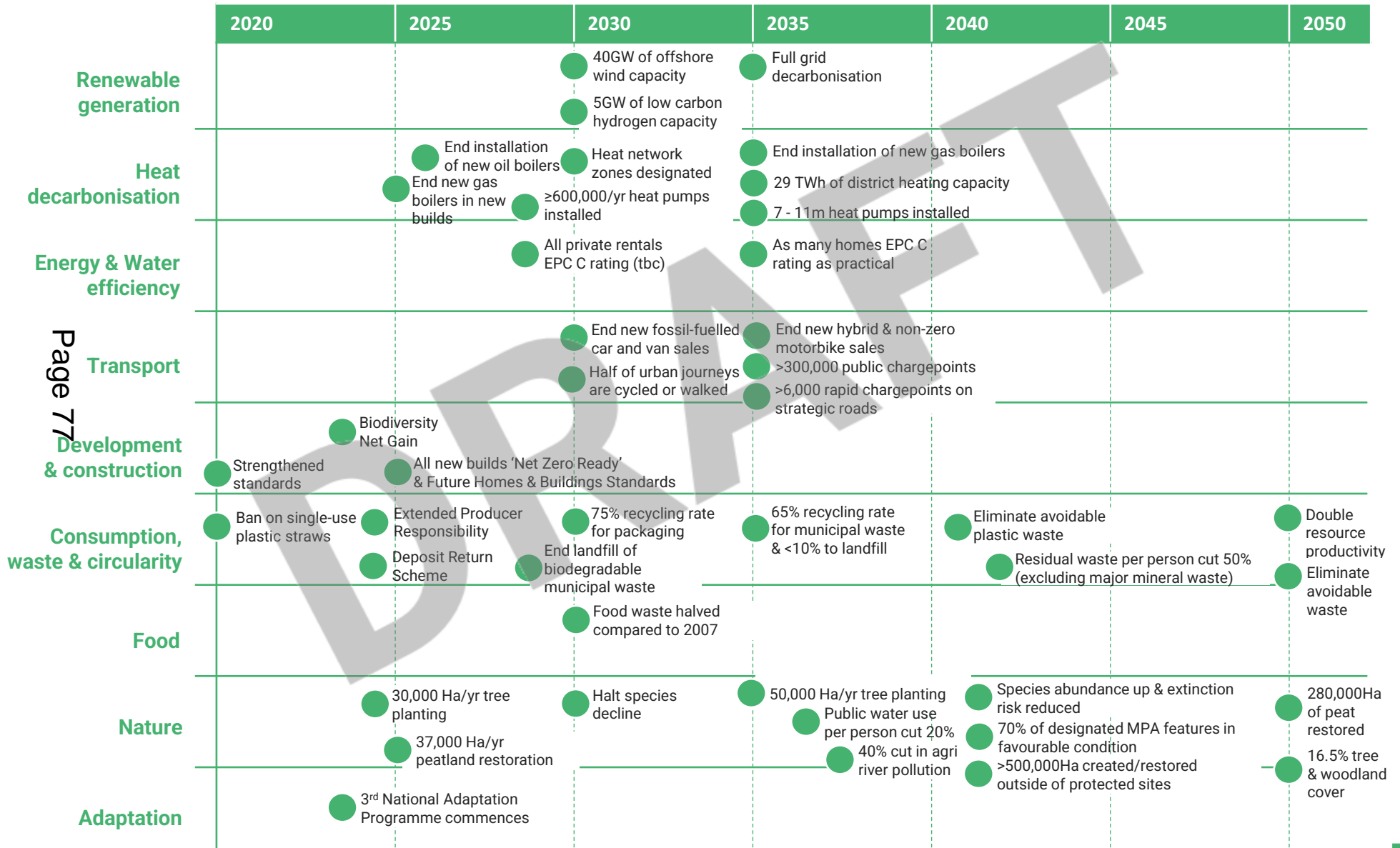
For example, the current Energy Security Bill builds on the Energy Security Strategy to help reform the energy system. It includes powers to regulate CO2 transport & storage networks, smart appliances and load controllers, and heat networks (including for fair pricing). It also establishes a market mechanism that obliges heating appliance manufacturers to scale up heat pumps from 2024 (the Low Carbon Heat Scheme), supports deployment of storage (by clarifying its role as a subset of generation), and enables heat network zoning.

**November 2021 also saw The Environment Act become law, setting a new framework for environmental protection** – the major legislative implementation of its 25 Year Environment Plan ambition to leave the environment in a better state than we found it. **It covers issues such as biodiversity, water quality, clean air and waste** and obliges policy to have regard to environmental principles like the polluter pays principle. It also provides the basis for new statutory targets, and establishes a new Office for Environmental Protection as an independent watchdog to enforce compliance. Alongside

On waste, for example, the Act strengthens producer responsibility for the end of life costs, introduces a deposit return scheme for drinks containers, and enables charges for some single-use plastics. It also creates requirements for how waste should be collected and separated (including weekly household waste collections), strengthens powers for waste crime, and enables product standards and labelling for resource efficiency. On nature it strengthens public body duties to conserve and enhance biodiversity, mandates that developers ensure a measurable net gain in biodiversity and secure it for at least 30 years, requires the preparation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies, and requires local consultation on tree felling.

**The following page shows key milestones set out in national policy.**

# Key National Milestones & Targets





Mission 1:

# RENEWABLE GENERATION

All energy for how we power, heat and transport ourselves will need to come from electricity or hydrogen generated by renewable or low carbon sources. This can unlock cleaner, cheaper and more secure British energy than imported fossil fuels –and generate jobs and investment (nationally up to £270bn and 120,000 jobs).

Government wants more on and offshore renewables and solar, to fully decarbonise power by 2035 (including 40GW of offshore wind by 2030) – and 5GW of hydrogen capacity by 2030 for difficult to electrify sectors. It is also transforming how the grid is planned and governed.

We've made good progress on solar locally but need faster growth in our generation and storage capacity, grid upgrades and smarter, flexible demand management. Electricity demand could grow 40-60% due to heat and transport electrification, so to be locally self-sufficient we'll need to grow our 491MW of capacity eightfold – including 4GW of solar (~19,000 acres) or 2GW of wind (~700 turbines), or some combination of the two. The Council alone needs 60MW of solar or 30MW of wind. Our decarbonisation routemap identifies opportunities, but grid constraints impair many projects, with connections often scuppered by high costs and delays from the triggering of reinforcements. Our operators' strategic investment plans will help, and we've provided evidence to inform these – but more remains to be done.

We'll need to deliver at scale, manage grid and national planning constraints, and take every opportunity for small-scale and large-scale deployment. Thankfully Dorset is an untapped resource of solar, wind and tidal energy.

## Objective: Boost deployment of renewable generation and flexibility measures on our estate and in wider Dorset.

- 1 Expand renewables on our estate:** Identify and implement opportunities to expand small- and large-scale renewables and flexibility measures like storage on our estate (including employment land and premises) to meet or exceed our energy demand.
- 2 Enable wider deployment through planning:** Encourage deployment of renewables and storage, and their integration in new developments through planning policy, toolkits, and guidance – including identifying suitable sites in the new Local Plan, and having regard for landscape, the historic environment, amenity, ecology, or productive farmland impacts and other constraints.
- 3 Continue Low Carbon Dorset:** Seek resource to continue the Low Carbon Dorset programme to promote and bolster advice and deployment by businesses, public and third sector organisations, owner-occupiers, landlords, and social housing providers; and support community-led action through projects.
- 4 Influence strategic energy planning for a locally efficient and responsive grid:** Work with local stakeholders on influencing and enabling strategic grid planning to rapidly accommodate new supply and demand, tackling anticipated congestion through infrastructure, speedier & cheaper connections, and smart & flexible solutions – such as through Local Area Energy Planning and lobbying on barriers for onshore and offshore renewable deployment.



**Heating makes up a quarter of UK emissions and half our gas use, so buildings need low carbon sources like heat pumps or hydrogen. This can unlock cleaner, cheaper, more secure heating than fossil fuels – giving us warmer, healthier and cheaper to heat buildings. It will help tackle fuel poverty and generate jobs and investment (nationally up to £200bn and 175,000 jobs).**

Government wants no new gas boiler sales from 2035 and heat pump installations of at least 600,000 a year by 2028 (a tenfold increase). It also wants 18% of heat to come from heat networks, and a 75% cut in public sector building emissions by 2037. Its Boiler Upgrade Scheme will give homeowner grants, whilst the Home Upgrade Grant will continue for low-income off-grid homes. It will also shift levies from electricity to gas bills over the decade to nudge uptake. The Social Housing and Public Sector Decarbonisation schemes are being extended. However, commentators have noted that the funding is insufficient to meet its targets.

Heat pumps are expected to be as cheap as gas boilers by 2030 and they're three times more efficient, so will significantly cut total household energy use. Government will determine heat network zones by 2025. It will also decide on the role of hydrogen in 2026, informed by a Hydrogen Village trial – with it more likely to play a role in areas with appropriate storage facilities (like gas import facilities and salt caverns). In Dorset, 82% of domestic heating systems currently are oil or gas powered. We need to retrofit heating systems in our current buildings and ensure that new builds install low carbon heating from the outset to avoid having to later retrofit them.

## Objective: Decarbonise heating in residential, community, public, commercial & industrial buildings.

- 1 Decarbonise heating on our estate:** Identify and implement further opportunities on our estate (including employment land & premises) for heat decarbonisation through the asset review process, and maximise the opportunities of future phases of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme grant funding.
- 2 Identify opportunities in wider Dorset:** Scope sites for large scale installation and heat network opportunities, including through heat mapping, and seek opportunities to pilot and test deployment (such as on our estate, in social housing, reuse of industrial by-product heat, or innovative conservation-friendly approaches for historic buildings).
- 3 Continue our retrofit advice & support offer:** Seek resource to continue the Low Carbon Dorset programme to bolster advice on deployment by businesses, public sector, third sector, and social housing organisations. Also secure resource to assist residents (owner-occupiers and landlords) to retrofit existing dwellings through the Healthy Homes Dorset Scheme, including signposting to advice for those who are 'able to pay'; and with emphasis on off-gas buildings.
- 4 Enable deployment for new builds through planning:** Encourage deployment in new builds through planning policy, toolkits, and guidance – including through the new Local Plan and identifying opportunities in allocation and masterplanning.



The UK has some of the least energy efficient housing in Europe, with two-thirds with an EPC rating of D or less. Achieving net zero buildings starts with improving this through a 'fabric first' approach that improves wall and loft insulation. Cutting water consumption per person will also be needed to ensure supply security, especially as our summers get hotter and drier. All of our buildings need to be substantially more energy and water efficient to limit expected growth in energy and water demand.

Boosting thermal performance will enable 38% of emission cuts nationally for heating buildings (with another 17% from heat pumps and 19% from public buildings). It will make them warmer, healthier and cheaper to run. Until the current energy crisis, bills hadn't risen for a decade despite rising prices, thanks to efficiency improvements.

Government aims to ensure as many homes as possible achieve EPC rating C by 2035, improving the slow progress of the last decade. It has expanded funding for the Home Upgrade Grant, Public Sector and Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. It has also proposed a target for mortgage lenders to increase the energy efficiency of their portfolio. But commentators have noted concern about the small scale of these measures.

Only around a third of Dorset's properties are rated EPC C or better. We will need a huge retrofit effort to increase the thermal and water efficiency of our existing building stock, ensure high standards for new builds, and expand use of smarter & more efficient appliances. This will be a challenge given our high proportion of older, detached, and hard-to-treat buildings.

**Objective: Retrofit to boost energy & water efficiency, cutting demand and wastage on our estate and wider Dorset's current building stock.**

- 1 Identify and implement opportunities on our estate** for retrofit, including expanded centralised utility and energy management, energy smart appliances, improved operational controls on energy-using equipment, water efficient tech (like flow regulators), water demand reduction measures (like rainwater harvesting & greywater systems), and leak elimination. Align our asset management and procurement approaches to support greater efficiencies.
- 2 Further improve the energy efficiency of streetlighting, bollards and signals** through technology and management.
- 3 Promote, deliver and enforce energy and water efficiency measures and behaviours** to cut wastage and demand, especially for schools, housing (including private rentals and social housing), businesses and hard to treat properties (including innovative and sensitive measures for conservation areas and listed buildings), progress enforcement of MEES towards meeting EPC C at a minimum, and seek further resource to assist residents through the Healthy Homes Dorset Scheme as well as encouraging those who are 'able to pay'.
- 4 Enable the energy efficient design of new builds** that follow the energy hierarchy and achieve high standards, through the new Local Plan and our Sustainability Checklist.





# ROAD TRANSPORT DECARBONISATION & MODAL SHIFT

Transport is a quarter of UK emissions, half of which are from cars. They hardly changed in recent decades as fuel efficiencies and EV growth were outweighed by growth in miles driven and SUVs. We need to switch all vehicles to electric or hydrogen, accelerate chargepoint deployment, and shift how people choose to travel. This will also help boost health from cleaner air and active travel, improve rural connectivity, and generate jobs and investment (nationally up to £220bn and 74,000 jobs).

Government's aim is to end the sale of new fossil-fuelled cars and vans by 2030, hybrids and non-zero motorbikes by 2035, and non-zero HGVs by 2040 – with similar for buses and coaches. It also wants EV charging to be cheaper and easier, with >300,000 public chargepoints by 2030. It has expanded the grant scheme for vehicles & infrastructure, prioritising on-street residential charging. It emphasises that 'modal shift' is needed too through better public transport and active travel, and by shifting freight from roads. It will invest in 4,000 zero emission buses, bus lanes, and a bigger capacity net zero rail network by 2050. It will also invest in walking & cycling so that half of urban journeys are cycled or walked by 2030, and review national roadbuilding policy.

Cars are the default mode of travel, especially in rural areas. Dorset has some of the highest levels of car ownership nationally and only around 1% of journeys are made on public transport. We must continue our existing programmes enabling EV infrastructure, continue efforts to enable modal shift by boosting active travel and public transport improvements, and continue to green the Council's own fleet and cut our ~5.3m business miles.

**Objective: Accelerate electric vehicle and charging infrastructure deployment, and shift how we travel to prioritise active and public modes through an integrated and affordable local transport system.**

- 1 Accelerate electric vehicle and charging infrastructure deployment** for personal, public, private and logistics travel, particularly rapid charging on strategic roads and developing an appropriate balance of on- and off-street charging options. We will identify how to extend affordable, accessible, convenient and smart charging for residents, businesses and visitors (including on our estate), without pavement disruption. We will make further use of grant funds and invest in the staged replacement of our fleet.
- 2 Enable modal shift and cut the need to travel for personal, commuting, business and logistics journeys** through increasing vehicle occupancy, investing in active travel and public transport, multi-modal services and infrastructure (like small-scale park & ride with EV and MaaS), comms & training, social prescribing, improving high speed digital infrastructure and promoting digital options, usership and sharing schemes, a well-maintained rights of way network and lobbying for rail improvements.
- 3 Embed infrastructure provision and modal shift in policy and strategy**, including aligning the new Local Transport Plan, the Local Plan (for sustainable travel options, colocation of dwellings and services, and charging infrastructure), parking policy, and procurement (for transport purchases & leasing).



**18,000 houses will be built in Dorset this decade, alongside other buildings & infrastructure. Good design will prevent environmental damage and protect owners from retrofit costs. They should aim to be net zero, nature positive and resilient in location, orientation, design and construction - cutting energy use, enabling sustainable travel, boosting the value of our natural assets, and limiting vulnerability to climate change.**

National policy is clear that they are material planning considerations. Government's road map for 'net zero ready' homes by 2025 (i.e. those with potential for zero operational emissions once the grid decarbonises) will require 75-80% less emissions through future standards due in 2025 (with cuts of a third already required). The Environment Act imposes duties on nature recovery and biodiversity net gain coming into force in 2023. National policy also requires that construction and operation of developments drives waste up the waste hierarchy.

Whilst those won't suffice for net zero (particularly on embodied carbon), we are able to set stronger local policy in some areas. The new Local Plan will be vital, but as statutory processes mean that its adoption won't be until 2026 we've produced guidance on how existing policy already allows much to be done in the interim. We already require applicants to supply a sustainability statement and checklist, and we have adopted Dorset Biodiversity Appraisal Protocol alongside strengthened policy protections for things like heathland and nutrient mitigation. Significant new building projects led by the Council (including the Building Better Lives programme) will provide an ideal opportunity for us to lead the way.

**Objective: Develop to high standards that cuts operational and embodied carbon, energy, water, and materials use; protects & enhances nature and ensures climate resilience.**

- 1 Encourage net zero new builds:** Establish policy, guidance & toolkits to encourage net zero new builds that follow the energy hierarchy, achieve high standards, and are sited to minimise the need to travel and enable sustainable travel. This should consider renewables, heat pumps & heat networks, energy & water efficiency. Trial tools for embodied carbon & whole life costing, and work towards development that we directly influence being net zero.
- 2 Promote sustainable materials use & waste management:** Promote sustainable construction (using the BREEAM tool) and waste management to drive waste up the waste hierarchy. For infrastructure too, cut natural resource use, waste, pollution, and primary aggregate use in favour of reused or recycled materials. Also prioritise reuse, remodelling, maintenance and improvement of existing assets.
- 3 Protect and enhance our ecological network:** Apply the mitigation hierarchy in siting and design to avoid biodiversity or pollution impacts as a priority. Measures should enhance our ecological network to support a range of ecosystem services in line with our Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Biodiversity Appraisal Protocol, Biodiversity Net Gain and planning policy.
- 4 Minimise climate risks:** Site and design to minimise (and where possible, reduce) exposure to risks like flooding and coastal erosion, with residual risks mitigated through incorporated proposals (including nature-based solutions).



**Waste is a source of emissions, such as through landfill methane, waste transport and water treatment. Litter, landfills (e.g. through leachate), waste crime and materials extraction also threaten nature. We must therefore work towards a more sustainable circular economy – cutting the waste that we produce, keeping resources in use as long as possible, and recovering & reusing materials.**

Waste makes up around 4% of UK emissions, much of which comes from construction, demolition and excavation. Around 10m tonnes of food and drink are also wasted annually. Government wants to move to a circular economy, double resource efficiency, and eliminate avoidable waste through better production, consumption and waste management. It is extending producer responsibility to make producers pay the full costs of disposal for packaging; introducing a deposit return scheme for single-use drinks containers; introducing charges or bans for single-use plastics; improving product labelling and design standards; and supporting reuse and remanufacture. It also wants to eliminate food waste to landfill and ensure all plastic packaging is recyclable, reusable or compostable.

Wider Dorset generates 1.6m tonnes of waste annually, and this is projected to grow. Locally we've grown recycling rates to 60%, curbed waste growth, and cut waste to landfill by 70% - whilst ensuring all our household food waste goes for anaerobic digestion. But there's still a big challenge ahead – and we've limited influence on commercial & industrial waste.

**Objective: Enable more sustainable production, consumption and waste treatment – to cut waste & materials use, maximise reuse & recycling, and minimise disposal.**

- 1 Become a low waste Council by 2040** by understanding and tackling our waste through campaigns & procurement approaches that enable waste reduction, reuse & recycling by our employees, tenants & concessions. This includes cutting food waste and single-life products, and further implementing our single-use plastic policy.
- 2 Manage Dorset's waste at the highest feasible level of the waste hierarchy** through facilities, campaigns, schemes and partnerships that enable us to cut waste (including food and plastic) and waste crime (including littering, pollution and fly tipping); and which encourage re-use, recycling, composting and recovery. We will aim to influence positive behaviour through campaigns (like 'Right Stuff, Right Bin' and 'Slim your Bin') and seek to influence business waste. We will also optimise routes and facilities for proximity – to cut vehicle emissions and safeguard & enhance nature.
- 3 Transition towards a circular Dorset** by encouraging businesses to apply sustainable design to products and packaging to improve their product lifespans and the resource efficiency of their operations and value chains; by supporting residents to reduce, reuse and recycle; and by nurturing reuse, repair and remanufacture.



**Land and farming emits more globally than transport, with livestock emitting three times that of aviation. Land use change (mostly for food and feed) is the main cause of species loss, and agriculture uses 70% of freshwater. Locally agriculture is Dorset's biggest emitter (33%) and uses 75% of land. We therefore need to produce more food with fewer emissions and less land, supported by a shift in consumption and huge cuts in food waste.**

Our agri-fisheries businesses are at the core of Dorset's heritage, economy and community, giving us food and stewarding our environment. Though intensive methods and pollution harm habitats, soils and seabeds, with the right incentives and advice they can deliver huge change – from healthier soils to limiting artificial fertilisers. Food will remain their main purpose, and we can support by buying local, sustainable produce. Yet this may be the hardest mission. Policy uncertainty on ELMS, business resilience challenges from inflation, and the lack of a national decarbonisation strategy for agriculture and land all make change hard. Further, what we eat is a deeply personal choice, and the cost of living crisis further limits options. Producers and consumers also need to adapt to a changing climate that will shift things like harvest dates or crop varieties, and may continue to elicit global food and input disruption that will impact choice and prices.

Thankfully the new subsidy regime for farming will give public money for public goods like climate, nature and flood resilience. It could create a radical shift, supporting sustainable practices (like agroforestry and low carbon farming), opening up new revenue sources, growing productivity, and enabling more efficient land use.

**Objective: Support the shift to locally secure, low-emission, nature-positive food production and diets.**

- 1 Transition our County Farms estate to low-emission and nature-positive food production**, like agroecological, regenerative, and water efficient, and catchment management practices; and identify opportunities for habitat creation or restoration where appropriate.
- 2 Facilitate low-emission and nature-positive agri-fisheries practices in Dorset** by promoting positive management practices, grant opportunities and clustering through trusted champions and peers; helping to foster whole-farm advisory capacity; and supporting business resilience (such as via payments for ecosystem services like soil carbon or run-off mitigation). Also encourage a shift to ecosystem-based fisheries management and sustainable aquaculture through trusted organisations that empower industry to secure sustainable fish populations and extensive seafloor habitats.
- 3 Identify and implement opportunities to support more community growing** such as through allotments and orchards, including on Council land and by embedding it in the refreshed Local Plan.
- 4 Support sustainable diets and the cutting of food waste**, shifting demand from carbon-intensive foods to local, low-carbon, nature-positive produce. Promote the consumption of local, sustainable, Green Kitchen Standard/Food for Life foodstuffs by households, businesses and our own catering services and contracts; and support means to cut food waste and boost surplus redistribution.



# NATURAL ASSETS & NATURE BASED SOLUTIONS

**Protecting and restoring our land, coast, rivers and sea is vital for biodiversity, carbon storage, flood resilience, food, and our health & wellbeing. We need to strengthen and extend our ecological network; and make it resilient to cumulative pressures like outflow & run-off pollution, air, light & noise pollution, disturbance & persecution, pests, abstraction, flooding and climate change.**

Government’s statutory target is to halt species decline by 2030. It wants to restore 75% of protected sites to favourable condition, create and restore 500,000Ha of wildlife-rich habitat, boost woodland cover to 12%, and restore 280,000Ha of peat by 2050. It also wants to reverse marine biodiversity loss and boost the management of protected marine sites. It will set new legally-binding targets in 2023. Its Nature Recovery Green Paper further proposes plans to ensure protection of 30% of land and seas by 2030, including designation, regulatory and public body reform.

The Environment Act also introduces a duty on local areas to create Local Nature Recovery Strategies. It also strengthens duties on public bodies to enhance nature, strengthens woodland and tree felling protections, and a new duty for developers to ensure a 10% net gain in biodiversity in their proposals from November 2023.

From wilder landscapes with green and blue corridors to better managed Marine Protected Areas, achieving this will require working with our strategic and place-based partnerships for integrated land, catchment and marine management that ensures its effective long-term management.

**Objective: Protect and restore our land, rivers & seas by making nature bigger, better and more joined-up for biodiversity, carbon, flood resilience and wider benefits.**

- 1 Create and embed a Local Nature Recovery Strategy** of evidence-based priorities and maps to support multiple ecosystem services and the right habitat in the right place. We’ll align use of existing policy like our Biodiversity Protocol, and integrate it further into new policy. We’ll develop an integrated approach to Biodiversity Net Gain, carbon, compensation, Green Infrastructure, water quality and natural flood management.
- 2 Take action on own estate** by working with our county farms tenants to ensure good land and watercourse management, extending cut & collect verge management, and reviewing chemical use and storage. We’ll identify opportunities to deliver on our estate through holistic evaluation of its optimal use (including for revenue generation from Biodiversity Net Gain, carbon, flood or nutrient mitigation credits).
- 3 Enable wider delivery and mainstream nature-based solutions,** including through partnership, landscape-scale and whole-catchment approaches. We’ll promote best practice; seek resource for site management and enforcement; guide communities on greenspace & garden management; and explore commercial sequestration opportunities. We’ll promote the health benefits of nature and ensure well maintained rights of way and public greenspace. We’ll also encourage more sustainable ecosystem-based fisheries management and sustainable aquaculture through trusted organisations that empower industry to sustain populations and seafloor habitats.



**Mitigation is not enough. Climate change is happening now, so we must manage growing risks to ensure a resilient Dorset where people, prosperity and nature are protected. Even under low warming scenarios the UK faces major and costly impacts without action. Acting now will be cheaper than dealing with the consequences later (with every £1 invested yielding £2-10 of benefits).**

Small shifts in average climate can trigger big changes. Whilst there are opportunities, they don't offset the risks. Heatwaves are now twice as likely and will occur every other year on average by 2050. Summer rainfall could drop by a quarter and winter rainfall may increase 16%. Sea levels have already risen 16cm and will continue. Extreme weather will cause more local flooding, coastal erosion, landslips and wildfires on our heaths and woodland. Impacts can also threaten mitigation efforts if renewables or nature-based based solutions aren't resilient. And global impacts may be felt locally too, such as through climate refugees, or supply chain disruption.

Government publishes a risk assessment every 5 years. The latest identifies 61 risks, including 8 urgent ones: natural habitats, soil health, natural carbon stores, agriculture, supply chains, the power system, heat impacts on health & productivity, and overseas impacts. 8 risks could see annual damage over £1bn each in a 2°C scenario, and £10m for another 36. Government recognises that adaptation so far hasn't been sufficient, and commits to boost it in the third National Adaptation Programme due in 2023. Its 4th assessment will also provide better spatial information to support local action.

**Objective: Understand, embed, raise awareness, and manage climate change impacts on sea levels, coastal erosion, extreme weather, ecosystems, and linked global impacts.**

- 1 Assess our vulnerability and develop an adaptation strategy for 2°C and 4°C, for our operations and wider Dorset:** Building on our 2010 risk assessment, consider the cost, safety and supply impacts on factors like health, economy, built and natural assets, transport, infrastructure, water, food and heritage. It may consider risk interdependencies, tipping points and inequalities in vulnerability; and it may recommend relocation or protection through engineered defences and structures, nature-based solutions, behavioural, policy, or monitoring measures.
- 2 Mainstream adaptation in our decision-making, wider policy and business continuity arrangements:** Ensure the risks inform our activity by embedding them in our integrated risk management approach, embed in planning and other relevant policy, and enable project appraisal methods that limit exposure of investment and assets to avoid lock-in, stranded assets and maladaptation.
- 3 Develop a partnership approach for collaborative, integrated, strategic adaptation measures for wider Dorset,** linking with relevant structures and partners (like our Local Resilience Forum, Dorset Coast Forum, and Flood Risk Management Authorities), aligning with local flood and shoreline management approaches, exploiting any emerging grant opportunities, and supporting wider awareness and empowerment of local communities to manage the risks.



**We must deliver at pace and scale for climate, nature and adaptation – and ensure the transition is delivered fairly so that everyone is protected and benefits.** Delivery cannot be achieved by the Council alone, so we need to enable and influence others locally and nationally,

using the skills and resources of wider stakeholders. We need to think long-term and across systems – setting an example through our **Operational Programme for things we directly control, whilst enabling and influencing others through our Facilitation Programme.**

**Leadership, governance & decision-making:** Enable leadership that sets a clear mandate and a positive example; governance & delivery structures for our operational and facilitation programmes; and decision-making tools to mainstream it in all key projects, programmes and strategies.

**Partnerships & community empowerment:** Engage and facilitate public, private and voluntary sector partners, local councils and community groups, and households. This will include working with key system partners; enabling effective strategic partnerships; and enabling local place-based partnerships and initiatives.

**Strategy & policy:** Align key corporate and place-based strategies & policies (such as our new Local Plan, Local Transport Plan, asset management approach, pensions scheme, and others) and ensure policy is being used to maximal effect through guidance where necessary.

**Resourcing & Investment:** Enable revenue and capital resource for delivery, monitoring & evidence – including core resourcing, seeking external grant funding, revenue generation opportunities, catalysing private finance, enabling crowdfunding, and encouraging the uptake of funding opportunities by key stakeholders (like ELMs).

**Green Economy:** Encourage investment in local green businesses, jobs and skills by embedding it in our economic strategies & projects, and working with skills providers. Address critical practical capability, like for the deployment of zero carbon measures, nature-positive land management, and advice or monitoring services.

**Procurement:** Explore opportunities to optimise procurement and commissioning so that contracts, purchasing and leasing help to cut carbon, maximise energy & water efficiency, cut waste and materials use, and maximise opportunities for nature recovery.

**Lobbying & advocacy:** Lobby Government, regulators and other key stakeholders on the key barriers to delivery, through engagement, consultation and forum input – including for resourcing, strengthening of national targets, aligning wider policy, devolution and stronger incentives, regulations and designations.

**Communications & Behaviour Change:** Inspire, encourage and guide personal and professional behaviours & practices – directly or indirectly through champions and peers. Grow understanding of the issues and opportunities, and enable informed choices (e.g. on energy & water use, land management, and food waste).

**Data, monitoring & reporting:** Acquire, improve and share robust data on energy and emissions (including potentially Scope 3), waste and materials management, natural assets, and climate vulnerability – and enable key research to fill strategic gaps on our baseline, pressures or opportunities (including mapping).

**Risk management:** Assess the vulnerability of the Council and wider Dorset to environmental risks, mainstream them in our risk management approach, and ensure appropriate mitigations and business continuity arrangements are in place.

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# Next Steps: Priority delivery for 2023-25

**We've established a £10m operational programme of capital funding, which should enable a further 5-6% cut in the Council's emissions over the next 5 years.** It will fund measures like switching a further 9,000 streetlights to LEDs, further retrofit of our buildings, purchasing EVs and expanding charging infrastructure. It will also complement major grant income for delivery across wider Dorset, such as through the Shared Prosperity Fund.

## Our priorities for 2023-25 are to:

Embed corporately by rolling out our decision-making tool, employee training, and embedding in procurement.

Embed further in our place strategies, especially the new Local Plan and Local Transport Plan.

Explore opportunities for collaborative public sector projects through our new public sector group.

Deliver an extended Low Carbon Dorset programme.

Deliver an extended Healthy Homes Dorset programme.

Continue to work with partners and landlords to raise energy efficiency standards in the rented sector.

Complete our current PSDS programme and progress analysis and plans to support further works.

Work with partners and developers to bring forward large-scale renewables.

Engage on grid constraints to influence strategic network planning.

Deliver Phase 2 of our EV charger programme and our LEVI pilot.

Purchase or lease further EVs to support our fleet transition, improve monitoring and further incentivise employee behaviour.

Work with partners to develop, expand and deliver funded programmes to support modal shift.

Deliver further materials and energy efficiencies for highways through surfacing and lighting technology.

Further extend our waste reduction, reuse and recycling efforts.

Develop a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Dorset.

Expand cut & collect and the electrification of green space management.

Work with our tenants to assess and implement County Farms opportunities.

Define our approach to Biodiversity Net Gain & carbon sequestration, and integrate it with our wider natural asset management approach.

Explore means to boost the uptake of emerging agri-environment schemes.

Kickstart our adaptation work with a refreshed risk assessment and define our approach for a Dorset Adaptation Programme.



## Place & Resources Overview Committee

9 February 2023

## Planning for Climate Change: Interim Guidance & Position Statement, Sustainability Checklist and Listed Building guidance

### For Recommendation to Cabinet

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr D Walsh, Planning

**Local Councillor(s):** All

**Executive Director:** J Sellgren, Executive Director of Place

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**Report Status:** Public

#### **Brief Summary:**

An Interim Guidance and Position Statement has been prepared to assist in decision-making for planning applications. The position statement provides commentary on the weight that can be given to climate change in decision making. It sets out what Dorset Council expects from planning applications for new buildings and stand-alone renewable energy schemes in relation to climate change, given current planning policy.

Alongside the position statement, a Sustainability Checklist has been prepared for completion by applicants. The Council's Local List requires the submission of a sustainability statement for proposals for new build and change of use (subject to certain exemptions) to demonstrate how sustainable design and construction have been addressed. This is to meet the requirements of policies relating to sustainable design and construction in the adopted local plans covering the Dorset Council area. The checklist has been prepared to ensure all relevant matters are considered.

As concerns about climate change have risen, and energy costs are increasing, many people are looking for ways to adapt and retrofit their houses to make them more energy efficient. This can be more challenging in a listed building, which has been designated as a result of its special architectural or historic interest in a national context. Local authorities have a statutory duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings and any features of special architectural or historic interest they possess. To assist with this a document has been prepared “Listed Buildings – what you can do for climate change” which outlines the importance of the historic heritage and issues to consider when looking at energy efficiency in Listed Buildings.

**Recommendation:**

That the committee review the Interim Guidance and Position Statement; the Sustainability Checklist and Listed Buildings – what you can do for climate change.

That the committee recommend that Cabinet agree the Interim Guidance and Position Statement, Sustainability Checklist and Listed Buildings – what you can do for climate change documents for the purpose of a six-week consultation.

That the committee recommend to Cabinet that the Portfolio Holder for Planning should be given delegated authority, after considering the results of this consultation, to approve use of the documents (Appendix 1, Appendix 2 and Appendix 3) to aid decision making on planning applications.

**Reason for Recommendation:**

To enable efforts to be taken to address the climate emergency when new buildings are proposed and to assist with decision-making for renewable energy proposals. The Interim Guidance and Position Statement and Sustainability Checklist will give clarity to developers as to the expectations of Dorset Council when considering development proposals.

The Listed Buildings document will provide guidance for owners of listed buildings when considering energy efficiency works.

Consultation enables the documents to be adjusted to reflect issues raised and therefore for weight to be given to it when making planning decisions. Should significant changes to any of the documents be considered necessary as a result of the consultation, councillors will be given the opportunity to consider revised versions prior to their use in planning decisions.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Dorset Council has declared a climate and ecological emergency. A Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy was adopted in 2020 and a revised strategy has been prepared. This Strategy seeks to reduce climate emissions to net zero by 2050 with reductions from the built environment being a significant contributor to achieving this target.
- 1.2 Since becoming a unitary authority, work to prepare a new Dorset Local Plan has been underway. Until adoption of the new Local Plan, the existing adopted local plans of the former district and borough councils provide the main part of the development plan for their respective areas. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 1.3 The new Dorset Council Local Plan will play a key role in delivering sustainable development. However, it will be some time before the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan attracts significant weight in the decision-making process. Whilst the adopted local plans provide a policy steer on sustainable design and construction, there is a need to clarify the Council's position prior to adoption of the new Dorset Council Local Plan to ensure that opportunities for addressing climate change are maximised as new development is brought forward.
- 1.4 The Council is also dealing with a significant number of applications for renewable energy schemes. There is a need to provide guidance to decision-makers on the weight to be given to the benefits of such schemes in the context of the climate emergency alongside other matters such as impacts on landscape and heritage.
- 1.5 An interim guidance and position statement has therefore been prepared to:
  - ensure that Dorset Council maximises opportunities to address the climate and ecological emergency through decision making on development proposals;
  - ensure that appropriate weight is given to the climate and ecological emergency in determining planning applications;
  - ensure that planning decisions are, as far as possible, supporting the Council's Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy;
  - ensure that existing adopted planning policies are being applied consistently in tackling the climate emergency; and

- clarify to applicants what Dorset Council's expectations are in relation to the climate emergency.
- 1.6 This includes ensuring that the requirements of the new Dorset Council National and Local List (October 2022), principally the submission of a sustainability statement, are implemented effectively.
- 1.7 Subject to the agreement of Cabinet, the Interim Position Statement, Sustainability Checklist and Listed Buildings – What you can do for Climate Change documents will be subject to a six-week consultation.
- 1.8 It is intended that after consultation, the position statement and checklist will be in place and used in making planning decisions until the adoption of the new Dorset Council Local Plan.

## **2. Interim Guidance and Position Statement and Sustainability Checklist**

- 2.1 Climate change must be addressed across planning. Locating development sustainably, transport planning, planning for landscape and ecology and environmental adaptation are all key factors that interplay and will be addressed through the new Local Plan. Whilst buildings contribute to climate change through their location, construction and how they are used, the focus of the position statement is on the sustainable design and construction of buildings rather than location. The Interim Guidance and Position Statement does not cover ecology, flood risk and transport in detail as these issues are well covered by existing adopted policy and application requirements.
- 2.2 The Interim Guidance and Position Statement (see appendix 1) focusses on two key areas: sustainable design and construction in relation to new built development and stand-alone renewable energy generation schemes.
- 2.3 For each of these areas, a review of national and existing adopted local policy has been undertaken. A position statement for each is then provided within the Interim Guidance and Position Statement, to be taken into account by decision-makers when considering relevant planning applications.

### Sustainable design and construction (Position Statement 1)

- 2.4 This states that the climate emergency is a material consideration and will be given weight in the balance when determining planning applications. It

also confirms that Dorset's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy will be given weight as a material consideration and that the carbon neutral or low carbon credentials of a development will be viewed positively as part of the planning assessment against the development plan and other material considerations.

- 2.5 The Sustainability Checklist (see appendix 2) is supplementary to the Interim Guidance and Position Statement and has been developed to set out how Dorset Council is encouraging applicants to incorporate sustainable design and construction into their proposals. It will also be used as a tool to support the assessment of the sustainability credentials of a proposal.
- 2.6 The Dorset Council Local List was adopted in October 2022 and requires at paragraph 39 the submission of a sustainability statement with relevant applications. The Interim Guidance and Position Statement confirms that applicants should submit a sustainability statement, supported by a completed sustainability checklist, as a means of providing supporting information that is relevant to the existing adopted local plan policies identified. The checklist is intended to assist in the preparation of the sustainability statement, which is required to be submitted in order for an application to be considered valid.
- 2.7 The Sustainability Checklist covers the following areas, in accordance with the Local List:
- reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions,
  - maximising the use of sustainable materials,
  - minimising waste and increasing recycling,
  - conserving water resources,
  - incorporating green infrastructure,
  - sustainable drainage and pollution, and
  - adaptation to climate change.
- 2.8 For each topic area, a number of questions or environmental performance standards are set out for consideration by the applicant. This will assist in ensuring best practice is incorporated wherever possible by providing appropriate prompts, although it does not place additional requirements

beyond adopted local plan policies. The aim of the checklist is to inform the design process by highlighting matters that are best considered at the outset of the design process, such as building orientation and green infrastructure, as well as more detailed design considerations. This is much more cost and time effective and efficient than addressing such matters later on in the planning application process or at the building stage.

- 2.9 Submitted sustainability statements and accompanying checklists will feed into the council's evaluation of development proposals under adopted planning policies. This is to assist in ensuring that the climate emergency is taken into consideration alongside other material considerations such as any impact on landscape and heritage.
- 2.10 Renewable energy schemes (Position Statement 2)
- 2.11 The Interim Guidance and Position Statement sets out the public benefits in relation to renewable energy schemes and the policy context in relation to the need for such schemes.
- 2.12 Detailed commentary is provided on the consideration of such proposals in relation to designated landscapes and heritage assets, taking into account relevant legislation and the national and local policy context.
- 2.13 Position Statement 2 states that Dorset's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy will be given weight as a material consideration in the determination of renewable energy planning applications.
- 2.14 It confirms that the significant public benefits of renewable energy will be given considerable weight as a material consideration in the balance of benefits against harm when making planning decisions. The position statement sets out how proposals falling within AONBs and affecting designated heritage assets will be considered, as well as those falling on best and most versatile agricultural land.
- 2.15 Renewable energy schemes are often temporary in nature and Position Statement 2 confirms that the lifetime of a proposed development will be a material consideration in decision making, balanced with a scheme's proposed benefits and its potential impacts.
- 2.16 It is intended that the Interim Guidance and Position Statement will assist decision-makers in their consideration of proposals for renewable energy schemes, by providing a review of relevant policy and by providing

guidance in relation to the key issues mentioned above. This should assist the council in making clear and consistent planning decisions and help in avoiding delay.

2.17 Listed Buildings – what you can do for climate change

2.18 The aim of this document is to provide guidance for owners of listed buildings and agents when considering energy efficiency improvements. It includes the following:

- Information on general good practice and quick wins
- Conservation principles, measures and techniques
- When listed building consent, planning permission and building control approval is required
- A table covering a variety of measures to reduce energy bills, whether they require Listed Building Consent, and comments / advice where relevant
- Information on the Council's decision making process
- Information relating to solar panels and double glazing in listed buildings, with reference to national policy.
- Case studies where works have been undertaken to listed buildings (NB one completed, two further ones to be completed prior to submission to Cabinet)
- Links to documents which provide further detailed information.

2.19 Each site is unique and dealt with in accordance with the characteristics of the listed building and its setting, but the document aims to provide general guidance and information to help owners of listed buildings develop successful applications. It also outlines improvements that can be undertaken which do not require consent.

**Consultation**

2.20 The Interim Guidance and Position Statement, the Sustainability Checklist and the Listed Buildings – what you can do for climate change have been prepared with input from planning and sustainability colleagues. The final draft versions were circulated to various teams within Dorset Council for comment. A number of constructive comments have been received with

some of these incorporated into the versions of the documents in Appendices 1, 2 and 3. The Interim Guidance and Position Statement and Sustainability Checklist have also been reviewed by Dorset Council's legal team. The Listed Buildings document has been sent to legal for review.

- 2.21 A number of comments are yet to be reviewed and consideration given to whether there is a need to amend the documents. Where possible, officers will highlight where changes may be necessary at the committee meeting and give a suggested way forward.
- 2.22 The documents have been sent to the Dorset AONB and Cranborne Chase AONB and should responses be received these will be considered and reported to the committee.
- 2.23 All comments received as part of this circulation, and suggestions arising from this committee, will be reviewed with the necessary changes incorporated into the documents before they are taken to Cabinet for agreement to undertaking further external consultation.
- 2.24 It is intended that external consultation will take place over a six week period. The consultation will be publicised with comments invited from those individuals, agents and groups on the Local Plan consultation database.

### **Next steps**

- 2.25 The Interim Guidance and Position Statement, Sustainability Checklist and Listed Buildings – what you can do for climate change will be considered by Cabinet on 28 March with a view to their agreement for the consultation to take place as soon as practicable after that date.
- 2.26 Following this consultation, the documents will be reviewed in response to any issues raised. It is then intended that, in consultation with the portfolio holder for planning, the documents will be published and used in planning decisions. However, if significant changes to the documents is considered necessary as a result of the responses to the consultation, councillors will be given a further opportunity to consider the revised documents before their publication and use.
- 2.27 It is anticipated that the start date for the use of the documents will be notified to officers, councillors and parish and town councils prior to their implementation. Similarly, a notification will be sent to planning agents and



developers and a press statement will be released. A programme of officer/member briefings will be implemented prior to publication.

### **Dorset Local Plan**

- 2.28 The Dorset Local Plan is the correct forum for full consideration of any new policy approach in respect of sustainable design and construction and renewable energy, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.
- 2.29 As stated at paragraph 1.8, the Interim Guidance and Position Statement and Sustainability Checklist are intended to be in place until the new Plan's adoption. As they will have been in use for a period of time before that Plan's adoption, reflection on their effectiveness will be possible.
- 2.30 It is intended that further evidence gathering will take place during the preparation of Dorset Council Local Plan policies. These draft policies will be subject to consultation enabling feedback to be received and the approach refined.
- 2.31 In the meantime however, it is hoped that the proposed position statement and checklist will make a positive contribution towards tackling the climate emergency by maximising opportunities for addressing the climate emergency through decision making.

### **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1 There are no financial implications associated with the Climate Change Interim Guidance and Position Statement, Sustainability Checklist or Listed Buildings – what you can do for climate change. The Interim Guidance and Position Statement should give clarity to those proposing development how Dorset Council will give weight to the climate emergency.
- 3.2 The Sustainability Checklist sets out the information that Dorset Council expects those proposing development to submit alongside their planning application to enable evaluation of development proposals. This should help to speed up the validation and decision-making process for planning applications.
- 3.3 Listed Buildings – what you can do for climate change will be uploaded on the Council's website to provide information for agents and owners of listed buildings.

### **4. Environmental Implications**

- 4.1 The proposed Interim Guidance and Position Statement sets out clearly the approach Dorset Council will take in considering climate change when making decisions on planning applications. Weight will be given to the extent that developments help in achieving the net zero targets of the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Strategy.
- 4.2 The Sustainability Checklist details the measures that will be used to evaluate the contribution development is making to achieving net zero targets. It sets out various environmental performance standards and the information that is expected to be submitted as part of the Sustainability Statement to support planning applications to demonstrate performance against these standards.
- 4.3 The Interim Guidance and Position Statement and Sustainability Checklist taken together should therefore help to deliver developments that achieve higher standards of environmental performance.
- 4.4 Listed Buildings – what you can do for climate change outlines what measures can be undertaken to help with the climate emergency. It also explains how local authorities have a statutory duty to have “special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”. This duty requires an objective assessment of the impacts of any proposals on the significance of listed buildings through national and local policy.

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

- 5.1 Improved building performance will have positive implications for people’s health and well-being by helping to address the health impacts of climate change.
- 5.2 Reduced energy usage in buildings will also help minimise fuel poverty.

## 6. **Other Implications**

- 6.1 Although setting high energy performance targets for new development may discourage some developers from developing in Dorset, it is important that buildings are built that minimise energy usage and minimise environmental impacts. The council will be considering this in the preparation of the local plan, and in the meantime cannot require higher standards than those set out in adopted local plan policy.
- 6.2 The Interim Guidance and Position Statement therefore sets out how environmental performance will be considered in planning applications but

does not prevent consent being granted for a development that does not meet high environmental performance standards should material considerations suggest that it is appropriate to grant consent.

## 7. **Risk Assessment**

7.1 **HAVING CONSIDERED:** the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

A final decision to implement the Interim Guidance and Position Statement and Sustainability Checklist will be made by Cabinet.

## 8. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

8.1 An equalities impact assessment has not yet been prepared for the Interim Guidance and Position Statement, Sustainability Checklist or Listed Buildings – what you can do for climate change but an assessment will be prepared to support the documents as they pass to Cabinet.

8.2 It is likely that once equalities issues have been considered the Interim Guidance and Position Statement and Sustainability Checklist will be either neutral or positive for many of the protected characteristics.

## 9. **Appendices**

1. Dorset Council Planning for Climate Change: Interim Guidance & Position Statement
2. Dorset Council Interim Guidance Note: Sustainability statement and checklist for planning applications
3. Listed Buildings – what you can do for climate change

## 10. **Background Papers**

Dorset Council Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy

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# **Dorset Council Planning for Climate Change - Interim Guidance and Position Statement**

**Draft version - January 2023**

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# 1. Dorset Council Planning for Climate Change - Interim Guidance and Position Statement

## 1.1. Introduction

**1.1.1.** This interim guidance and position statement seeks to clarify existing planning policy requirements within the Dorset Council area in relation to planning for the climate and ecological emergency.

**1.1.2.** The statement provides commentary on the weight given to climate change in decision making and sets out what Dorset Council expects from planning applications, given current policy. The statement focusses on new built development and proposals for stand-alone renewable energy generation schemes and is intended to be in place until the adoption of the new Dorset Local Plan.

**1.1.3.** This statement primarily relates to issues associated with the climate emergency. Whilst it is recognised that the climate and ecological aspects of the emergency are intrinsically interlinked, the ecological aspects are not specifically addressed in this document as they are considered to be well covered by existing policy frameworks and guidance. Should there be a future need to clarify the council's position on ecological matters pertaining to climate change, this will be done as a further piece of work.

### Why do we need a guidance statement?

**1.1.4.** There is clear scientific evidence to show that climate change is happening and is due to human activity. CO<sub>2</sub> is now at its highest level in at least 2 million years, with global emissions in 2022 just shy of 2019's record level. Average global temperatures have risen by 1.2C on pre-industrial levels, with 2011-20 more likely than not the hottest period in 125,000 years. This is causing a huge increase in the severity and likelihood of weather extremes like heatwaves, flood and wildfires – with 50-75% of people globally facing 'life threatening' extreme heat by then end of the century.

**1.1.5.** The latest IPCC report<sup>1</sup> confirms we are locked into a global temperature increase of 1.5°C by 2050 that will have severe impacts on our climate. Coupled with increasing fuel costs which will impact people's quality of life, there is a need to act as soon as possible in addressing climate change.

#### The policy response

**1.1.6.** The UK is a signatory to the 2015 Paris Agreement, which commits to halving global emissions from 2010 levels by 2030. Government has since made a statutory commitment to cut UK emissions by 78% by 2035, and to then reach net zero by 2050. It has also pledged that by 2030 it will protect at least 30% of land and seas and halt species

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<sup>1</sup> [Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change \(ipcc.ch\)](https://www.ipcc.ch)

loss. It has accepted that its work on climate adaptation has ‘not been sufficient’<sup>2</sup> and thereby committed to developing a national adaptation programme.

**1.1.7.** Locally we must act on each of the three pillars of the climate emergency, the ecological emergency, and environmental adaptation. The council will set an example and lead the way for Dorset to cut our emissions, restore nature, and make us resilient for now unavoidable environmental changes. These three missions are inextricably linked – and tackling them presents huge socio-economic as well as environmental opportunities.



**1.1.8.** Dorset Council declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019, and our Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy (CEES) sets clear ambition for the council and wider Dorset to rapidly become carbon neutral and nature positive.<sup>3</sup> The latest bi-annual progress report<sup>4</sup> showed that the county's emissions had been reduced by 18% against the baseline year (2017). This is a fantastic reduction, but to stay within our carbon budget we still need to cut our emissions by over half by 2030 – and we need to speed up the rate of our emission cuts if we're to stay on track.

### The role of planning for sustainable development

**1.1.9.** Achieving truly sustainable development will be central to this. Plan making and decision-taking for future development play a vital role in climate change mitigation, by influencing greenhouse gas emissions, and adaptation, by increasing resilience to climate change, and so in delivering the strategy. Addressing climate change is one of the core land use planning principles that is expected to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking.<sup>5</sup> Ultimately the aim will be for new buildings to be net zero, nature positive and resilient in location, orientation, design and construction - cutting energy use, enabling sustainable travel, boosting the value of our natural assets, and limiting vulnerability to climate change.

**1.1.10.** Planning ensures suitably located development, taking into account travel and flood risk, the development of sustainable buildings, it protects our natural assets, enables place making and the integration of green infrastructure, and can support the delivery of

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<sup>2</sup> HMG (2022), *UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022*  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1047003/climate-change-risk-assessment-2022.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1047003/climate-change-risk-assessment-2022.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Dorset Council's Plan 2022-2024  
<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/3284687/Dorset+Councils+Plan+2022-2024.pdf/3eb63860-f277-676e-7aa6-c10cfb8ab54d>

<sup>4</sup> <https://moderngov.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/s31424/Appendix%20A%20-%20CEES%20Progress%20report%20-%20Autumn%202022.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Planning Practice Guidance – Climate Change Paragraph 001



appropriately sited renewable energy. These considerations all factor into responding to the climate emergency.

**1.1.11.** The most important and most impactful planning consideration is the location of development. This is achieved through the local plans by the establishment of settlement hierarchies and the allocation of sustainable sites for development. Optimising the development potential of sites located in sustainable areas with easy access to facilities and services, and not in open countryside, immediately reduces the need for car use and can promote active travel.<sup>6</sup> In turn this reduces carbon emissions from transport. Well-designed places will respond to their context, creating character and community and working positively to address environmental issues affecting climate.<sup>7</sup>

**1.1.12.** The first, and most important, consideration for an applicant and those determining a planning application, therefore, will be whether the proposal is in a sustainable location and consequently whether it minimises the need to travel. By doing so, this is a key step in taking the climate emergency into account.

**1.1.13.** Since this principle is well established and embedded in policy and decision making, this statement seeks to provide guidance on what can be achieved thereafter in terms of on-site action that can be taken to reduce carbon emissions and help with adaptation to the changing climate.

**1.1.14.** The autumn 2021 Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy Progress Report recognises that:

*'Reducing energy use and increasing use of renewable energy in buildings ... is the single largest part of both the council and county-wide carbon footprint and one of the most challenging areas requiring significant investment by organisations and individuals across Dorset.'*

**1.1.15.** The CEES sets out a range of objectives and actions specifically in relation to buildings, including ensuring all new buildings in Dorset are zero-carbon, and developing a positive planning framework for achieving this.

**1.1.16.** The CEES also sets out that in order for Dorset to generate 100% of its own energy demand there will be a need for around 4GW of solar energy (around 19,000 acres) or 2GW of wind energy (around 700 big turbines), or a combination of the two. The CEES states actions to increase renewable energy generation in Dorset, including by identifying sites for renewable energy development, creating appropriate policy and guidance for such schemes and establishing a positive planning policy framework for maximising the use of renewable energy within development.

## **Purpose and scope of this statement**

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**1.1.17.** Existing adopted planning policy was drafted by the former district and borough councils with the clear intention of improving the sustainability credentials of proposals. However, the plans<sup>8</sup> were adopted several years ago and the climate and ecological

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<sup>6</sup> A new Government agency, Active Travel England, has responsibility for enhancing active travel infrastructure and will be made a statutory consultee on major planning applications in the future.

<sup>7</sup> National Design Guide – Paragraph 36

<sup>8</sup> West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (2015), Purbeck Local Plan (2012), North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 (2016) & Christchurch & East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014)

emergency policy agenda has moved on significantly with shifts in emphasis within national policy.

**1.1.18.** Adopted local plans do not specifically allocate land for renewable energy development, however applications for such schemes have been coming forward over recent years, mainly in the form of solar farms. As progress towards carbon neutrality happens it is likely that applications for renewable energy schemes will increase, putting pressure on Dorset's environmental designations. Therefore, it is considered necessary to clarify the council's position on such developments and their impacts to ensure the coherence of our approach to tackling both the climate and ecological emergencies together.

**1.1.19.** The new Dorset Council Local Plan will play a key role in delivering sustainable development, taking into account the wide ranging factors that culminate to address climate change and ensure effective place making. However, it will be some time before the emerging Dorset Council Local Plan attracts significant weight in the decision-making process, with a proposed adoption date of 2026. Whilst the adopted local plans provide a policy steer on sustainable design and construction, there is a need to clarify the council's position prior to adoption of the new Dorset Council Local Plan to ensure that opportunities for addressing climate change are maximised as new development is brought forward.

**1.1.20.** The Interim Guidance and Position Statement therefore focuses on sustainable design and construction in relation to new built development and stand-alone renewable energy generation schemes.

**1.1.21.** The principal purposes of the statement are:

- to ensure that we are maximising opportunities to address the climate and ecological emergency through decision making;
- to ensure that appropriate weight is given to the climate and ecological emergency in determining planning applications;
- to ensure that planning decisions are, as far as possible, supporting the council's Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy;
- to ensure that existing adopted planning policies are being applied consistently in tackling the climate emergency; and
- to clarify to applicants what the council's expectations are.

**1.1.22.** This includes ensuring that the requirements of the new Dorset Council National and Local List (October 2022), principally the submission of a sustainability statement, are implemented effectively.

**1.1.23.** The council's position on sustainable design and construction forms Position Statement 1 of this document. The council's position statement on renewable energy forms Position Statement 2 of this document.

**1.1.24.** The interim guidance and position statement is not in itself planning policy and is not part of the statutory development plan. Instead, it is an explanatory document, setting out that the climate emergency is a material consideration in decision making and explaining how Dorset Council will make planning decisions. It identifies how the requirements of development plan policy may be interpreted in assessing development proposals. A Sustainability Checklist has also been prepared to assist applicants in addressing the sustainability requirements of adopted policies and to encourage best practice.

**1.1.25.** The statement is intended to be a useful resource for planning officers, councillors who sit on planning committees and applicants. The statement should be read in conjunction with the development plan as a whole. It is intended that this position statement will be in place until the adoption of the new Dorset Local Plan. Further work will be undertaken in the development of the new Dorset Local Plan on addressing the many factors that play a role in addressing and adapting to climate change.

**1.1.26.** As noted, this statement does not specifically address the ecological aspects of the climate and ecological emergency. Similarly, it is recognised that transport and the location of developments are important factors in the issue of climate change. However, whilst settlement hierarchies and spatial strategies of adopted local plans all require development to be sustainably located, with access to suitable and sustainable transport, the council's wider transport policies are mainly covered separately, for example within the Local Transport Plan<sup>9</sup> and related strategies.

**1.1.27.** Environmental adaptation, as a key 'pillar' in achieving resilience to climate change, is interlinked with the sustainable design of development, and as such is addressed broadly within section 2 of this document.

**1.1.28.** An overview of the context and framework for consideration of environmental adaptation, ecological, and transport issues is set out below.

### Environmental adaptation

**1.1.29.** We must recognise that climate change is already happening and, even if we are successful in drastically curbing carbon emissions in Dorset, nationally and across the world, climate change will continue to impact on our lives. Dorset's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy recognises the need to build resilience to current and future climate change as an integral part of its approach. Resilience in the built environment is essential and this must be a central consideration in planning for future development. Section 2 of the statement draws on the local policy framework, setting out how this should be addressed through sustainable design and construction, including green infrastructure and sustainable drainage.

### Ecological emergency

**1.1.30.** Addressing the ecological emergency requires protecting, enhancing, creating and restoring our natural habitats to secure biodiversity and the wider ecosystem services they provide. There are legal protections for many local habitats and species and public authorities like Dorset Council have a legal duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the Environment Act 2021 requires that all planning permissions (with a few exemptions) will have to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain. This is expected to be from November 2023. This is an approach that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand.

**1.1.31.** Planning applications must be supported by appropriate ecological information, as required by regulations and as is set out in paragraph 21 of the Local List and our Ecology

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/roads-highways-maintenance/transport-planning/local-transport-plan>

<sup>10</sup> Under s40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 ("the NERC Act") as amended by the Environment Act 2021.

Guidance for Planning Applications.<sup>11</sup> The Dorset Biodiversity Appraisal Protocol<sup>12</sup> sets out how the council addresses impacts on biodiversity from planning applications. Impacts and mitigation in relation to biodiversity, as well as how a proposal enhances biodiversity, are given thorough consideration as part of the decision-making process, in accordance with adopted local plan policies.

## Transport

**1.1.32.** Transport is a major contributor to Dorset's carbon footprint, contributing around 40% of its total carbon emissions, and with car ownership amongst the highest in the country. To address the climate and ecological emergency, and to reach zero carbon, fossil fuel use in the transport sector will need to be eliminated. This will not be as simple as just switching to different fuels or energy sources. It will require significant changes in attitudes, planning and infrastructure, economic incentives, and political and institutional changes. In the Council area, there will need to be a significant shift towards active travel, public transport, and electric vehicles.

**1.1.33.** The spatial strategies and settlement hierarchies of the adopted Local Plans aim to reduce the need for car travel by locating the majority of development at the most sustainable locations, and the Local Transport Plan (LTP) for the area sets the strategy for the management, maintenance, and development of the area's transport system, as well as explaining how improved transport will be delivered. Goal 2 of the LTP relates to tackling climate change, through reducing greenhouse gas emissions from travel and transport, increasing the use of lower carbon transport modes, and maximising greener fuel vehicle technology. The council has also adopted an electric vehicle strategy which focuses on the delivery of public electric vehicle charging infrastructure to help enable a shift from petrol and diesel car ownership to use of electric vehicles.

**1.1.34.** For planning applications, the council's Local List requirements (section 40) set out that applications for proposals which will generate significant amounts of traffic or movement will require submission of a transport assessment and travel plan. Through this, applicants need to show how the proposals are maximising opportunities for sustainable transport, and how the transport implications of the development are going to be managed to ensure the minimum environmental, social and economic impacts.

## Why not wait for future standards on energy performance of new buildings?

**1.1.35.** Since the adoption of the existing local plans covering the Dorset Council area, there have been changes to Building Regulations<sup>13</sup> including improving ventilation, introducing a new overheating requirement, and requiring new homes to produce 30% less

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<sup>11</sup>

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/0/Ecology+guidance+for+planning+applications.pdf/342fdc7f-e963-1b2b-51f6-4a95a9fcba7f>

<sup>12</sup> That may require surveying, impact assessments, a biodiversity plan or completion of a biodiversity checklist depending upon the site size.

<sup>13</sup> Changes to Part L (Conservation of Fuel and Power) and Part F (Ventilation) of the Building Regulations were announced in December 2021 and came into force in June 2022. Two new Approved Documents were also introduced – Part O (Overheating) and Part S (Infrastructure for Charging Electric Vehicles).

carbon dioxide emissions than previous standards.<sup>14</sup> Whilst this will clearly provide benefits, the uplifts will not in themselves result in the ‘ultra-low’ energy performance needed to result in carbon neutral development.

**1.1.36.** Additionally, the Government aims to implement Future Homes and Buildings Standards by 2025. The standards will comprise further amendments to the Building Regulations and will ensure new homes produce 75-80% less carbon emissions than homes delivered under pre 2022 regulations.

**1.1.37.** The South-West Energy Hub suggests that councils that have declared a climate emergency may need to take supplementary action prior to the proposed legislative changes for a number of reasons. Interim uplifts fall short of or are only comparable to current best practice and, due to the Future Homes standards covering the same scope as Building Regulations, key net zero elements such as embodied carbon would not be included, and so the resulting buildings will likely not be truly net zero carbon.<sup>1516</sup>

**1.1.38.** It is intended that the new Dorset Council Local Plan will consider a local policy approach to improve on the Future Homes and Buildings Standards. The local plan is the correct forum to develop any local policy in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and will be subject to independent examination. Given the timetable for its preparation however, it could be several years before the local plan is adopted and until any new national standards are required through legislation.

**1.1.39.** Dorset Council has therefore prepared this interim position statement and guidance for applications to ensure we are maximising opportunities for addressing the climate emergency through decision making.

## 1.2. Overarching policy context in relation to climate change

**1.2.1.** There are currently five adopted local plans<sup>17</sup> in the Dorset Council area. All of the adopted local plan policies form part of the development plan for their respective areas. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.<sup>18</sup> National policy forms a material consideration in decision making.

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<sup>14</sup> Government has separately stated that it intends to amend the Regulations to improve standards for the digital capability of new builds. This will play an important role in cutting journeys, which will be necessary alongside the shift to active, public and low carbon modes of travel. Government’s September 2022 consultation confirms proposals to require developers to ensure that all new builds have gigabit capable infrastructure and (subject to cost cap) a gigabit-capable connection (or the next fastest broadband connection if it exceeds the cost cap).

<sup>15</sup> [WoE-net-zero-new-build-policy-evidence- 1.3.pdf \(swenergyhub.org.uk\)](https://www.swenergyhub.org.uk/woe-net-zero-new-build-policy-evidence-1.3.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> The Future Homes Standards work towards realising Government’s road map for industry to achieve ‘net zero ready’ homes by 2025 (with consultation expected in 2023 and legislation in 2024), but this terminology denotes homes with the potential (without further retrofitting) to have net zero *operational* emissions once the grid decarbonises.

<sup>17</sup> Purbeck Local Plan Part One (adopted 2012), North Dorset Local Plan Part One (adopted 2016), East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy (adopted 2014), West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (adopted 2015) and the Swanage Local Plan (adopted 2017).

<sup>18</sup> Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

## Legislative Context

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### Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and Planning Act (2008)

**1.2.2.** The Planning Act 2008 introduced an amendment to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 at Section 19 (1A) stating that ‘Development plan documents must (taken as a whole) include policies designed to secure that the development and use of land in the local planning authority’s area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.’ This is a statutory requirement.

### Climate Change Act 2008

**1.2.3.** The Climate Change Act 2008 introduced a target to reduce UK carbon emissions by 80% of the 1990 baseline by 2050. This was subsequently amended in 2019 to a 100% reduction by 2050 (i.e. a net zero target). The most recent national carbon budget of June 2021 set a further statutory milestone target for reducing emissions by 78% by 2035. Paragraph 153 and footnote 53 of the National Planning Policy Framework states ‘Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change in line with the objectives and provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008.’

**1.2.4.** The statutory and national policy requirements outlined above place a specific duty on local planning authorities in this regard and the key importance of climate change in preparing local plans is evident.

### Planning and Energy Act 2008

The Planning and Energy Act 2008 introduced a power for local planning authorities to set policies ‘imposing reasonable requirements for – (a) a proportion of energy used in development in their area to be energy from renewable sources in the locality of the development; (b) a proportion of energy used in development in their area to be low carbon energy from sources in the locality of the development; (c) development in their area to comply with energy efficiency standards that exceed the energy requirements of building regulations.”

There is common confusion on whether local areas can exceed national standards for energy efficiency since the Deregulation Act 2015 set a prospective amendment (c), but which is not yet in force.<sup>19</sup> The Minister stated that Local Plans couldn’t exceed national standards once the amendment came into force, which that was then expected to be timed for the launch of the planned national ‘zero carbon homes’ policy. However, that policy was subsequently cancelled so the amendment remains prospective. Government have subsequently clarified<sup>20</sup> that local areas *can* still set higher local energy efficiency standards and that it does not intend to bring the amendments into force in the immediate term.

## National policy context

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**1.2.5.** National policy relevant to climate change includes:

- National Planning Policy Framework
- National Planning Policy for Waste
- Written Ministerial Statement of 25 March 2015
- Written Ministerial Statement 18 June 2015

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/20/section/43>

<sup>20</sup> [The Future Homes Standard: changes to Part L and Part F of the Building Regulations for new dwellings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

- Written Ministerial Statement of 1 July 2021
- Net Zero Strategy & Heat and Buildings Strategy

**1.2.6.** National policy is supported by the Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide.

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

**1.2.7.** Achieving sustainable development is embedded in the NPPF with the role of the planning system being to deliver development in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner. The NPPF emphasises that responding to climate change is central to the three dimensions of sustainable development.

**1.2.8.** Section 14 of the NPPF sets out how the planning system should help to meet the challenge of climate change. Paragraph 152 specifically states:

*'The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.'*

On resilience and adaptation, Paragraphs 153 and 154 further elaborate that:

*'Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure.'*

*New development should be planned for in ways that:*

- a) avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure; and*
- b) can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government's policy for national technical standards.'*

**1.2.9.** At paragraph 157 the NPPF sets out the expectation that new development should 'take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.'

**1.2.10.** There is a clear intention that development should be designed to reduce emissions and, as well as through locating development sustainably, this should be through improving energy efficiency and reducing overheating. There is also a clear intention that adaption must be incorporated into the design of development. This should be through measures such as green infrastructure, water efficiency of buildings and sustainable drainage.

**1.2.11.** It is also evident that the provision of renewable energy development has an important role to play in addressing climate change through supporting transition to a low carbon future.

**1.2.12.** Paragraph 155 states that:

*'To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, plans should:*

- a) provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximises the potential for suitable development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts);*
- b) consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development; and*
- c) identify opportunities for development to draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for colocating potential heat customers and suppliers.'*

**1.2.13.** In determining applications for renewable and low carbon energy development Paragraph 158 of the NPPF is key, stating that *'...local planning authorities should:*

- a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and*
- b) approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas.'*

## National Planning Policy for Waste

**1.2.14.** Paragraph 8 states that local planning authorities should, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities, ensure that new non-waste development makes sufficient provision for waste management, including through providing adequate storage facilities, and that the handling of waste arising from the construction and operation of development maximises reuse and recovery opportunities and minimises off-site disposal.

**1.2.15.** This means that the construction and operation of new development should drive waste management up the waste hierarchy, meaning (in order of priority): prevention (using less materials and extending product life), reuse (cleaning, repairing and refurbishing), recycling (turning waste into new products), waste recovery and disposal. This includes, for example, making provision for householders to separate waste to encourage recycling and that construction should make use of use of recycled materials on site. These actions are an important climate part of climate change mitigation, reducing the need for new materials.

## Written Ministerial Statement of 25 March 2015

**1.2.16.** The Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) revoked the Code for Sustainable Homes, stating that policies should not require compliance with any level of the Code.

**1.2.17.** In relation to decision-making, it confirmed that existing policies referring to the Code, could continue to apply a requirement for a water efficiency standard equivalent to the new national technical standard. It also notes that decisions on solar installations should give



consideration to impacts on the natural and historic environment and the quality of agricultural land.

### Written Ministerial Statement of 18 June 2015

**1.2.18.** The [written ministerial statement](#) HCWS42 made on 18 June 2015 restricted wind energy from being implemented unless the area was identified as suitable for such development in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan; and following consultation, it could be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by affected local communities had been fully addressed and therefore the proposal had their backing. This was subsequently included in the NPPF at footnote 54.

### Written Ministerial Statement of 1 July 2021

**1.2.19.** The Written Ministerial statement made on 1 July 2021 (UIN HCWS140) focuses on reducing water demand, setting out measures Government will be taking to reduce personal water consumption. In terms of water efficient homes, local authorities are encouraged to adopt a minimum building standard of 110 litres per person per day in all new builds where there is a clear local need, such as in water stressed areas. This is in comparison to the minimum building standard of 125 litres per person per day,<sup>21</sup> and requires the installation of more efficient fixtures and fittings.

**1.2.20.** Although this standard is not within local policy and will be considered through the emerging Dorset Local Plan, this commitment raises the profile/importance of addressing water efficiency through development.

### National Design Guide

**1.2.21.** The National Design Guide illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful and can be achieved in practice. It has guidance on resources, stating that:

**1.2.22.** Well-designed places and buildings conserve natural resources including land, water, energy and materials. Their design responds to the impacts of climate change by being energy efficient and minimising carbon emissions to meet net zero by 2050. It identifies measures to achieve:

- mitigation, primarily by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and minimising embodied energy; and
- adaptation to anticipated events, such as rising temperatures and the increasing risk of flooding.

**1.2.23.** The Guide goes on to advise on following the energy hierarchy<sup>22</sup>, careful selection of materials and construction techniques and maximising resilience to climate change. 'Good design' therefore includes design that addresses and responds to climate change.

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<sup>21</sup> Building Regulations (2010) Part G2 (36) states the potential consumption of wholesome water by persons occupying a dwelling must not exceed 125 litres per person per day' or the optional requirement of 110 litres per person per day if that is specified in the development's planning permission.

<sup>22</sup> Energy hierarchy: reducing the need for energy through passive measures including form, orientation and fabric; using energy efficient mechanical and electrical systems, including heat pumps, heat recovery and LED lights; and maximising renewable energy especially through decentralised sources, including on-site generation and community-led initiatives.

**1.2.24.** The Guide should be taken into account by local authorities when making decisions.<sup>23</sup> It should therefore be used to inform proposals wherever possible in order to achieve good design.

### Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

**1.2.25.** The PPG expands on national policy and in relation to climate change, reminds us that effective spatial planning is an important part of a successful response to climate change as it can influence the emission of greenhouse gas emissions and increase resilience to climate change impact through the location, mix and design of development.

**1.2.26.** Notable points include guidance on what planning can do to mitigate climate change. These are:

- Reducing the need to travel and providing for sustainable transport
- Providing opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy technologies
- Providing opportunities for decentralised energy and heating
- Promoting low carbon design approaches to reduce energy consumption in buildings, such as passive solar design
- Retrofitting and adapting historic (i.e. traditionally-constructed) buildings in a way consistent with their conservation

**1.2.27.** The PPG provides an array of guidance on how sustainable design and construction can be used for developments in order to mitigate and adapt to climate change, as well as offering guidance on how the impact of climate change should be taken into account in decision making. The PPG also provides useful information and guidance relating to renewable energy development, and relevant considerations for their determination.

### Net Zero Strategy & Heat and Buildings Strategy

**1.2.28.** The 2021 Net Zero Strategy contains multiple commitments relevant to planning, including the ambition to ban the sale of new gas boilers and for new heating appliances to be low carbon by 2035; a commitment to more onshore wind, solar and other renewables for grid decarbonisation by 2035; and on transport a recommitment to ending the sale of fossil-fuelled cars by 2030 alongside funding for integrated bus networks, zero emission transport infrastructure, and an ambition for half of all town/city journeys to be cycled or walked by 2030. It also set ambitions for improving reporting on embodied carbon in buildings and exploring the potential of maximum embodied carbon levels in the future.

**1.2.29.** Its accompanying Heat and Buildings Strategy highlights the importance of energy performance and fabric-first approaches as a first step to decarbonising heat. It notes that heat pumps and heat networks are proven scalable interventions for new builds which are preferable to future retrofitting, and that a third of the target of 600,000 per year heat pump installations should be delivered by 2028. It also notes that strategic choices on hydrogen's role in heating will be made by 2026 and are most likely to play a role in areas with

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<sup>23</sup> Statement UIN HCWS1840 made on 1 October 2019 [Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#) states that '*The National Design Guide is also capable of being a material consideration in planning applications and appeals, meaning that, where relevant, local planning authorities should take it into account when taking decisions. This should help give local authorities the confidence to refuse developments that are poorly designed*'.

appropriate storage facilities (like gas import facilities and salt caverns) but are unlikely to be suitable elsewhere where heat pumps and heat networks are likely better options. It also notes the necessity of local authorities developing Local Area Energy Plans with key stakeholders.

## Conclusions

**1.2.30.** The intention of national policy and guidance is clear in that climate change is a central consideration in planning. Dorset Council considers climate change is an important part of the planning balance in decision making and, as a matter that should be taken into account in deciding a planning application, it is a material consideration.

## Local policy and development plan context in relation to climate change

**1.2.31.** The adopted local plans covering the Dorset Council area are: the Purbeck Local Plan Part One (adopted 2012), North Dorset Local Plan Part One (adopted 2016), East Dorset and Christchurch Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy (adopted 2014), and the West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (adopted 2015) and the Swanage Local Plan (adopted 2017). The Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (adopted 2019) is also relevant to climate change.

**1.2.32.** Subsequent reviews of these plans have reached different stages, the most advanced of these being the Purbeck Local Plan 2018-2034 which is currently at examination. All other plan reviews ceased production in 2019 when Dorset Council became a unitary authority. Since that date, a draft of the Dorset Council Local Plan was produced for consultation.

**1.2.33.** The adopted local plans all incorporate strategic objectives to address climate change. There are a number of specific policies in the adopted local plans that are relevant to climate change. The relevant objectives and policies are listed in [Appendix A](#)<sup>24</sup> of this statement. Appendix A also provides some commentary on each relevant policy, outlining how Dorset Council interprets them and how a planning application should respond to the policy.

**1.2.34.** There was a clear intention from each of the former districts and boroughs in their plans to work towards addressing the challenge through improving the sustainability credentials of development as well as enhancing green infrastructure, improving resilience against flooding, reducing car reliance and encouraging renewable energy. This intention continues with Dorset Council. This interim guidance and position statement seeks to respond to changes that have taken place nationally and locally since the current local plans were adopted.

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<sup>24</sup> Adopted Local Plan policies and objectives relating to climate change, renewable energy, and sustainable design and construction - <https://modern.gov.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/s32668/AppendixAofAppendix1AdoptedLocalPlanpoliciesandobjectivesrelatingtoclimatechange.pdf>

## 2. Sustainable design and construction

### 2.1. Policy context - sustainable design and construction

#### Local policy and development plan context in relation to sustainable construction and design

**2.1.1.** Sustainable design and construction enables development that both helps to mitigate climate change and is resilient to climate change. This means that a development would incorporate measures to minimise carbon emissions, water consumption and waste through both the construction and operation of the building(s). Furthermore, as our climate is already being affected, buildings need to be well adapted and resilient to this. This means incorporating interrelated measures that assist in a development being resilient to flooding, overheating and drought for example. This is both at the building and development scale, from rainwater harvesting to green infrastructure and sustainable drainage schemes,

**2.1.2.** The following adopted policies place a requirement on proposals to incorporate sustainable design and construction into their development:

- Purbeck Local Plan - Policy D
- West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan – Policy ENV13
- Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014) – Policy ME3
- North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 – Policy 3
- Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole & Dorset Waste Plan – Policy 22

**2.1.3.** There are also adopted policies specifically relating to green infrastructure and sustainable drainage as follows:

- Purbeck Local Plan – Policy GI
- West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland Local Plan – Policy ENV3; Policy ENV5
- Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 (2014) – Policy HE4; Policy ME6
- North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 – Policy 15 and Policy 13
- Swanage Local Plan – Policy SGI

**2.1.4.** There is clear intention from each of the former district/borough councils in these policies to encourage sustainable construction and design in the face of climate change.

**2.1.5.** In relation to energy performance of new development, the adopted local plans vary in their prescriptiveness and in their applicability to size and type of development as outlined in Appendix A. They are largely not up to date with national policy, as they either don't set targets, or refer to outdated standards, but they concur on their aim to provide high energy efficiency in buildings.

**2.1.6.** With reference to point b) of NPPF paragraph 154, all adopted policies apart from that in the West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan specifically require reduction in carbon emissions through a design approach, such as by meeting various stated standards. The West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland policy wording is broader, generally stating that new buildings and alterations/extensions are expected to achieve high standards of environmental performance. The supporting text for the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland policy however sets out design related methods that may be appropriate for doing this and asks for the submission of a sustainability statement.

**2.1.7.** In some cases, the stated standards are out of date, such as the Lifetime Homes Standard (Purbeck) and Code for Sustainable Homes (East Dorset). North Dorset reflects national policy in stating that development should meet current national standards for energy performance. Orientation of buildings is only specifically mentioned in policy in the East Dorset Local Plan and the Wareham Neighbourhood Plan.

**2.1.8.** Water efficiency is specifically covered in North Dorset's and Christchurch and East Dorset's policies, whilst West Dorset's policies refer to rainwater harvesting in the supporting text to Policy ENV13.

**2.1.9.** Minimising waste is a requirement of the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole & Dorset Waste Plan (2019) which forms part of the development plan and applies across the Dorset Council area. Policy 22 requires the consideration of waste from new developments with minimising waste a requirement for all major development.

**2.1.10.** All of the former districts and boroughs have adopted policy relating to provision of green infrastructure and sustainable drainage. Such measures are important in enabling development that is well adapted and resilient to climate change. Along with other adaptation measures and wider considerations such as biodiversity net gain, the benefits are interrelated.

**2.1.11.** Although there are differences between the policies of the former district and borough councils, the emphasis on climate change is evident. Through the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy, as well as the new Dorset Council Local Plan, Dorset Council wants to ensure action happens consistently across the area.

### Sustainability statement and checklist

**2.1.12.** Section 39 of the new Dorset Council National and Local List Requirements<sup>25</sup> (the Local List), adopted on 1 October 2022, states that a Sustainability Statement is required to support planning applications for most new buildings to demonstrate how sustainable design and construction has been addressed, including reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions, minimising waste and increasing recycling, conserving water resources, incorporating green infrastructure and sustainable drainage minimising pollution, maximising the use of sustainable materials and adaptation to climate change.

**2.1.13.** In order to clarify how applications can address the various criteria of the policies listed above, Dorset Council has prepared a Sustainability Checklist that should be completed to inform the preparation of the sustainability statement. Please refer to the *Interim Guidance Note – Sustainability statement and checklist for planning applications*.

**2.1.14.** The checklist incorporates questions to reflect the matters outlined in section 39 of the Local List that should be addressed in a sustainability statement. It incorporates best practice targets relating to energy performance and water efficiency, as well as questions to identify any more established practices relating to, for example, sustainable drainage, green infrastructure, and use of materials. The aim of the checklist is to inform the design process by highlighting matters that are best considered at the outset of the process, such as building orientation. This is much more cost effective and time efficient than addressing such matters later on or at the building stage.

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/282235/New+Validation+Checklist-+V1.1+Final+-+1+October+2022.pdf/c281a77c-d6ae-991e-e90e-e535a0f9804a>

**2.1.15.** Whilst the sustainability checklist outlines best practice, the questions within it will act as prompts to applicants rather than placing any additional requirement beyond adopted local plan policies. It is intended to enable the applicant to demonstrate the capability of the development to meet net zero and other sustainability standards and so enable the decision-maker to make an assessment of how the application responds to the climate emergency through sustainable design and construction. Submitted sustainability statements and accompanying checklists will feed into the council's evaluation of development proposals under adopted planning policies. This is to assist in ensuring that the climate emergency is taken into consideration alongside other material considerations such as any impact on landscape and heritage.

**2.1.16.** The checklist will be used proportionately in relation to the scale and nature of the proposed development. It is intended that the checklist will be updated in parallel with the progress of the new Dorset Council Local Plan, the emerging Purbeck Local Plan, and any relevant updates to national policy. The Net Zero Carbon Toolkit<sup>26</sup> has been published for use nationally to provide best practice design advice and guidance and is useful document to refer to.

## **Retrofitting existing buildings**

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**2.1.17.** Householder applications, and certain non-residential proposals are exempt from the requirement to submit a sustainability statement. The full list of exemptions can be found within the Local List. Consideration of sustainable design and construction and completion of the sustainability checklist is still however encouraged for these types of proposal, since retrofitting the existing housing stock will make an important contribution in addressing the climate challenge.

**2.1.18.** For proposals relating to listed buildings, please refer to the council's additional guidance: 'Listed Buildings - What you can and can't do for climate change.' It should be noted that installations relating to renewable energy on listed buildings and within conservation areas will be assessed against national and local planning policy on heritage assets. Listed building and/or conservation area consent may be required for works to such buildings or within such designated areas.

## **Demonstrating sustainable design and construction measures**

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**2.1.19.** Measures identified within a submitted sustainability statement and checklist will need to be suitably demonstrated within the application documents. In some cases, it will be appropriate to include relevant information on the application drawings, and in other cases as part of submitted reports and assessments.

**2.1.20.** In relation to the energy efficiency of buildings, updates to Building Regulations in 2022 (under Part L) included the requirement for builders to complete a Building Regulations Part L (BREL) report at the design stage, as well as at the completion stage of a development. This is to help demonstrate that a building's as-built energy performance matches its designed performance, whilst detailing the proposed measures through which energy efficiency will be achieved. Additionally, a building's Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) will state a property's 'primary energy use' and 'space heating demand'. The method of recording predicted energy use presented in a BREL report, and an EPC (kWh/m<sup>2</sup> per

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.levittbernstein.co.uk/site/assets/files/3694/net-zero-carbon-toolkit-v2.pdf>

year) is similar to that used for the best practice targets as detailed in the Sustainability Checklist. Therefore, a predicted BREL report and EPC should be submitted alongside the Checklist to demonstrate the projected energy use of a proposed building.

**2.1.21.** Other tools are also available for modelling the energy use of a building, which allow more accurate predictions of potential 'unregulated' energy use arising from day to day use<sup>27</sup>. Products such as CIBSE (Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers) TM54, the Passive House Planning Package (and similar) can be used, and associated reports should be submitted to accompany the Sustainability Checklist.

## 2.2. Position Statement 1 - Sustainable design and construction

1. Climate change will be given significant weight as a material consideration in the balance when determining planning applications, in line with the legislative and national policy context (as summarised in section 1 of this document).
2. The Dorset Council Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy, which aims to move Dorset towards net zero carbon by 2050, will be given weight as a material consideration in planning decisions.
3. The climate emergency will have specific relevance to the following types of development:
  - New dwelling houses (including replacement dwellings)
  - New non-residential floorspace
  - New mixed-use developments
  - New infrastructure developments
  - Extensions and conversions to existing buildings
4. Having regard to the aim to move Dorset towards net zero by 2050; national policy, in particular paragraph 154 of the NPPF; and the Dorset Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy, the carbon neutral or low carbon credentials of a development will be viewed positively as part of the overall planning assessment against the development plan and relevant material considerations. Proposals that achieve high energy performance will contribute towards net zero in line with the Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy.
5. The National Design Guide should be reflected in development proposals. Design that reflects the Design Guide, incorporating measures set out to address climate change mitigation and adaptation, will be viewed positively as part of the overall planning assessment against the development plan and relevant material considerations.
6. The Interim Guidance Note – Sustainability statement and checklist for planning applications is supplementary to this statement and sets out how Dorset Council is encouraging applicants to incorporate sustainable design and construction into their proposals. Applicants should submit a Sustainability Statement, supported by a

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<sup>27</sup> Unregulated energy use is less accurately captured by the Building Regulations process - See SW Energy Hub - Net Zero New Buildings - [WoE-net-zero-new-build-policy-evidence- 1.3.pdf\(swenergyhub.org.uk\)](https://www.swenergyhub.org.uk/1.3.pdf)

completed Sustainability Checklist, as a means of providing supporting information that is relevant to the existing adopted policies identified in Appendix A.<sup>28</sup>

7. The contribution a proposal makes towards net zero will be assessed through the submitted Sustainability Statement. A proposal that meets the targets stated in the checklist will be viewed positively as part of the overall planning assessment against the development plan and relevant material considerations.
  - a. Where it is demonstrated that a proposed development will be net zero and it comprehensively complies with all of the standards set out in the checklist, this will be given weight in the planning balance.
  - b. Where a proposed development incorporates measures and standards as set out in the checklist, this will be taken into account when making planning decisions. The degree to which a proposal incorporates measures to achieve the targets and standards set out in the checklist will be considered – greater weight will be given where more measures are incorporated into the development proposal. Conversely, less weight will be given where fewer measures are incorporated into the development proposal.

The information will be used by the council as Local Planning Authority to assess how the application responds to the climate emergency through sustainable design and construction.

### 3. Renewable energy development

**3.1.1.** This section relates to standalone renewable energy generation schemes such as solar farms and their associated infrastructure, battery storage infrastructure, as well as wind energy development.

**3.1.2.** Other types of development that may be relevant to this statement are:

- electric vehicle charging stations (where there might be an element of renewable energy provision);
- proposals relating to the installation of renewable heating technologies such as ground and air source heat pumps; and
- development proposing other sources of renewable energy, such as hydro-electric power, tidal energy, and geothermal energy.

### 3.2. Policy context – Renewable energy development

#### Local and national policy for renewable energy development

**3.2.1.** The following adopted local plan policies cover proposals for renewable energy development, whilst setting criteria for their assessment and acceptability:

- Purbeck Local Plan – Policy REN
- West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan – Policy COM11

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<sup>28</sup> Householder applications, and certain non-residential proposals are exempt from this requirement. The full list of exemptions can be found within the Local List. Consideration of sustainable design and construction is still however encouraged for these types of proposal. For proposals relating to listed buildings, please also refer to the council's additional guidance: [Listed Buildings - What you can and can't do for climate change.](#)



- Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Part 1 – Policies ME4 and ME5
- North Dorset Local Plan Part 1 – Policy 22

**3.2.2.** In respect of paragraph 155 of the NPPF all of the adopted local plans are positive in their policy and strategy approach to renewable energy development, however none of the plans specifically identify suitable areas for such development.

**3.2.3.** In determining applications for renewable and low carbon energy development Paragraph 158 of the NPPF is key, stating that ‘...*local planning authorities should:*

- a) *not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and*
- b) *approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas.’*

**3.2.4.** Through criterion a) the justification for renewable energy development is clear in the context of the need to tackle climate change. With reference to criterion b) all of the adopted plans set out approaches and criteria for ensuring that the impacts of renewable energy development are, or can be made, acceptable.

**3.2.5.** Generally, impacts addressed in local plan policies comprise those relating to:

- Landscape, including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Heritage Coast, and locally valued landscapes
- Heritage assets
- Amenity (such as impacts of noise, flicker, vibration)
- Ecology, such as designated wildlife sites
- Radar technology and communications
- Highway safety

**3.2.6.** Applicants will need to submit supporting assessments in relation to impacts, including clearly set out schedules of mitigation, in order to demonstrate that impacts are, or can be made acceptable.

**3.2.7.** The PPG includes useful guidance relating to renewable energy developments, including guidance specific to solar farm developments, their normally temporary nature, and the potential to mitigate visual impacts.

## Public benefits

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**3.2.8.** Renewable energy generation can be considered as a public benefit due to its contribution to reducing greenhouse gases. The NPPF states under paragraph 158 that it should be recognised that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions. Considerable weight will therefore be given to the benefits of any such a proposal.

**3.2.9.** The public benefits of renewable energy schemes<sup>29</sup> may include:

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<sup>29</sup> As reflected within adopted North Dorset Local Plan policy 22: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy, and policy 5: The Historic Environment

- the amount of heat or electricity that is likely to be generated from the proposed renewable or low carbon energy development and the consequential reduction in greenhouse gas emissions
- local community benefits, including jobs, investment in the local economy, community ownership or shareholding of a scheme and local provision of renewable and low carbon energy, for example, through a district heating network

**3.2.10.** The public benefits of renewable energy development will be weighed against the impacts of a scheme. Whilst there is not a requirement for applicants to demonstrate overall need for renewable energy developments, the benefits of schemes will need to suitably outweigh any adverse impacts (including cumulative impacts), and as such the benefits should be clearly set out by applicants in terms of the proposed level of energy generation, wider community benefits, and any environmental enhancements.

## Planning policy for wind energy

**3.2.11.** Paragraph 158 of the NPPF contains an important footnote<sup>30</sup> relating specifically to onshore wind energy development. The footnote establishes a requirement for onshore wind developments to be allocated within the development plan and to have community backing. None of the adopted plans identify areas as suitable for large scale wind energy development.

## Designated landscape and heritage impacts

**3.2.12.** Adopted local plan policies vary in their wording and implied permissiveness in terms of impacts of renewable energy schemes, and what may be deemed 'acceptable'. Adopted policies on the protection of the environment will be relevant to the assessment of impacts of any proposal. There are legal duties with regards to designated landscapes and heritage assets<sup>31</sup> with great weight attributed to their conservation (and enhancement in respect of designated landscapes) through national policy. The relevant sections of the NPPF should be taken into account (Sections 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment and Section 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment).

### Designated landscapes

**3.2.13.** In relation to designated landscapes, approximately 56% of the Dorset Council area is covered by its two AONB designations, and paragraphs 176 and 177 of the NPPF state:

<sup>30</sup> Footnote 54 of the NPPF reads: 'Except for applications for the repowering of existing wind turbines, a proposed wind energy development involving one or more turbines should not be considered acceptable unless it is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in the development plan; and, following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by the affected local community have been fully addressed and the proposal has their backing.'

<sup>31</sup> Section 85 (1) *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000* – In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty. Section 66 (1) *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* - In considering whether to grant planning permission (or permission in principle) for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 72 (1) *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* - In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any powers under any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

176. *Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas... The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.*

177. *When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:*

- a) *the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- b) *the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- c) *any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.*

**3.2.14.** For major development within the AONB, full consideration in respect of criteria a) to c) will be required by the decision maker in order to assess whether exceptional circumstances for the proposal can be demonstrated, and whether the development would be in the public interest.

**3.2.15.** Footnote 60 of the NPPF outlines that whether a development is major is ‘*a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined*’. Standalone schemes for solar farms within the AONB are likely to be considered ‘major’ due to their normally significant land-take and potential for visual and landscape impacts, whereas smaller installations on existing buildings are unlikely to be considered major.

**3.2.16.** In relation to assessing the need for a development (in relation to criterion a of paragraph 177), paragraph 158 of the NPPF is clearly relevant as it states that demonstration of an overall need for a renewable energy scheme would not be required. However, given the protected nature of the AONB landscape, demonstration of the benefits of a scheme should be provided with an application in order to inform the weighing of the benefits against any harm to the AONB. The context of the climate emergency and the need to tackle climate change will be relevant to the assessment, along with any local economic benefits that such developments may provide.

**3.2.17.** Assessment of an application against criterion b) of paragraph 177 will be informed by the proximity and availability of connection to the electricity grid, as the costs associated with forming new connections and upgrading infrastructure to accommodate development can be significant and potentially prohibitive to a development. Additionally, a significant proportion of the council area is itself designated AONB, and the area outside the AONB is subject to other constraints, such as those associated with heritage assets, ecological designations, urban areas and agricultural land. Furthermore, the council must have regard to the setting of the AONB as development within its setting should be ‘*..sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated area..*’ This will have

an impact on the availability of alternative areas for development outside the AONB. Potentially reasonable areas of search for assessing the scope of developing outside the designated area will be informed by the scale of the proposed scheme, informed by suitable grid connection opportunities.

**3.2.18.** Options for meeting the need in a different way will likely be limited as alternative sources of renewable energy (such as wind energy) are constrained in the council area. However, alternative approaches may include considering the potential for a number of smaller scale developments rather than a single large scale scheme. To inform assessment of a proposal against criterion b) applicants should submit with a planning application an assessment of alternative sites and options, including evidence and viability assessment of a scheme in relation to connection to the grid.

**3.2.19.** Consideration of criterion c) of paragraph 177 will require a case-by-case assessment for each proposal. Potential detrimental effects on the environment will include those associated with the landscape, heritage, agriculture, ecology, and the public rights of way network. Applicants will be required to submit with a planning application relevant assessments of potential environmental impacts (including cumulative impacts), which should include clear schedules of mitigation and methods of moderation. These issues will be considered through consultation with specialists as part of the planning application process and considered against relevant local plan policies.

#### Heritage assets

**3.2.20.** In relation to the historic environment, paragraph 199 of the NPPF states that:

*'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.'*

**3.2.21.** Paragraph 200 makes clear that *'any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting should require clear and convincing justification...'* and paragraph 201 goes on to state that where there will be substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, *'local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.'* Under paragraph 202, any 'less than substantial harm' should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme, and under paragraph 203 impacts on a non-designated heritage asset will be a material consideration in the determination of an application.

**3.2.22.** Public benefits are referred to above and include the contribution renewable energy proposals make in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The imperative to tackle climate change, as recognised in legislation and policy, and the benefits provided may outweigh harm. This will be assessed on a case by case basis.

**3.2.23.** Whilst considerable weight will be given to the benefits of a renewable energy proposal, great weight will be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, and the higher the level of designation, the greater that that weight will be. The public benefits of a proposal will be balanced against the significance and level of harm to a designated heritage asset and its setting. Regard will therefore be given to the level of designation. For

proposals that would result in substantial harm to a designated asset, that harm is unlikely to be outweighed by the benefits of renewable energy since such harm should be exceptional (for grade II designations) or wholly exceptional (for the highest designations<sup>32</sup>).

**3.2.24.** For proposals which would cause less than substantial harm to a grade I or grade II\* listed building, or scheduled monument, that harm is less likely to be outweighed by the public benefits or renewable energy proposals than those that may cause less than substantial harm to a grade II listed building. For a proposal that is judged to result in less than substantial harm, the level of this harm will also be considered, and it may be appropriate to consider a scale of less than substantial harm with assessment of where on this scale the harm is judged to fall. Proposals should demonstrate that that harm to an asset or its setting has been mitigated as far as practicable.

### Temporary nature of development and agricultural land

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**3.2.25.** Some adopted plan policies reflect matters highlighted in the WMS March 2015, and PPG in relation to impacts on higher quality agricultural land. The main thrust of the guidance and WMS is to protect higher classifications of land (Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification), direct development towards lower classifications, and require justification for any siting of proposals on higher classifications. This is also reflected in the NPPF footnote 58, which states *'Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality.'* Appeal decisions have referenced impacts on the productivity of agricultural land, covering issues such as the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land over longer temporary periods<sup>33</sup>, as well as highlighting that impacts of shorter temporary periods may be acceptable<sup>34</sup>.

**3.2.26.** According to the renewable energy industry solar panels are generally guaranteed for 20-25 years and designed to last at least 25-30 years<sup>35</sup>, (up to 50 years with modern improvements in technology<sup>36</sup>). As such the lifetime of the technology will be an influence on the proposed lifetime of a development. Landscape and environmental impacts, as well as impacts on agricultural land, will also be a consideration when establishing an appropriate time limit to any planning permission. In this context solar farm schemes are generally granted on a temporary basis.

**3.2.27.** It should be noted that whilst a scheme may be secured as 'temporary' through a planning condition, an application to extend the life of the development, or for a similar development on a site could be made in the future. Any such application would be considered on its own merits, but in the context of a different baseline – with development already on the ground. Temporary schemes could still have landscape and environmental impacts that would persist for the lifetime of the development, and in this context a higher period such as 40 years is a considerable amount of time, i.e. it is in the order of half a lifetime. Additionally, any mitigation required (for example, for landscape impacts) would need to be relevant for the proposed period. As such, longer temporary periods may require

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<sup>32</sup> Scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens and World Heritage Sites.

<sup>33</sup> Appeal Ref: APP/K2610/W/21/3278065 - Land north of The Street, Cawston, Norfolk NR11 7QR

<sup>34</sup> Appeal Ref: APP/R3325/W/16/3142550 Land off Old Bowden Way, Milborne Port, Somerset

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.greenmatch.co.uk/blog/2015/01/the-lifespan-of-solar-panels>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.renewableenergyhub.co.uk/main/solar-panels/how-long-do-solar-panels-last/>

more rigorous methods of mitigation, which in themselves could have an adverse impact. As such proposals are granted on a temporary basis, appropriate site restoration must be considered and this would be secured by condition.

**3.2.28.** The issue of the impact on agricultural land should also be considered in this context, particularly where a proposed scheme would be sited on higher grade agricultural land. In these cases, full justification for their siting will be required from applicants. In some cases, a shorter period of time may well reduce impacts to an acceptable degree, however assessment should be made on a site-by-site basis. It should be noted that a solar farm may not entirely remove an agricultural site from productivity, as in some cases a site can still be grazed whilst it is in use as a solar farm.

### 3.3. Position statement 2 – renewable energy development

1. The Dorset Council Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy is adopted and will be given weight as a material consideration in the determination of renewable energy planning applications.
2. The significant public benefits of renewable energy schemes, in respect of their contribution to meeting targets of renewable energy generation,<sup>37</sup> will be given considerable weight as a material consideration in the balancing of all relevant issues when determining planning applications.
3. The benefits of contributing to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and achieving climate change targets will be appropriately balanced against any harm arising from a development, with reference to the requirements of national and local planning policies. As such:
  - a. Through supporting assessments and any appropriate mitigation, applicants will need to demonstrate that the impacts of schemes are, or can be made, acceptable.
  - b. Any benefits of a proposal should be set out as part of the application. Whilst there is not a requirement for applicants to demonstrate overall need for renewable energy developments the benefits of schemes will need to suitably outweigh any adverse impacts.
4. The lifetime of a proposed development will be a material consideration in decision making, balanced with a scheme's proposed benefits and its potential impacts. Whilst the proposed lifetime of a development will be taken into account, the temporary nature of proposals with longer development lifetimes (e.g. more than 25 years) is unlikely to be given significant weight in the planning balance, as in these cases the impacts associated with the development will take effect over a significant period of time (e.g. for a 40 year permission).
5. Where an application may affect the best and most versatile agricultural land, its proposed location will need to be fully justified, with a sequential approach taken in order to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land.

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<sup>37</sup> Those set out within the Council's adopted Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy - [Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy - Dorset Council](#) and as set out within the Climate Change Act 2008.

6. For applications within the AONB:
  - a. The case officer will need to determine whether a proposal qualifies as ‘major development’, however large scale, stand-alone renewable energy developments will likely be considered as such.
  - b. In the case of major development, applicants will need to demonstrate that exceptional circumstances and overall public interest exist for the development, and the context of the Climate and Ecological Emergency will be a consideration in this assessment.
  - c. In line with paragraph 177 of the NPPF, applicants will also need to consider the scope of meeting the need outside the AONB, as well as showing that that detrimental effects on the environment, landscape and recreational opportunities can be moderated to an acceptable degree.
  - d. Applicants will need to demonstrate the public benefits of a proposed scheme, and this will inform the weighing of benefits against any harm to the AONB landscape.
7. Where designated heritage assets are affected, great weight will be given to their conservation. The significance of the asset will be considered, as well as the level of harm. Regard will also be given to the reversible and temporary nature of such proposals, notwithstanding criterion 4.
8. Larger scale wind energy development proposals will be considered unacceptable given the current national policy context<sup>38</sup> and given that currently there are no suitable areas for this type of development identified within the development plan.

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<sup>38</sup> This will remain that case up until either a change in national policy or a development plan document identifying such sites is formally adopted in line with statutory consultation processes. It is recognised that the current national planning policy position in relation to onshore wind energy development will potentially be subject to changes in association with the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, anticipated to be enacted in 2023. Therefore, the Council’s position on such developments will be reviewed accordingly should changes occur.

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# **Dorset Council Interim Guidance Note - Sustainability statement and checklist for planning applications**

Draft version – January 2023

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## Introduction

Dorset Council declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019 and adopted its Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy in 2020 which recognised the importance of planning to achieve its ambition.

Paragraph 39 of the Dorset Council National and Local List of Requirements (adopted 1 October 2022)<sup>1</sup> (the 'Local List'), states that a Sustainability Statement is required to support planning applications to demonstrate how sustainable design and construction have been addressed in the proposal. This is to meet the requirements of policies relating to sustainable design and construction in the adopted local plans covering the Dorset Council area.

This guide sets out the requirements for the sustainability statement and includes a checklist to ensure all relevant matters are considered. Adopted policies relevant to the items within the checklist questions are referenced in the checklist itself. A table of the relevant adopted policies including commentary and application requirements in relation to each is attached at Appendix 1.

## What does the checklist cover?

The checklist focuses on the following key areas where new development has an impact on the climate emergency, as set out in the Local List and reflecting adopted local policies:

1. reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions,
2. maximising the use of sustainable materials,
3. minimising waste and increasing recycling,
4. conserving water resources,
5. incorporating green infrastructure,
6. sustainable drainage and pollution, and
7. adaptation to climate change.

Buildings contribute to climate change through their construction, how they are used and where they are located. Managing the location of development is a key role of the Local Plan and is being considered through the preparation of the Dorset Council Local Plan. The focus of this checklist is on sustainable design and construction of buildings under the headings listed.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/282235/New+Validation+Checklist+-+V1.1+Final+-+1+October+2022.pdf/c281a77c-d6ae-991e-e90e-e535a0f9804a>

Transport clearly is a key contributor to climate change but is not included in the checklist and sustainability statement requirements. Existing planning policies and information requirements regarding sustainable transport are well established. Adopted local policies and the Local List require that planning applications should detail how proposals are maximising opportunities for sustainable transport modes (see paragraph 41 of the Local List). The inclusion of electric vehicle charging points in new development is an important issue and it should be noted that in June 2022 this requirement was incorporated into the Building Regulations.<sup>2</sup>

The Council has taken the decision not to include flood risk and ecological aspects within the checklist and sustainability statement requirements. This is not because these issues are any less significant; rather it is because regulations and adopted policy, and information requirements relating to these matters already comprehensively cover the issues for planning applications. For further information on assessments required in relation to flood risk, see paragraph 22 of the Local List and for further information on information required in relation to biodiversity, see paragraph 21 of the Local List and our Ecology Guidance for Planning Applications.<sup>3</sup>

## Who is the checklist for?

In accordance with Paragraph 39 of the Local List, a sustainability statement should be prepared and this checklist should be completed for all applications for residential, mixed-use, commercial, retail, community or leisure uses and built waste management facilities - other than householder applications, alterations, and extensions to existing non-residential buildings and applications for change of use where there is no increase in floorspace. This is specified in more detail in the Local List - please refer to the Local List for exemptions.

This requirement includes outline and reserved matter applications, and, in the case of applications for permission in principle, technical details consent. It should be noted that consideration of the checklist at an early stage can inform the design process by highlighting matters that are best considered at the outset of the process. This will be more cost effective and time efficient than addressing such matters later on. The checklist should be completed as fully as practicable at outline stage. Where further detail will be provided at the reserved matters stage, this should be noted and explained.

Applications for conversions and change of use as well as householder applications are also encouraged to consider relevant parts of the checklist and submit either a completed checklist or include within their planning statement information to demonstrate how climate change has been taken into consideration. For proposals relating to listed buildings, please refer to the council's additional guidance: 'Listed Buildings - What you can and can't do for climate change.', which aims to explain what can be achieved to save energy and at the same time conserve the special interest of a listed building in the context of climate change. The document sets out what retrofitting and sustainable construction

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<sup>2</sup> Requirement S1 of Schedule 1 and Regulation 44D of the Building Regulations 2010.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/0/Ecology+guidance+for+planning+applications.pdf/342fdc7f-e963-1b2b-51f6-4a95a9fcb7f>

measures may or may not be appropriate for a listed building, as well as providing potentially suitable alternatives, and giving an overview of relevant case studies.

## What are you expected to do?

Applicants should prepare:

- A completed checklist coversheet to indicate which sustainability standards your development complies with - answering the Yes/No column as well as the reasoning column where relevant
- A sustainability statement detailing the required information in relation to each of the checklist questions, cross referencing other assessments where appropriate.

If answering Yes to a Checklist question, a full explanation should be provided and/or a signpost to other relevant application documents (such as the Design & Access Statement) should be provided within the sustainability statement. If answering No to a checklist question, brief reasoning should be outlined in the subsequent column and a full explanation provided in the sustainability statement.

### 1. Reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions

Adopted local plans all seek improvements in the energy performance of new buildings with an emphasis on delivering the best standards for energy performance, and with renewable energy being encouraged to provide for energy used during the building's operation. Until recently the emphasis at the national level has been on building regulations rather than through planning policy. However, there remains a need and a desire for new buildings to be built at the highest energy performance standards and, where possible, achieve net zero.

Generally, net zero means achieving a balance between the greenhouse gases put into the atmosphere and those taken out. In the context of new buildings this means zero fossil fuel generated operational energy (in part achieved by reducing demand through energy efficiency measures) and meeting best practice for embodied carbon (including from the building materials and methods used during construction). As standard, Building Regulations (Part L) require the energy and carbon intensity of buildings to be measured through specific calculations<sup>4</sup>, and whilst there are some benefits to this approach in that they set clear requirements which are not overly onerous, there are some limitations in terms of achieving the lowest levels of energy demand and reaching net zero carbon emissions<sup>5</sup>. Recent Building Regulations changes (in 2021) for improved ventilation and a new overheating requirement<sup>6</sup> have provided benefits, but do not result in ultra-low energy performance.

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<sup>4</sup> Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) and Simplified Building Energy Model (SBEM)

<sup>5</sup> For example, the SAP/SBEM calculations used in this process do not calculate real life energy (i.e., unregulated energy from ICT equipment, lifts, refrigeration systems, cooking equipment etc.) and can be inaccurate in terms of a building's heating demand

<sup>6</sup> [New Approved Documents and new compliance guides supporting Part L: circular04/13 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-approved-documents-and-new-compliance-guides-supporting-part-l-circular0413)

Indications are that the Future Buildings Standard 2025 will provide further uplifts in the energy performance of buildings but will likely continue with similar methods of calculation, meaning that resulting buildings are unlikely to be net zero carbon.

The London Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) have published guidance<sup>7</sup> on alternative metrics for driving net-zero carbon design, which have been recognised by local planning authorities as an approach that would be resilient to changes in national policy.<sup>8</sup> The metrics help to ensure that all energy use is considered, and when addressed together, they allow all resulting buildings to be truly net zero in their carbon emissions. The main targets set out by LETI's guidance are those relating to:

- Ultra-low operational energy use<sup>9</sup> of buildings (for example less than or equal to 35 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/yr for residential buildings)
- Building fabric, in the form of space heating demand metrics such as 15kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/yr for all building types
- Reduction of construction impacts through assessment and reduction of embodied carbon in developments
- Low carbon energy supply through no use of fossil fuels for heating and hot water
- Zero fossil fuel generated energy through use of on-site or off-site renewable energy technologies to match a building's energy use. In this regard it is important that factors such as the orientation of buildings are considered, to maximise opportunities for solar.

Additionally, the risk of overheating is an important issue. The appropriate passive ventilation of buildings<sup>10</sup>, the orientation of buildings to allow for passive (solar) shading, glazing ratios, and the provision/appropriate siting of green infrastructure can help to address this issue.

Through their sustainability statement, applicants are encouraged to take account of these targets and ensure schemes are designed accordingly to maximise the potential for achieving net zero development. Standards for operational energy use and heating demand should be included in sustainability statements, as well as details on how energy supply, embodied carbon, renewable energy provision, and managing risk of overheating have been considered. Applicants may wish to note whether a proposed development is 'net zero ready', meaning that it will achieve net zero without further retrofitting once the grid is fully decarbonised.

Some work on the costs associated with implementing the measures recommended by LETI (for residential development) has been undertaken by Cornwall Council as part of the preparation of the Cornwall Council Climate Emergency Change DPD<sup>11</sup>, which at the time of publishing of

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.leti.uk/one-pager>

<sup>8</sup> See Cornwall Council, Somerset West & Taunton Council, Bath and North East Somerset, and West Oxfordshire Council

<sup>9</sup> Ultra-low levels of energy performance are considered to be the lowest possible to enable a development to be net-zero in its operation, and are reflected in the Energy Use Intensity and space heating demand metrics we are recommending

<sup>10</sup> Passive ventilation is the process of supplying air to and removing air from an indoor space without using mechanical systems

<sup>11</sup> A summary of this work is presented in guidance produced by the South West Energy Hub (in section 6) - <https://www.swenergyhub.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/WoE-net-zero-new-build-policy-evidence-1.3.pdf> and the evidence itself can be found on the Cornwall Council website - [Climate Emergency Development Plan Document \(DPD\) - Cornwall Council](#).

this guidance note and checklist is under independent examination. The work highlighted that space heating target of 15 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year and an energy use target of 35 kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year would be viable in most cases, albeit there is acknowledgement the situation may vary by region in terms of local requirements, and labour/ material costs.

Building to BREEAM standards<sup>12</sup> for non-residential development can provide benefits for the energy performance of buildings, and these standards are widely used. Where these standards are applicable, the proposed standard (i.e. Excellent or Outstanding) and relevant calculations should be provided within the sustainability statement.

Modelling tools such as the Passive House Planning Package, or CIBSE TM54 can be used to calculate energy use figures for proposed development. Further information and guidance on these requirements can be found in [LETI's Climate Emergency Design Guide](#).

## 2. Maximising the use of sustainable materials

Using renewable and low impact materials has been an integral part of sustainable construction for some time, with the BREEAM Green Guide having first been published in 1996 to provide a tool to consider the environmental impacts of building materials. Applicants are encouraged to use materials that will not deplete non-renewable resources wherever possible, and therefore reduce the level of embodied carbon associated with developments. Use of recycled materials is also encouraged, as is using local materials.<sup>13</sup> Within their sustainability statement applicants should state the credentials and origins of materials used.

## 3. Minimising waste and increasing recycling

Waste minimisation and recycling play an important role in climate change mitigation. Waste management on development sites can reduce the amount of waste arisings generated, and the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019) requires that waste arising from construction, demolition and excavation works is minimised and managed in accordance with the waste hierarchy. The preparation of site waste management plans is good practice for construction projects and is required through Paragraph 18 of the Local List (Construction management plan/site management plan).

The National Planning Policy for Waste (Paragraph 8) and the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan (2019) (Policy 22) require that new development make sufficient provision for waste management. Applicants should incorporate adequate on site indoor and outdoor storage facilities into the design to allow occupiers to separate and store waste for recycling and recovery. For residential development this should take account of the Council's guidance note.<sup>14</sup> A summary of how provision has been made in the design of the development should be outlined in the sustainability statement.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://bregroup.com/products/breeam/breeam-technical-standards/>

<sup>13</sup> As advocated by the National Design Guide

<sup>14</sup> Guidance notes for residential developments (May 2020) [2b837431-3a24-17f5-2d40-dcff0aa6652b \(dorsetcouncil.gov.uk\)](https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/media/2b837431-3a24-17f5-2d40-dcff0aa6652b)

#### 4. Conserving water resources

Many areas of England will face water shortages by 2050 if action isn't taken. The Environment Agency's National Framework has set out that an additional 25% of the current daily volume put into our public water supply will be needed in England by 2050 to meet future pressures, and sets out ambitions to reduce personal water consumption to 110 litres per person per day.<sup>15</sup> The Government has responded with a statement setting out measures it will be taking to reduce personal water consumption.<sup>16</sup> Local authorities are encouraged to adopt a minimum building standard of 110 litres per person per day in all new builds where there is a clear local need, such as in water stressed areas. This is in comparison to the minimum building standard of 125 litres per person per day,<sup>17</sup> and requires the installation of more efficient fixtures and fittings. Dorset falls within the Wessex Water area, which the Environment Agency has classified as an area of 'serious' water stress.<sup>18</sup>

In order to encourage greater water efficiency in new homes and to demonstrate compliance with adopted local plan policies requiring water efficiency (i.e. Policy ME3 of the Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy and Policy 3 of the North Dorset Local Plan), applicants should include in their sustainability statement calculations of water efficiency together with an explanation of the technologies to be implemented, demonstrating that water consumption will be limited to 110 litres per person per day wherever practicable.

The checklist provides an interpretation as to what would constitute a water efficient development. Although West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland, and Purbeck do not specifically state water efficiency in Policy ENV13 and Policy D respectively, applications in these areas are also encouraged to address this through the checklist to demonstrate best practice.

#### 5. Incorporating green infrastructure

Green infrastructure ranges from the provision of trees, landscaping, and residential gardens; to local greenspaces and community spaces such as parks, play parks, and allotments; and also larger strategic spaces such as country parks, green corridors, and environmentally designated sites.<sup>19</sup> Natural England's [Green Infrastructure Framework](#) provides guidance on the principles and standards for green infrastructure in England.

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<sup>15</sup> [National Framework for water resources summary.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#) 'Reducing demand for water – Statement made on 1 July 2021' (Statement UIN HCWS140)

<sup>17</sup> Building Regulations (2010) Part G2 (36) states the potential consumption of wholesome water by persons occupying a dwelling must not exceed 125 litres per person per day' or the optional requirement of 110 litres per person per day if that is specified in the development's planning permission.

<sup>18</sup> The Environment Agency has looked across current and future water usage and climate change scenarios to provide a water stress situation for each water company area. Dorset falls within the Wessex Water area. [Water stressed areas – 2021 classification - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>19</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35033>



In the context of climate change, it is important that development proposals incorporate green infrastructure on a range of scales (relevant to the proposal) to provide wide ranging benefits. Within their sustainability statement, applicants should demonstrate compliance with adopted policies by demonstrating that sufficient green infrastructure has been incorporated into their proposal to serve the development site, and in order to:

- Provide shading and cooling effects, therefore minimising the overheating of buildings through tree planting and landscaping
- Help to absorb carbon dioxide through provision of appropriate amounts of vegetation
- Provide effective surface water management through sustainable drainage provision
- Link to existing green infrastructure networks to maximise environmental benefits of wildlife green corridors and sustainable travel

## 6. Sustainable drainage and minimising pollution

Delivering sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) as part of a development has many benefits including mitigating and adapting to climate change, as well as managing flood risk, contributing to green infrastructure and ecological networks and helping to prevent new development from contributing to water pollution. National policy requires that SuDS are incorporated into major developments unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate.<sup>20</sup> For the purposes of the checklist it should be demonstrated that an appropriate and deliverable SuDS scheme has been incorporated into the development proposal with appropriate accompanying plans and assessments within the application signposted.

## 7. Adapting to climate change

Adapting to climate change in respect of built development is about reducing the risks posed by climate change through the construction of climate resilient buildings and developments. Adaptation is wide ranging and is already included above in respect of green infrastructure, SuDS and building to avoid overheating. Additional adaptation measures might include green roofs, increased trees and vegetation, cool/white roofs, triple glazing and raised floor levels. Such measures are encouraged where appropriate and should be noted in the sustainability statement.

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<sup>20</sup> National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 169)

## The Sustainability Checklist

Sustainability Standards	Compliance	Relevant policies	Have you complied with the stated standards? (Yes/No)	If you haven't complied with the stated standards, please summarise the reasoning (full explanation should be provided within the Sustainability Statement)	Industry guidance, good practice and case studies
<b>1. Reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions</b>					
Have you designed the fabric of the development to maximise energy efficiency?	<p>Explain in the Sustainability Statement how the proposal intends to maximise energy efficiency and reduce energy demand, including by settling out relevant calculations.</p> <p>Demonstrate whether the proposal achieves ultra-low energy demand, for example through meeting the standards below:</p> <p><b>Residential buildings</b> For residential development, to achieve ultra-low energy demand through design, predicted energy modelling should demonstrate a target of &lt;35kwh/m2.yr</p> <p><b>Non-residential buildings</b> For non-residential development the following energy use targets are recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office/retail &lt;55kwh/m2.yr</li> <li>• Light industrial – 110 kWh/m2/yr.</li> <li>• Community space (e.g. health care) &lt;100 kwh/m2.yr</li> <li>• Sports and Leisure &lt;80kwh/m2.yr</li> <li>• School &lt;65kwh/m2.yr</li> </ul> <p>Alternatively, BREEAM standards may be provided for non-residential development. Please indicate the relevant level which applies to the proposed development.</p> <p><b>All buildings</b> For all building types a space heating demand of less than 15 kWh/m2/yr should be aimed for.<sup>21</sup></p> <p>Predictive energy modelling should be used, for example through undertaking a BREL<sup>22</sup> report, using the Passive House Planning Package, CIBSE TM54 or equivalent, and carried out with the intention of meeting the target energy use.</p>	<p>WDWP – Policy ENV13</p> <p>North Dorset – Policy 3</p> <p>Purbeck – Policy D</p> <p>East Dorset - Policy ME3</p> <p>Purbeck Emerging Policy E12</p>			<p>LETI Climate emergency Design Guide (January 2020) - <a href="https://www.leti.uk/cedg/252d09_3b0f2acf2bb24c019f5ed9173fc5d9f4.pdf">252d09_3b0f2acf2bb24c019f5ed9173fc5d9f4.pdf (leti.uk)</a></p> <p>SW Energy Hub - Net Zero New Buildings - <a href="https://www.swenergyhub.org.uk/woe-net-zero-new-build-policy-evidence-1.3.pdf">WoE-net-zero-new-build-policy-evidence- 1.3.pdf (swenergyhub.org.uk)</a></p>
Will the operational energy use of the resultant development be, or be capable of, being 100% renewable?	<p>Explain in the Sustainability Statement whether the resultant development's energy use will be 100% renewable, or capable of being so without further retrofitting once the grid fully decarbonises.</p> <p>Include the total kWh/yr of energy consumption of the buildings, accounting for both regulated and unregulated energy, on the site, and the total kWh/yr of energy generation by renewables to show that the zero-carbon operational balance is or is not met.</p>	<p>WDWP – Policy ENV13</p> <p>North Dorset – Policy 3</p> <p>Purbeck – Policy D</p>			<p>LETI Climate emergency Design Guide (January 2020) - <a href="https://www.leti.uk/cedg/252d09_3b0f2acf2bb24c019f5ed9173fc5d9f4.pdf">252d09_3b0f2acf2bb24c019f5ed9173fc5d9f4.pdf (leti.uk)</a></p>

<sup>21</sup> These best-practice targets reflect those recommended in the LETI Climate Emergency design guide - <https://www.leti.uk/cedg>

<sup>22</sup> Building Regulations England Part L report -

		East Dorset - Policy ME3 Purbeck Emerging Policy E12			SW Energy Hub - Net Zero New Buildings - <a href="https://www.swenergyhub.org.uk/woe-net-zero-new-build-policy-evidence-1.3.pdf">WoE-net-zero-new-build-policy-evidence- 1.3.pdf</a> ( <a href="https://www.swenergyhub.org.uk">swenergyhub.org.uk</a> )
Has the risk of overheating been considered in the design of the development?	Explain in the Sustainability Statement how the development reduces the risk of overheating, for example through adequate passive ventilation, passive shading, and green infrastructure provision. If the development intends to use active ventilation methods, please explain the compatibility of this with EUI targets.	WDWP – Policy ENV13 North Dorset – Policy 3 Purbeck – Policy D East Dorset - Policy ME3 Purbeck Emerging Policy E12			CIBSE TM52 - <a href="https://www.cibse.org/~/media/2019/04/TM52-The-Limits-of-Thermal-Comfort-Avoiding-Overheating-in-European-Buildings-CIBSE.pdf">TM52: The Limits of Thermal Comfort: Avoiding Overheating in European Buildings   CIBSE</a>
<b>2. Maximising the use of sustainable materials and methods</b>					
Will the development use sustainable materials and methods in its construction, and have embodied carbon emissions been considered?	Explain in the Sustainability Statement how the development makes use of sustainable construction materials and minimises embodied carbon emissions.  Provide a schedule of materials and construction technologies proposed to be used with details of: - Sustainability credentials - Locally produced and sourced materials - Confirmation of reuse of onsite materials where relevant (or link to site waste management plan); or explanation of why this is not possible.  Explain in the Sustainability Statement how the BRE Green Guide Specification has informed design decisions, where applicable.  Use of lifecycle modelling to assess embodied carbon.	WDWP – Policy ENV13 North Dorset – Policy 3 Purbeck – Policy D East Dorset - Policy ME3 Purbeck Emerging Policy E12			LETI Climate emergency Design Guide (January 2020) - <a href="https://www.leti.uk/252d09_3b0f2acf2bb24c019f5ed9173fc5d9f4.pdf">252d09_3b0f2acf2bb24c019f5ed9173fc5d9f4.pdf</a> (leti.uk)  Embodied and whole life carbon assessment for architects - <a href="https://www.leti.uk/11241WholeLifeCarbonGuidanceev7pdf.pdf">11241WholeLifeCarbonGuidanceev7pdf.pdf</a>  BRE Green Guide to Specification: <a href="https://www.bregroup.com/greenguide/podpage.jsp?id=2126">https://www.bregroup.com/greenguide/podpage.jsp?id=2126</a>
<b>3. Minimising waste and increasing recycling</b>					
Will the construction company that you use be registered with the Considerate Construction Scheme?	Confirm in the Sustainability Statement whether the construction company used will be registered with the Considerate Construction Scheme	BCPD Waste Plan Policy 22			Considerate Constructors Scheme: <a href="https://www.ccscheme.org.uk/">https://www.ccscheme.org.uk/</a>
Will you be preparing and adhering to a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) as a	Confirm in the Sustainability Statement that a SWMP will be prepared and adhered to and if this is part of the Construction / Site Management Plan. Include information on: • Sustainable procurement measures used to minimise the generation of waste during the construction process	BCPD Waste Plan Policy 22			Wrap: <a href="http://www.wrap.org.uk">http://www.wrap.org.uk</a>

way of reducing and managing construction waste?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The types and quantities of waste that will be generated during the demolition and construction phases and the measures to ensure that the waste is managed in accordance with the waste hierarchy</li> </ul>				
Have you provided sufficient space and safe and convenient access for waste recycling?	Provide details of space within the development for recycling/waste sorting and storage and details of safe and convenient access for waste recycling in the Sustainability Statement. Cross reference layout plans.	BCPD Waste Plan Policy 22			Dorset Council Guidance notes for residential developments (May 2020) <a href="https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/2b837431-3a24-17f5-2d40-dcff0aa6652b">2b837431-3a24-17f5-2d40-dcff0aa6652b</a> ( <a href="https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk">dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</a> )
Have choices of appliances or furnishings considered their repairability?	Provide details of whether your choices of appliances or furnishings have considered their durability, repairability or reuse.	BCPD Waste Plan Objective 1 and Policy 1			
<b>4. Conserving water resources</b>					
Can you demonstrate that water consumption will be minimised?	<p>Explain in the Sustainability Statement how water consumption will be minimised.</p> <p>Include relevant water efficiency calculations, with an explanation of the technologies used to achieve this, reflecting Government guidance of reducing from 125 litres to 110 litres per person per day for dwellings.</p>	<p>WDWP – Policy ENV13</p> <p>North Dorset – Policy 3</p> <p>East Dorset - Policy ME3</p> <p>NPPF – Para 154</p>			<p>The water calculator: <a href="http://www.thewatercalculator.org.uk/">http://www.thewatercalculator.org.uk/</a></p> <p>Sanitation, hot water safety and water efficiency: Approved Document G: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sanitation-hot-water-safety-and-water-efficiency-approved-document-g">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sanitation-hot-water-safety-and-water-efficiency-approved-document-g</a></p> <p>BREEAM Non-domestic Buildings Technical Manual: <a href="https://www.breeam.com/NC2018">https://www.breeam.com/NC2018</a></p>
Do you include measures to conserve water through rainwater harvesting and/or water recycling?	Describe water conservation measures in the Sustainability Statement.	<p>WDWP – Policy ENV13</p> <p>North Dorset – Policy 3</p> <p>East Dorset - Policy ME3</p> <p>NPPF – Para 154</p>			<p>RHS Guidance on water collecting, storage and re-using - <a href="https://www.rhs.org.uk/garden-jobs/water-collecting-storing-and-using">https://www.rhs.org.uk/garden-jobs/water-collecting-storing-and-using</a></p>
<b>5. Incorporating green infrastructure</b>					
Do you incorporate green infrastructure as part of the proposal?	<p>Describe what level and types of green infrastructure are provided and how this is incorporated into the proposal. Include details of on-site and off-site provision and any information about how this contributes towards addressing climate change (both adaptation and mitigation).</p> <p>Confirm that appropriate levels of green infrastructure are provided to serve the site itself (relative to the scale of the proposal).</p>	<p>WDWP Policy ENV3</p> <p>North Dorset Policy 15</p> <p>East Dorset Policy HE4</p>			<p>Investing in Green places – South East Dorset Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011) <a href="https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/south-east-dorset-green-infrastructure-strategy">https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/south-east-dorset-green-infrastructure-strategy</a></p> <p>Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework -</p>

		Purbeck Policy GI Purbeck Emerging Policy I3 NPPF – Para 154			<a href="https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Home.aspx">https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Home.aspx</a>
<b>6. Sustainable drainage</b>					
Do you include sustainable drainage measures as part of the proposal?	Within the Sustainability Statement, detail the approach to SuDS incorporated within the site in accordance with the hierarchy of drainage options.	WDWP – Policy ENV5, ENV13 East Dorset - Policy ME3; Policy ME6 North Dorset – Policy 13 Purbeck – Policy FR: Flood Risk Purbeck Emerging Policy E5			Dorset Council – Surface Water Planning web page - <a href="https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/surface-water-planning?p_l_back_url=%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dsustainable%2Bdrainage">https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/surface-water-planning?p_l_back_url=%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dsustainable%2Bdrainage</a>
<b>7. Adaptation to climate change</b>					
Have you incorporated any specific climate change adaptation measures into the proposal?	Describe any specific measures incorporated to address this issue and/or cross refer to other relevant application documents.	WDWP – Policies ENV3, ENV5, ENV7, ENV13 East Dorset - Policy ME3, ME6, HE2, HE4 North Dorset – Policy 3, Policy 13, Policy 15, Policy 24 Purbeck – Policy FR, Policy D, Policy GI Purbeck Emerging Policies E5, E6, E12, I3 NPPF – Para 154			National Design Guide - <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide</a>

## Glossary (key definitions)

**Biodiversity:** Biological diversity among and within plant and animal species in an environment.

**BREEAM standards:** A technical standard which enables consistent and comparable assessment and verification across the entire built environment lifecycle.

**BREL report:** A report that will be produced for building projects, using SAP assessments to show if buildings use less energy and produce lower carbon emissions.

**Building fabric:** Refers to the roof, walls, windows, floors and doors.

**Carbon emissions:** A term used to refer to both carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions released into the atmosphere from burning fossil fuels (coal, oil, natural gas) and other greenhouse gas emissions. The full term is carbon dioxide equivalent emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>e).

**Carbon intensity:** The carbon intensity of electricity is a measure of how much CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are produced per kilowatt hour of electricity consumed.

**Climate change:** The long-term change of climate typically measured over decades or longer.

**Climate change adaptation:** Adjustments made to natural or human systems in response to the actual or anticipated impacts of climate change, to mitigate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

**Climate change mitigation:** Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

**Change of use:** A change in the way that land or buildings are used. Planning permission is usually necessary in order to change from one 'use class' to another – as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended).

**Conversions:** This generally means the physical work necessary to change the use of a building from a particular use, classified in the use classes order, to another use. Can also mean the subdivision of residential properties into self-contained flats or maisonettes.

**Ecological network:** A system of core areas connected by ecological corridors, of existing and future habitat needed to allow populations of species and habitats to survive in fluctuating conditions.

**Electric vehicle charging point:** A charging socket which is connected to an electric vehicle via a charging cable to allow the battery to be recharged with electricity.

**Embodied carbon:** All the CO<sub>2</sub> emitted in producing materials. The embodied carbon of a building can include all the emissions from the construction materials, the building process, all the fixtures and fittings inside, as well as from deconstructing and disposing of it at the end of its lifetime.

**Energy consumption:** All the energy used to perform an action, manufacture something or simply used to inhabit a building.

**Energy performance:** Summary of the energy efficiency of buildings.

**Fossil fuel generated operational energy:** Energy produced from carbon-rich fuel (coal, oil and natural gas) formed from the remains of ancient animals and plants, such as using a gas cooker or gas-fired boiler/heating system. Their combustion is considered to contribute to the 'greenhouse effect'.

**Future buildings standard:** A policy document that sets out proposed changes to Building Regulations (Part L and Part F) to provide a pathway to highly efficient non-domestic buildings which are zero carbon ready, better for the environment and fit for the future.

**Greenhouse gas:** A layer of gases in the atmosphere which absorb and release heat and maintain the Earth's temperature. Naturally occurring examples include water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and ozone. Some human activities increase these gases, including fossil fuel combustion within motor vehicles and some power stations.

**Green infrastructure:** A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity.

**Householder application:** An application for planning permission used for proposals to alter or enlarge a single house, including works within the boundary and garden of a house.

**Local list:** A list of local information requirements necessary to determine a planning application before it can be registered as a valid application. See: [Dorset Council's Local List](#)

**Net zero:** When the UK's total greenhouse gas emissions are equal to or less than the emissions the UK removes from the environment.

**Operational energy usage:** The energy needed to run buildings.

**Passive solar shading:** A technique for shading a building leading to natural cooling and energy conservation, by blocking the sun from the building. For example an overhanging roof or appropriately located trees/planting.

**Passive ventilation:** The process of supplying air to and removing air from an indoor space without using mechanical systems.

**Rainwater harvesting:** The collection and storage of rainwater, rather than allowing it to run off. For example collecting rainwater from a rooftop into a water butt or surface run-off into a reservoir.

**Renewable Energy:** Covers energy which occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment - from wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun, and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat.

**SAP calculations:** Standard Assessment Procedure calculations assess and compare the energy and environmental performance of dwellings

**Sustainable design:** An environmentally responsible and resource-efficient building design approach encompassing, construction, maintenance, renovation, and reuse.

**Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS):** Sustainable drainage systems are designed to control surface water run off close to where it falls and mimic natural drainage as far as possible. The measures for managing the rainwater aim to:-

- Reduce the causes & impacts of flooding,
- Remove Pollutants from surface water runoff at source,
- Combine water management with green space with benefits for amenity, recreation and wildlife.

**Sustainable transport modes:** Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, ultra-low and zero emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

**Sustainability statement:** A report for planning which details a proposed buildings commitment and strategy to address climate change as set out in its local authority planning policy.

**Ultra low energy demand/performance:** To maximise the energy efficiency potential of a building to be the lowest possible to enable it to be net-zero in its operation.

**Wildlife green corridors:** Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations.



## **Listed Buildings – what you can do for climate change**

As concerns about climate change have risen, and energy costs are increasing, everyone is looking for ways to adapt and retrofit their houses to make them more energy efficient. Legal provisions including the Building Regulations and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) for rented homes, require building owners to face up to the need to make homes more energy efficient. All these improvements can be more challenging when you live in or own a listed building. This document aims to explain what can be achieved to save energy and at the same time conserve the special interest of your listed building.

There are approximately 26,500,000 buildings in England and Wales (domestic and non-domestic). Of these, about 400,000 (1.5%) are listed. Buildings are listed by the Government (on the advice of Historic England) when they are considered to have special architectural or historic interest in a national context. The listing gives statutory protection to the whole of the exterior and interior of the building (not just the elements listed on the list description) and, potentially, any buildings and structures in its curtilage. Most changes to listed buildings will therefore require Listed Building Consent, as well as any planning permission that the works might require.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings and any features of special architectural or historic interest they possess.

### **Climate and ecological emergency**

Dorset Council declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019 and the council has a climate and ecological emergency strategy. It has also published an interim guidance and position statement in relation to planning for climate change. This provides commentary on the weight given to climate change in decision making and sets out what Dorset Council expects from planning applications given current planning policy. The position statement focusses on new built development and proposals for stand-alone renewable energy generation schemes.

Conservation officers are aware of the climate and ecological emergency and the need for everyone to reduce their energy costs. There are a number of options available to achieve this in existing buildings, and this document summarises the options available for listed buildings. It also explains why certain options are not appropriate on listed buildings, and what suitable (and often cheaper) alternatives are available. Assessments or inspections carried out free of charge by companies with a product or treatment to sell should be treated with caution.

### **General good practice**

Carrying out repairs and regular maintenance promptly can improve the thermal efficiency of a building and early intervention may save significant costs later on. Bills can be much higher if windows or doors are not correctly fitted and fixed. Failure to deal with leaking gutters and rainwater pipes can cause damp walls and damage to the building fabric. Good control systems that enable you to regulate energy use also help reduce costs, such as thermostats and timers. Turning down a thermostat by one degree Celsius in a centrally heated house may reduce its annual heating energy consumption by 10% or more ([Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: How to Improve Energy Efficiency \(historicengland.org.uk\)](https://www.historicengland.org.uk/energy-efficiency-and-historic-buildings-how-to-improve-energy-efficiency)).

### **Why do older buildings need a special approach?**

Most listed buildings are constructed differently to modern buildings in that they use traditional materials and have solid walls, which together operate on the principle of 'breathability'. 'Breathability' means that the structure naturally admits a degree of moisture but allows it to evaporate externally and internally through ventilation and heating. Buildings constructed like this also tend to heat up and cool down more slowly, helping to even out changes in humidity and temperature.

It is for these reasons that, for example, non-breathable render or plaster on outside or inside walls can prevent this natural evaporation and then lead to problems such as damp or condensation, which in turn reduces both thermal performance and energy efficiency.

By contrast, most modern buildings use cavity walls and impermeable materials to prevent moisture entering the structure at all and so aim to control the movement of moisture and air within the building envelope.

### **Identifying areas for improvement**

Historic England recommends that a whole-building approach is used to identify areas for improvement. This includes looking at building use and occupation, building fabric, engineering services and equipment and energy supply.

### **Quick wins**

Low cost, simple improvements may include regulating energy use to fit your daily routine, using thick curtains, repairing or reinstating window shutters and awnings, draught proofing windows and doors and installing loft insulation. These can be undertaken quickly and can reduce energy consumption. In addition to reducing energy costs, repairing historic features such as window shutters and wall panelling will enhance a building's character and significance.

### **Conservation principles, measures and techniques**

The following high-level principles apply to the repair of historic buildings. They should also be considered when designing energy efficiency improvements:

- Only techniques and materials that have been demonstrated to be appropriate to the building fabric should be used. These will normally be the same as the original or host material. When this material is no longer available or appropriate, the proposed work should employ a material that has compatible properties, both technically (similar permeability or porosity) and aesthetically.
- Interventions should maximise the life expectancy of significant building fabric, consistent with sustaining its significance.
- Interventions should be technically feasible, practicable and reversible – or at least re-treatable – and should not prejudice future interventions when they become necessary.
- All works should be adequately recorded, and the records made available for others who may take on the building in the future.
- Interventions should contribute to, or at least not compromise, the sustainability of future management and maintenance

### **Building Regulations and Building Control.**

Any Building work being proposed to a property may require Building Regulation Approval as well as Listed Building Consent and Planning permission. Certain requirements of the "Building Regulations and Approved Documents including Approved Document Part L –

Conservation of fuel and power” can and may be modified for listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas but a Building Regulation application is still required and should be submitted before work commences.

The energy efficiency of historic and traditional dwellings should be improved only if doing so will not cause long-term deterioration of the building’s fabric or fittings. In particular, this applies to historic and traditional buildings with a vapour permeable construction that both absorbs moisture and readily allows moisture to evaporate.

New extensions to historic and traditional dwellings should comply fully with the energy efficiency standards unless there is a need to match the external appearance or character of the extension to that of the host building.

In determining whether full energy efficiency improvements should be made, the Building Control team works with the authority’s conservation officers.

Please do contact Dorset Council Building Control team to discuss your Building Regulation application requirements.”

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/building-control/contacts/building-control-contacts>

### **Planning Permission**

There are certain types of development that can be carried out without the need to apply for planning permission. These types of works/development are known as “permitted development”. Whether you need to apply for planning permission will depend on a number of factors. You can use the Planning Portal to get advice on your permitted development rights and common projects for residential properties.

<https://www.planningportal.co.uk/permission>

Further to the Planning Portal you can also find out further information on the Dorset Council website and the Council offer an informal process that can tell you whether or not you need planning permission. This service covers both householder proposals and non-householder proposals.

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning/find-out-if-you-need-planning-permission/find-out-if-you-need-planning-permission>

### **What can I do?**

The whole-building approach is recommended to ensure that energy efficiency measures are suitable, robust, well integrated, properly co-ordinated and sustainable. This way we can better ensure that energy efficiency measures are in-keeping with the way the building has been constructed and are thus consistent with its conservation for future generations.

For more detailed information see Guidance from Historic England – Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings – How to improve energy efficiency – [Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: How to Improve Energy Efficiency \(historicengland.org.uk\)](https://www.historicengland.org.uk/guidance/energy-efficiency-and-historic-buildings-how-to-improve-energy-efficiency)

As a first step you could consider carrying out an audit of the energy use of your building and current equipment and remove any equipment no longer required. A more high-tech option is to commission a thermal imaging camera test to identify areas of heat loss and damp patches.

## **Do I need Listed Building Consent [LBC]?**

The table below shows a number of works that can be undertaken to reduce energy bills and provides guidance as to when Listed Building Consent is required. It is advisable to seek pre application advice from Dorset Council (there is a fee for this), as this will provide feedback on your proposals and should lead to a better outcome when you submit your LBC application. For further information use this link: [Pre application advice - Dorset Council](#). You can also seek advice on whether planning permission is required. In general, LBC will not be required if:

1. Repairs to walls or ceilings make up less than 10% of the area of the wall or ceiling
2. Installing new services such as boilers, storage heaters and even draught proofing does not require intrusive attachments to historic fabric

To make an application for Listed Building Consent, log onto the [Planning Portal](#) and go through the applications link.

Works to reduce energy bills in listed buildings	LBC not needed	LBC needed	Comments regarding proposal
Works to alleviate or tackle damp problems, such as repairs to permeable mortars, plasters or renders	X		LBC is not needed if repairs are in matching materials. If a change of materials is proposed, then LBC will be needed but is likely to be acceptable if they maintain or introduce breathability. If in doubt, always seek advice from local Conservation Officer.
Draught-proofing to windows and doors	X		LBC will be needed if any chasing of any services into underlying historic fabric is required to fit draught proofing. Most draught proofing is reversible.
Like-for-like replacement boiler (using existing flue opening), radiators, or storage heaters	X		
Loft insulation	X		
Low energy light bulbs in existing fittings	X		
New central heating controls	X		
New (first time) storage heaters (providing no fixings onto historic fabric)	X		
Remedying poorly adjusted, faulty or inappropriate controls and malfunctioning systems / equipment	X		
Repair ( <i>in situ</i> ) of ill-fitting and damaged historic window and door frames to reduce draughts	X		
Repair ( <i>in situ</i> ) of window shutters (internal / external) and awnings	X		
Repair of wall panelling	X		This is only applicable to small areas of like-for-like repair. However, some historic wall panelling will require a specialist contractor (e.g. where panelling has ornament or mouldings) and advice should be sought from the Conservation team first in these instances.

<b>Works to reduce energy bills in listed buildings</b>	<b>LBC not needed</b>	<b>LBC needed</b>	<b>Comments regarding proposal</b>
Thick curtains / carpets / rugs / wall hangings / screens / draught-excluders	X		
Vented register plates to reduce draughts in chimneys, but allow air flow to reduce condensation	X		
Air-source heat pumps		X	
External insulation to exterior walls		X	Please contact conservation team to discuss as this could impact on historic fabric of the building
Floor insulation between joists (where floor covering is modern and/or no disturbance of ceilings is required)		X	Where there are sub-floor voids, care should be taken in all cases to ensure that insulation does not block ventilation.  Please contact conservation team to discuss as this could impact on historic fabric of the building
Installation of insulated breathable solid floor substrate (e.g. Limecrete with recycled foamed glass)		X	The acceptability of these works depends on the nature and extent of works needed to break out any existing floor slab.
Insulation on outside face of exterior walls		X	Please contact conservation team to discuss as this could impact on historic fabric of the building
Insulation of roof including 'room in the roof' insulation		X	If insulation is simply laid between/on floor joists no LBC required
Insulation on internal faces of exterior walls		X	The extent to which this is permitted depends heavily on the nature of the building and the nature of the proposed insulation. For example, buildings with internal ornament (e.g. dado rails, picture rails, panelling, window surrounds etc.), which would be compromised if insulation were added, are less likely to be suitable. In addition, in all cases the insulation would need to be a breathable product.
New boiler in new location with new flue		X	

<b>Works to reduce energy bills in listed buildings</b>	<b>LBC not needed</b>	<b>LBC needed</b>	<b>Comments regarding proposal</b>
New (first time) central heating system		X	
Reinstate window shutters (internal / external) and awnings		X	
Replace historic single-glazed windows with new double-glazed windows		X	Please contact conservation team to discuss as this could impact on historic fabric of the building
Replace modern single-glazed windows with new double-glazed windows		X	
Restoration of ill-fitting and damaged historic window and door frames (where this requires removal)		X	
Secondary glazing		X	In most cases, secondary glazing will require a bespoke and high-quality design. LBC not required if secondary glazing is simply pushed into the frame surrounds, and can be removed.
Solar PV panels		X	<p>On listed buildings themselves, these are likely only to be acceptable in the minority of cases where they are fully obscured by parapets on large or complicated roofs or on modern extensions. It may be possible and preferable to look for opportunities to install them on outbuildings (see above) or on ground-mounted arrays, though these would likely need planning permission.</p> <p>Please contact conservation team to discuss as this could impact on historic fabric of the building</p>
Solar PV panels on outbuildings		X	LBC will be needed here where the outbuildings are considered to be curtilage-listed buildings (i.e. date before 1 July 1948, are in the same ownership and are spatially and functionally ancillary to the main listed building). In all cases, advice should be sought from the Conservation Team.

Works to reduce energy bills in listed buildings	LBC not needed	LBC needed	Comments regarding proposal
Underfloor heating		X	
Works to alleviate or tackle damp problems involving injected damp-proof courses		X	Please contact conservation team to discuss as this could impact on historic fabric of the building

### How does the Council make decisions affecting listed buildings?

The nature of the historic environment means Councils must assess applications for retrofit or other energy-saving measures on a case-by-case basis. Listed buildings make up a tiny fraction of the total number of buildings and so there has been no change by Government to the legislation which requires us to protect what is special about them, even in the face of climate change.

We have a statutory duty to have “special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”. This duty requires us to assess objectively the impacts of any proposals on the significance of listed buildings through national and local policy.

Where proposals will result in harm to the significance of a listed building, there are various tests which have to be met in order for the harm to be permitted. The most common is that there must be public benefits which are sufficiently substantial to outweigh the harm caused, but taking into account that ‘special regard’ (i.e. the ‘great weight’ in planning policy) to be given to protecting what is special about them.<sup>1</sup> This great weight rightly sets the bar high in deciding whether harm should be permitted.

Where harm occurs through, say, the installation of solar panels, the issue therefore tends to be that the addition of solar panels to one building rarely qualifies as being a public benefit of sufficient substance, though of course it might be outwardly beneficial to wider national and global aims.

### Can I put solar panels on unlisted buildings in a Conservation Area?

Conservation Areas exist to manage and protect the special architectural and historic fabric of a place – the features that make it unique. Dorset has c. 180 Conservation Areas, including villages and towns such as Corfe Castle, Blandford Forum, Wimborne, Shaftesbury and Dorchester. The attractiveness of these areas is a key reason why people want to live and work in Dorset, and local authorities have a duty to protect them.

There are existing Permitted Development rights to install solar panels on unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas, provided that certain criteria are met, such as ensuring that they are not higher than the highest part of the roof or fitted to a wall that fronts a highway. Therefore, where the installation meets certain criteria, solar panels can be installed without the need for planning permission.

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<sup>1</sup> More information on what constitutes ‘public benefits’ can be found in the Government’s Planning Practice Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment>



## **Can I put solar panels on the roof of my listed building?**

Installing solar panels on listed buildings can have a negative impact on the special architectural interest of the building therefore the positioning of any proposal needs to be considered carefully. The setting of the building and, where relevant, the character and appearance of the Conservation Area (to which listed buildings typically contribute significantly) should also be considered.

This does not automatically mean that installing solar panels is completely out of the question. Conservation Officers have worked with owners of buildings such as the Corn Exchange in Dorchester and Durlston Castle. With careful design and sensitive siting, it has been possible to install solar panels on these Grade I and II\* listed buildings without impacting their significance negatively. In addition, there could be opportunities to utilise the roofs of modern extensions.

On smaller properties, it may be possible to site solar panels on sheds or garage roofs, or to the rear of a building. Renewable energy projects and the infrastructure associated with them should aim to be reversible where possible and avoid damage both to the significance of the building and its fabric.

The possibilities very much depend on the context and each situation is assessed on a case-by-case basis.

## **Can I install double glazing in my listed building?**

Numerous requests are received by local authorities to remove historic windows from listed buildings and replace with double glazing. There are a number of reasons why consent may not be obtained:

- Many listed buildings have historic glass which can be decades or even centuries old. This gives it a particular look and quality which is completely different from modern double glazing. Historic windows with designs following historic patterns, usually make an important contribution to the significance of historic buildings. They should be retained and repaired wherever possible.
- Upvc is rarely considered to be an acceptable solution on a listed building, due to the impact on the character and appearance of the building.

Planning inspectors have demonstrated this through recent decisions where appeals regarding double glazing have been dismissed.

A historic window that has been in position for many years has a low carbon footprint: repairs may enable it to last decades or even centuries more. In contrast, double glazing has a high carbon footprint and is likely to need replacing every 10-20 years. uPVC is not always easy to recycle. This makes it a much less cost effective and sustainable option than retaining and repairing original windows.

If maintained correctly and fitted well, a good quality timber window will far outlive the lifespan of a uPVC window and, unlike the latter, can be sourced sustainably.

In a listed building, uPVC windows may be difficult to install, given their generic sizing when considered alongside historic windows that are invariably of differing sizes.

The advice regarding historic windows will always be to repair them wherever possible, to retain any historic glass and associated heritage interest. In cases where repairs are not possible the windows should be replaced in the traditional style. Options such as secondary

glazing and thick curtains can be effective at reducing heat loss, retaining the historic interest of the property and costing less than double glazing.

### **If I sell or rent out my listed building, do I need an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)?**

Contrary to popular belief, Listed Buildings are **not** exempt from the need to obtain an EPC.

### **I rent out my listed building and it has an energy rating of F or G. What should I do?**

Since the 1 April 2020 [The Energy Efficiency \(Private Rented Property\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2015](#) have required landlords to ensure that all rented homes achieve a minimum EPC rating of at least an E. EPC's normally provide a list of the recommended improvements that can be carried out.

If your listed building has an EPC of F or G, you will need to carefully consider which recommended energy efficiency improvements can be completed, either without the need for consent or with consent, which is likely to be granted.

If no recommendations can be carried out as Listed Building Consent is not likely to be granted or permitted works have been done and the rating remains below an E, then landlords can [apply for an exemption to the regulations](#).

Landlords can also use the Councils online [Energy Rating Improver](#) service to see what they need to do to comply.

### **Examples of applications where energy efficiency measures have been approved**

Solar panels at Durlston (to be completed)

Case study from a grade 2 listed building (to be completed)

#### **Case study – renewable energy at Athelhampton House**

Athelhampton Manor House is a grade I listed building, continually lived in since Saxon times and mentioned in the Domesday book. The current house was largely constructed in Tudor times and extended in Elizabethan times. The park and garden are also grade I listed.

Through careful design by SPASE design architects and surveyors, a variety of renewable energy improvements have been carried out at Athelhampton. Works have included:

- PV solar arrays outside the boundary of the listed park
- 15 air source heat pumps which heat the main house
- A ground source heat pump which provides heating for river cottage and the coach house

It is estimated that these improvements will save over 100 tonnes of carbon each year, with a payback time expected in the region of 7 years. The siting of the infrastructure associated with these works has been located to ensure it is not impacting the Listed Building or its setting.

<p> This image cannot currently be displayed.</p>	
<p>Ground source heat pump equipment sited in a room at the back of the building</p>	<p>Solar photovoltaic panels and associated planting to the rear of the river cottage and outside the boundary of the listed park</p>
	
<p>Air source heat pumps at the side of a modern building</p>	<p>Solar photovoltaic panels situated in working yard, adjacent to compost heaps</p>

**Further information**

There is a wealth of freely available guidance on these matters, some of which are listed below and which can be downloaded from the relevant websites. These outline some of the technical aspects of energy performance of traditionally constructed buildings, but also sustainable and non-invasive ways in which this can be improved.

- [Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: How to Improve Energy Efficiency \(historicengland.org.uk\)](http://historicengland.org.uk)
- [Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Solar Electric \(Photovoltaics\) \(historicengland.org.uk\)](http://historicengland.org.uk)
- [Planning Responsible Retrofit of Traditional Buildings | Historic England](#) Sustainable Traditional Buildings Alliance (STBA)
- [Energy Efficiency and Traditional Homes | Historic England](#)
- [SPAB Briefing Energy efficiency.pdf](#) Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)

For further information contact the Conservation team:  
[planningconservation@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:planningconservation@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk) or ring 01305 252388

### **Relevant legislation**

[Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) (s.16, 66): local authorities are to have “special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”. An equal duty exists for Conservation Areas (s. 72).

[National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) paragraphs 199 and 200 state that “when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation....Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration...) should require clear and convincing justification.”

[The Energy Efficiency \(Private Rented Property\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2015](#) require that rented homes achieve a minimum energy rating of E on the EPC scale. Landlords may only apply for an exemption to the regulations where a recommended improvement would unacceptably alter the character or appearance of the listed building and no other recommended works are possible.

Building regulations – to be completed

**Place and Resources Overview Committee – DRAFT Forward Plan**

Title	Description	Date of meeting	Report author	Portfolio Holder	Other meetings
Council Tax premiums on second homes and empty properties	The report sets out the implications for a key element of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill; the proposed changes to allow councils to place a council tax premium on second homes and empty properties, with a number of recommendations on next steps. The aim of this draft legislation is primarily aimed to allow councils to raise additional revenue and to acknowledge the impact that second (and empty) homes can have on some communities. If the Bill receives royal assent, these options will become available to billing authorities with effect from 1 April 2024 at the earliest. All councils wishing to engage with this proposed legislation will need to have taken some form of council	9 February 2023	Steven Ford – Corporate Director – Climate & Ecological Sustainability / Katie Hale – Head of Revenues & Benefits	Cllr Peter Wharf – Deputy Leader	Cabinet – 28 February 2023  Full Council – 30 March 2023

Title	Description	Date of committee meeting	Report author	Portfolio Holder	Other meetings? (CLT / SLT / Cabinet)
	resolution at least 12 months prior to the financial year in which the changes will come into effect.				
Consultation and Engagement Policy and Protocol	To consider changes to policy	9 February 2023	Laura Cornette – Business Partner – Communities & Partnerships	Cllr Jill Haynes – Corporate Development & Transformation	Cabinet – 28 February 2023
Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy 2023-25 Refresh	A refresh of the Climate and Ecological strategy	9 February 2023	Antony Littlechild – Sustainability Team Manager	Cllr Ray Bryan - Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel & Environment	Cabinet – 28 March 2023
Planning for Climate Change: Interim Guidance and Position Statement, Sustainability Checklist and Listed Buildings Guidance	To present three documents that have been prepared in relation to planning for the climate emergency. The Interim Position and Guidance Statement has been prepared to clarify existing planning policy requirements and to provide guidance to decision-makers on the weight to be attributed to climate in relation to planning applications for new built	9 February 2023	Sara Hardy – Senior Planning Policy Officer	Cllr David Walsh - Portfolio Holder for Planning	Cabinet – 28 March 2023

Title	Description	Date of committee meeting	Report author	Portfolio Holder	Other meetings? (CLT / SLT / Cabinet)
	<p>development and renewable energy schemes. It also sets out what the council expects from planning applications. A sustainability checklist has been prepared to provide guidance on the information to be included with submitted sustainability statements and to encourage best practice. A guidance document has also been prepared to give advice on works that may be able to be undertaken to improve the energy efficiency of listed buildings. The report seeks the views of Overview committee before consideration by Cabinet.</p>				

Title	Description	Date of committee meeting	Report author	Portfolio Holder	Other meetings? (CLT / SLT / Cabinet)
Dorset Council's roles in ensuring better broadband and mobile coverage across Dorset	High quality fixed and mobile digital infrastructure is essential to the economy and communities in all parts of Dorset . Dorset Council plays a number of key roles in leading, facilitating and monitoring improvements to coverage. This item will enable councillors to take stock and make any necessary recommendations in relation to policy or provision.	18 April 2023	Dugald Lockhart – Service Manager Digital Place	Cllr Jill Haynes – Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development & Change	May 2023

Dates for May 2023 onwards will be set in the 2023/24 calendar of meetings to be approved by Full Council in February 2023





## The Cabinet Forward Plan - February to May 2023

Publication date: 31 January 2023

### Explanatory Note:

This Forward Plan contains future items to be considered by the Cabinet and Council. It is published 28 days before the next meeting of the Committee. The plan includes items for the meeting including key decisions. Each item shows if it is 'open' to the public or to be considered in a private part of the meeting.

### Definition of Key Decisions

Key decisions are defined in Dorset Council's Constitution as decisions of the Cabinet which are likely to -

- (a) to result in the relevant local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the relevant local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates (**Thresholds - £500k**); or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the relevant local authority."

In determining the meaning of "*significant*" for these purposes the Council will have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 9Q of the Local Government Act 2000 Act. Officers will consult with lead members to determine significance and sensitivity.

### Cabinet Portfolio Holders 2021/22

<b>Spencer Flower</b>	Leader / Governance, Performance and Communications
<b>Peter Wharf</b>	Deputy Leader / Adult Social Care and Health
<b>Gary Suttle</b>	Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy
<b>Ray Bryan</b>	Highways, Travel and Environment
<b>Graham Carr-Jones</b>	Housing and Community Safety
<b>Jill Haynes</b>	Corporate Development and Transformation
<b>Laura Beddow</b>	Culture, Communities and Customer Services
<b>Andrew Parry</b>	Children, Education, Skills and Early Help
<b>Tony Ferrari</b>	Economic Growth, Assets & Property
<b>David Walsh</b>	Planning

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<b>February</b>					
<p><b>Commissioning Strategies for Adult Social Care</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision</b> - Yes <b>Public Access</b> - Open</p> <p>To adopt final versions of the suite of commissioning strategies to form the basis of the Council's priorities under the portfolio for the coming five years.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker</b> Cabinet</p>	<p><b>Decision Date</b> 28 Feb 2023</p>	<p>People and Health Overview Committee 19 Dec 2022</p>	<p>Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health</p>	<p><i>Jonathan Price, Interim Corporate Director for Commissioning</i> <i>jonathan.price@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Adults</i></p>
<p><b>Update on Children in Care Strategy and Plan</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision</b> - Yes <b>Public Access</b> - Open</p> <p>To review a proposal to increase fees for foster carers to ensure the offer of Dorset Council is comparative to neighbouring authorities and recognises the work that out foster carers do for our children.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker</b> Cabinet</p>	<p><b>Decision Date</b> 28 Feb 2023</p>	<p>People and Health Overview Committee 31 Jan 2023</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help</p>	<p><i>Louise Drury, Head of Service Children in Care and Care Leavers</i> <i>louise.drury@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Children (Theresa Leavy)</i></p>
<p><b>Procurement Forward Plan Report - over £500K (2023-24)</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision</b> - Yes <b>Public Access</b> - Open</p> <p>Cabinet is required to approve all key decisions with financial consequences of £50K or more.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker</b> Cabinet</p>	<p><b>Decision Date</b> 28 Feb 2023</p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy</p>	<p><i>Dawn Adams, Service Manager for Commercial and Procurement</i> <i>dawn.adams@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p><b>Charging Ahead: Public Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Programme</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision</b> - Yes <b>Public Access</b> - Open</p> <p>To request procurement of installation services valued at £4m To request delegated decision-making authority for the Public Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Board</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 28 Feb 2023</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment</p>	<p><i>Christopher Whitehouse, Transport Project Officer christopher.whitehouse@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p><b>Dorset Council - Determination of School Admissions Arrangements 2024 - 25</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision</b> - Yes <b>Public Access</b> - Open</p> <p>Statutory requirement for an annual determination of the Council's School Admissions Arrangements.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 28 Feb 2023</b></p>	<p>People and Health Overview Committee 31 Jan 2023</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help</p>	<p><i>Ed Denham, School Admissions Manager ed.denham@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, People - Children (Theresa Leavy)</i></p>
<p><b>Data and Business Intelligence Strategy</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision</b> - Yes <b>Public Access</b> - Open</p> <p>Agreement for taking forward the Data and Business Intelligence Strategy as an organisation.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 28 Feb 2023</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation</p>	<p><i>Deborah Smart, Corporate Director – Transformation, Innovation and Digital deborah.smart@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p><b>National Planning Policy Consultation Response</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision</b> - Yes <b>Public Access</b> - Open</p> <p>To agree Dorset Council's response to the consultation on changes to National Planning Policy.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 28 Feb 2023</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Planning</p>	<p><i>Terry Sneller, Local Plan Team Leader terry.sneller@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Hilary Jordan, Service Manager for Spatial Planning hilary.jordan@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p><b>Capital Programme Update</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision</b> - Yes <b>Public Access</b> - Open</p> <p>Agreement to the 2023/24 Capital Programme.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 28 Feb 2023</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy</p>	<p><i>Heather Lappin, Head of Strategic Finance heather.lappin@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>
<p><b>Cost of Living</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision</b> - Yes <b>Public Access</b> - Open</p> <p>To consider the use of reserves for a number of initiatives that directly support Dorset's residents with the impact of the cost living challenge.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 28 Feb 2023</b></p>		<p>Leader of the Council</p>	<p><i>Jennifer Lewis, Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement jennifer.lewis@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>
<p><b>LGA Corporate Peer Review - Follow up report</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision</b> - No <b>Public Access</b> - Open</p> <p>Following Dorset Councils initial corporate peer review by the LGA in</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 28 Feb 2023</b></p>		<p>Leader of the Council</p>	<p><i>Chief Executive (Matt Prosser)</i></p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p>autumn 2019, the council invited the peer review team back three years on to give them the opportunity to comment on progress that had been made or any areas that we need to look further. The team undertook a series of pre-meetings as well as a one-day site visit that generated the report from which we have taken a number of actions to take forwards and will report on delivery in line with the action plan once agreed.</p>					
<p><b>Consultation and Engagement Policy and Protocol</b>  <b>Key Decision</b> - Yes  <b>Public Access</b> - Open          Consider changes to Policy.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker</b>  <b>Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date</b>  <b>28 Feb 2023</b></p>	<p>Place and Resources          Overview Committee          9 Feb 2023</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for          Culture, Communities          and Customer          Services</p>	<p><i>Jennifer Lewis, Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement          jennifer.louis@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Laura Cornette, Business Partner - Communities and Partnerships          Laura.cornette@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk          Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>
<p><b>Delegated authority to approve project submissions and activity through the Collaboration Agreement with the Ministry of Defence in relation to the Defence BattleLab</b>  <b>Key Decision</b> - Yes  <b>Public Access</b> - Open</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker</b>  <b>Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date</b>  <b>28 Feb 2023</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for          Economic Growth,          Assets and Property</p>	<p><i>Nick Webster, Head of Growth, Economy and Regeneration          Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p>The council has concluded a Collaboration Agreement with the Ministry of Defence (MOD) relating to the operational delivery of the Defence BattleLab on the Dorset Innovation Park.</p>					
<p><b>Dorset Council Plan Priorities: One Customer Account and Digital Innovation</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision - No Public Access - Open</b></p> <p>to receive a report from the Portfolio Holders for Corporate Development and Transformation and for Culture, Communities and Customer Services.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 28 Feb 2023</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation, Portfolio Holder for Culture, Communities and Customer Services</p>	<p><i>Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p><b>Council tax premiums on second homes and empty properties</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision - No Public Access - Open</b></p> <p>This report sets out the implications for a key element of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill; the proposed changes to allow councils to place a council tax premium on second homes and empty properties, with a number of recommendations on next steps. The aim of this draft legislation is primarily aimed to allow councils to raise additional revenue and to acknowledge the impact that second (and empty) homes can have on some communities. If the Bill receives</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Dorset Council</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 30 Mar 2023</b></p>	<p>Cabinet Place and Resources Overview Committee 28 Feb 2023 9 Feb 2023</p>	<p>Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health</p>	<p><i>Steven Ford, Corporate Director for Climate and Ecological Sustainability Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p>royal assent, these options will become available to billing authorities with effect from 1 April 2024 at the earliest. All councils wishing to engage with this proposed legislation will need to have taken some form of council resolution at least 12 months prior to the financial year in which the changes will come into effect.</p>					
<p><b>The Proposed Sale of the former Bere Regis Primary School, Rye Hill, BH20 7LP</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision</b> - Yes <b>Public Access</b> - Fully exempt</p> <p>to dispose of the site formerly known as Bere Regis Primary School.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 28 Feb 2023</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property</p>	<p><i>Tim Hulme, Head of Service Property Management tim.hulme@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p><b>Potterne Park</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision</b> - Yes <b>Public Access</b> - Fully exempt</p> <p>Negotiations in respect of a Council owned asset.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 28 Feb 2023</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property</p>	<p><i>Peter Hopkins, Corporate Director - Assets and Property peter.hopkins@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p><b>March</b></p>					
<p><b>Natural Environment, Climate and Ecological Strategy - refresh</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision</b> - Yes <b>Public Access</b> - Open</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 28 Mar 2023</b></p>	<p>Place and Resources Overview Committee 9 Feb 2023</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment</p>	<p><i>Steven Ford, Corporate Director for Climate and Ecological Sustainability Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
A refresh of the Climate and ecological strategy.					
<p><b>Dorset Council Plan Priorities: Update: County Deals/Community Safety</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision</b> - No <b>Public Access</b> - Open</p> <p>To receive a report from the Portfolio Holders for Economic Growth, Assets and Property and Housing and Community Safety.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker</b> <b>Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date</b> <b>28 Mar 2023</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety</p>	<p><i>Andrew Billany, Corporate Director of Housing</i> <i>andrew.billany@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Adults</i></p>
<p><b>Planning for Climate Change: Interim Guidance and Position Statement Sustainability Checklist and Listed Buildings Guidance</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision</b> - Yes <b>Public Access</b> - Open</p> <p>To present three documents that have been prepared in relation to planning for the climate emergency. The Interim Position and Guidance Statement has been prepared to clarify existing planning policy requirements and to provide guidance to decision-makers on the weight to be attributed to climate in relation to planning applications for new built development and renewable energy schemes. It also sets out what the council expects from planning applications. A sustainability checklist has been prepared to provide</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker</b> <b>Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date</b> <b>28 Mar 2023</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Planning</p>	<p><i>Mike Garrity, Head of Planning</i> <i>mike.garrity@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>



Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p>guidance on the information to be included with submitted sustainability statements and to encourage best practice.</p> <p>A guidance document has also been prepared to give advice on works that may be able to be undertaken to improve the energy efficiency of listed buildings.</p> <p>The report seeks the views of Overview committee and endorsement by Cabinet.</p>					
<p><b>April</b></p>					
<p><b>Dorset Council Plan Priorities Update: Housing for Local People</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision - No Public Access - Open</b></p> <p>To receive a report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 25 Apr 2023</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety</p>	<p><i>Andrew Billany, Corporate Director of Housing andrew.billany@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p><b>Dorset Council Plan Priorities Update: Working with the Integrated Care System</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision - No Public Access - Open</b></p> <p>To receive a report of the Portfolio Holder for Social Care and Health.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 25 Apr 2023</b></p>		<p>Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health</p>	<p><i>Executive Director, People - Adults</i></p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p><b>Youth Justice Service Inspection</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision</b> - Yes <b>Public Access</b> - Open</p> <p>To have oversight of the inspection report and of the action plan to address the report's recommendation.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 25 Apr 2023</b></p>	<p>People and Health Overview Committee 21 Mar 2023</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help</p>	<p><i>David Webb, Manager - Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service david.webb@bcpcouncil.gov.uk, Paul Dempsey, Corporate Director - Care &amp; Protection Tel: 01305 224513 paul.dempsey@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, People - Children (Theresa Leavy)</i></p>
<p><b>May</b></p>					
<p><b>Dorset Council Plan Priorities Update: Value for Money (Unitary Council Benefits)</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision</b> - No <b>Public Access</b> - Open</p> <p>To receive a report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy.</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 16 May 2023</b></p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy</p>	<p><i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>
<p><b>June</b></p>					
<p><b>Library Strategy</b></p> <p><b>Key Decision</b> - Yes <b>Public Access</b> - Open</p>	<p><b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Date 20 Jun 2023</b></p>	<p>Joint Overview Committee</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Culture, Communities and Customer Services</p>	<p><i>Elizabeth Crocker Elizabeth.Crocker1@dorsetcc.gov.uk, Kate Turner, Service Manager for Libraries</i></p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
The proposed library strategy is in the process of going through the second phase of consultation.					<i>kate.turner@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i>
<b>Finance Report - Outturn 2022/2023</b>  <b>Key Decision - No</b> <b>Public Access - Open</b>  To consider the Council's performance against its revenue budget in 2021/22 and the impact this has upon reserves, including the general fund.	<b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b>	<b>Decision Date 20 Jun 2023</b>		Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy	<i>Heather Lappin, Head of Strategic Finance heather.lappin@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i>
September					
<b>Additional Procurement Forward Plan 2023-24 and incorporating the refresh of the annual Modern Slavery Transparency Statement</b>  <b>Key Decision - Yes</b> <b>Public Access - Open</b>  Additional Procurement Forward Plan: Cabinet is required to approve all key decisions with financial consequences of £500k or more. This report will also incorporate the annual refresh of the Modern Slavery Transparency Statement for Cabinet's agreements.	<b>Decision Maker Cabinet</b>	<b>Decision Date</b>		Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation	<i>Dawn Adams, Service Manager for Commercial and Procurement dawn.adams@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i>

### **Private/Exempt Items for Decision**

Each item in the plan above marked as 'private' will refer to one of the following paragraphs.

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the shadow council proposes:-
  - (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
  - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.